

How do I know if I need to take the shipping training?

If you plan to ship infectious substances, and/or dry ice, training is required.

An **infectious substance** is defined as a substance that is known to contain or can reasonably be expected to contain a pathogen(s). **Pathogens** are micro-organisms, such as bacteria, viruses, rickettsiae, parasites, fungi, and other agents such as prions, that can cause disease in humans or animals. Infectious substances are capable of spreading disease when exposure to them occurs. Substances containing organisms in the World Health Organization (WHO) Risk Group 2, 3 and 4 are considered infectious substances.

[Shipping training](#) is offered in two courses; one is for personnel shipping biological or infectious substances with or without dry ice (**Shipping Infectious Substances with or without Dry Ice**) and the other course only covers a shipment using dry ice (**Shipping with Dry Ice**).

We only ship infectious substances once or twice a year. Do I still need to be trained?

Yes, anyone who offers infectious substances (dangerous goods) for transport or transports infectious substances (dangerous goods) must be trained and have this training documented. IATA (International Air Transport Association) regulations classify **dangerous goods** as articles or substances which are capable of posing a risk to health, safety, property or the environment. A list of dangerous goods can be found in the IATA manual; however, this list is not exhaustive.

EHS's online [training course Shipping Infectious Substances with or without Dry Ice](#) covers training for Division 6.2 – Infectious Substances and Class 9 – Dry Ice; **Shipping with Dry Ice** only covers training for Class 9 – Dry Ice. Please select the course most applicable to your shipping requirements.

How often is training required?

Training is required initially, and then every two years or with significant regulatory change. The training schedule is determined by IATA (International Air Transport Association) in order to ensure that a shipper's knowledge remains current.

What is the difference between Biological Substances and Infectious Substances?

These are the definitions set down by IATA:

- **Category A Infectious Substance**, an infectious substance which is transported in a form that, when exposure to it occurs, is capable of causing permanent disability, life-threatening or fatal disease in otherwise healthy humans or animals; and
- **Biological Substance, Category B**, an infectious substance which does not meet the criteria for inclusion in Category A.

Greater detail will be found in the online training; especially helpful for classification are Handouts #4 and #4A. Remember you must complete the online training and be certified, before you ship. For examples, please refer to the [Frequently Shipped Biological Material and Proper Classification](#) handout.

What are select agents and can we ship them?

Select Agents are agents identified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services which have the potential to pose a serious risk to public or animal health and safety; a listing of select agents and toxins can be found in [42 CFR Part 73](#). All select agents (with the exception of toxins under a permissible amount) are restricted from shipping unless the lab is registered with either CDC or USDA (depending on the toxin). Select agent toxins (under permissible amounts) can be shipped as dangerous goods, Class 6.1, UN 3172. The permissible amount varies per toxin; amounts can be found at <http://www.selectagents.gov/toxinLimits.htm>.

Does the 24-hour emergency response telephone number have to be written on the outside of the shipping package?

No, the emergency number needs to be written on the Shipper's Declaration form. The **emergency number** must be the number of someone who is available the entire time the material is in transit, knowledgeable of the material being transported, and has comprehensive emergency response mitigation information for the material.

The contact number for the person responsible for the shipment will be placed on the outside of the package and on the air waybill for both Category A Infectious substances and Biological Substances, Category B shipments. This is not a 24-hour emergency number; however, the person responsible for the package should be knowledgeable about the material being shipped.

What precautions should I take when receiving biological materials?

Before arranging to receive infectious materials, verify that the shipment is being made in compliance with the regulations and know the hazards associated with the agent you will be receiving. When you receive the package make sure it isn't damaged. Open it in a biological safety cabinet with protective gloves. First open the outer packaging and remove the secondary container. Because the primary container may have leaked, before opening the secondary container, wipe it down with an appropriate disinfectant. If the primary container has leaked, place all packaging material into an autoclave bag, autoclave and discard the autoclaved materials in a biohazard box. If your package is damaged, contents are missing, or the package does not arrive, you must contact the shipper and/or carrier. If the shipment involves a select agent, also notify the Biological Safety Officer who will notify CDC.

How do I ship stable nucleic acid samples?

Biological material not considered infectious can be shipped as exempt material following a triple packaging system. Please refer to the [Frequently Shipped Biological Material and Proper Classification](#) handout for further information and other examples of exempt biological material.

What type of biological material is exempt from shipping regulations and how is it marked and labeled?

Please refer to the [Frequently Shipped Biological Material and Proper Classification](#) handout for further information and examples of exempt biological material.

How do I ship or receive overseas packages?

Customs officials require permits for certain infectious shipments crossing state and international borders. While the sender is responsible for obtaining any required export permits, the receiver (consignee) must obtain the required import permits. An import permit may be required to deliver a package even if a permit is not required by the sender. All shipments entering the United States are processed by the U.S. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection. Please check with the applicable governmental agency prior to shipment/receiving your material: USDA's [Animal Plant Health Inspection Services](#) (APHIS), [CDC](#), or the [Department of Commerce Bureau of Export Administration](#).