

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES
BUREAU FOR PUBLIC HEALTH
OFFICE OF LABORATORY SERVICES
MICROBIOLOGY SECTION
RABIES UNIT

RABIES TESTING GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

TYPES OF SPECIMENS

1. BURIED ANIMALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR TESTING.

2. Small animals such as bats or small rodents can be sent whole. The sender should ensure that smaller animals are dead before shipping the specimen to the OLS Rabies Unit.
3. Severed head of **moderate-sized** animal.
4. Brain only of larger size animal such as a cow.

NOTE:

The services of a veterinarian should be used to sever the heads or to remove the brains of suspect animals immediately after the animal's death. Specimen should be submitted to the OLS Rabies Unit NO LATER THAN 48 hours after removal of head.

RABIES SPECIMEN MAILING BOXES

Specimen Mailing Boxes are provided to County Health Departments, Veterinarian clinics, and the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources. Each consists of the following:

1. **2 PLASTIC BAGS**: Specimen should be placed in a plastic bag and then placed in the second bag to ensure that no fluids will contaminate the box or leak out of the container.
2. **VINYL ZIPPER BAG**: Double bagged specimen should be placed in the zipper bag to serve as added to protection against any leaks.
3. **2 REFRIGERANTS**: Two refrigerants or ice packs should be placed in zipper bag near specimen. Placing the ice packs in the zipper bag will ensure that any leakage will be contained if the refrigerants were to rupture.
4. **TEST REQUEST/SUBMISSION FORM**: Please provide all information requested on the Test Request/Specimen Submission form. When completed, the form should be placed on the

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lid of the mailing box, away from the specimen.

5. **OUTER MAILING BOX**: The outer box has a white label which states: PROPERTY OF THE OFFICE OF LABORATORY SERVICES/167 11th AVENUE/SOUTH CHARLESTON, WV 25303.
6. **PRE-ADDRESSED LABEL**: After the specimen is properly packaged. The box should be taped closed and the pre-addressed label should be affixed to the outside of the box.
7. **UN3373 LABEL DIAGNOSTIC**: Affix UN3373 Biological Specimen label to the outside of the box.

*NOTE: Newspaper or any absorbent material can be used to prevent smaller samples from shifting inside the container. **DO NOT USE STYROFOAM PEANUTS OR SHREDDED PAPER TO PACK SPECIMEN.** In the event of a specimen leak, the peanuts or shredded paper would pose a larger contamination threat to the technician.*

SPECIMEN SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. Notify the OLS Rabies Unit in advance regarding submission of specimen. It is important to inform the technician what type of exposure was involved (Human or pet).
2. The kit is designed to hold the severed head of moderate-size animals. It can also serve to hold the **BRAIN ONLY** of larger-size animals such as a cow, horse, etc. **OLS strongly recommends using only the boxes provided.**
3. Complete all the required information **LEGIBLY** on the Rabies Test Request/Specimen Submission Form.
4. No living animals will be accepted for Rabies testing. Smaller animals involved in an exposure should be euthanized **HUMANELY**.
5. Specimens brought to the OLS after work hours can be placed in the dock refrigerator. The

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Rabies Unit must be notified prior to placing any specimen in the dock refrigerator.

6. Call the Rabies Unit if you have any questions.

SHIPPING

Rabies specimens are considered 'Category B' and are to be shipped following IATA Packing Instruction 650. All specimens packaged in the provided Rabies Mailing Box can be sent by the United State Postal Service (USPS), United Parcel Services (UPS) or any other carrier that accepts diagnostic specimens AS LONG AS the proper labeling is placed in a visible area of the shipping container.

BIOHAZARD LABELS SHOULD NOT BE PLACED ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE SHIPING CONTAINER.

VACCINATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Any questions concerning vaccination recommendations should be addressed to:

INFECTIOUS DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY PROGRAM

(304) 558-5358 -or- 1-800-423-1271 (In West Virginia only)

RABIES UNIT CONTACT INFORMATION

Work Hours | Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:30pm

(OLS observes all State and Federal holidays.)

Phone | (304) 558-3530 extension(s) 2611 / 2613 / 2602

Fax | (304) 558-6210

Pager | (304) 361-9066

(after Work Hours on weekdays, weekends, or holidays)