

Guidance for Laboratories

Shipping 2019-nCoV specimens to WHO 2019-nCoV referral laboratories

7 February 2020

To expedite the shipment of clinical samples from patients suspected of being infected with the 2019-nCoV virus from the country of collection to one of the 2019-nCoV referral laboratories, a shipment mechanism has been established. To use this shipment mechanism, please follow the instructions below carefully [footnote 1]. This mechanism, which is similar to the GISRS SFP [footnote 2], uses contracted couriers (World Courier and in some circumstances HAZGO) to ship out the specimens from the sending laboratory to the WHO 2019-nCoV referral laboratories.

PROCEDURE AND DOCUMENTATION FOR SHIPMENT

1. For each shipment, laboratories are requested to complete the attached Booking Form and forward by email to World Courier, Switzerland (opsgva@worldcourier.ch) and copy all WHO staff listed on the Booking Form. In countries where World Courier is not operating, HAZGO will be contacted by WHO staff and instructed to carry out the transport using the same request and funding mechanism.
2. The designated courier (World Courier, or HAZGO), or a local agent representative, will then contact the laboratory concerned to arrange collection at the earliest convenience. The agent will provide all relevant packaging, labelling and paperwork required to comply with international regulations. Dry ice will also be provided should the laboratory request "Frozen" shipment on the Booking Form. For advice on shipment temperatures see footnote 3
3. The Laboratory will be required to complete the following paperwork before the agent can accept the package for shipment:
 - i. A House Airway Bill (HWB). This document will be provided by the courier agent.
 - ii. If the shipment contains an infectious substance Category A (UN2814), a completed Declaration of Dangerous Goods (DGs) is also required. The courier's local shipping agent will be able to provide assistance concerning export documentation upon request.
 - iii. An export permit for the originating country as relevant.
 - iv. An import permit for the recipient country as relevant.
 - v. A packing list/invoice indicating the recipient's address, number of packages, detail of contents including weight and value. NB: for international transport, a minimal value is required even if the items are being provided free of charge. The World Courier or HAZGO courier will be able to advise the laboratory on any of the above administrative requirements.
4. Include your WHO regional laboratory focal point in the email request that you sent out. If not known, please contact the logistics emergency support team (Mr. José Rovira, email roviraj@who.int and Mr. Christian Fuster, email fusterc@who.int) with WHO/SFP/2019-nCoV and the country name in the subject line.

1. Costs of shipments will only be covered by WHO when done strictly in accordance with the above instructions, including the use only of WHO-designated couriers. WHO is not able to accept or reimburse costs or invoices from laboratories.

2. https://www.who.int/influenza/gisrs_laboratory/logistic_activities/en/

3. For molecular confirmation of test result: if the specimen will reach the laboratory in less than 72 hours, store and ship at 2-8°C. If the specimen will reach the laboratory in more than 72 hours, ship on dry ice. Avoid repeated freezing and thawing, if sample is already frozen send it out on dry ice.