

NIH Policy Manual

26101-42-F - Shipping Policies and Procedures

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Transmittal Notice

1. Explanation of Material Transmitted: This policy manual issuance provides updates to policies and procedures for shipping services at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the Bethesda and Rockville, Maryland area.
2. Filing Instructions:

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PLEASE NOTE: For information on:

- Content of this chapter, contact the issuing office listed above.
- NIH Policy Manual, contact the Division of Management Support, OMA on 301-496-4606, or enter this URL: <https://oma.od.nih.gov/DMS/Pages/Manual-Chapters.aspx>.

A. Purpose

1. This NIH Manual Chapter contains policies and procedures for the safe handling and transportation of outbound and inbound shipping services for domestic and international shipments of biological materials; non-infectious, hazardous or infectious shipments (Category A and Category B) including all dry ice shipments, diagnostic specimens, and shipments of live animals from and to the Bethesda/Rockville, Maryland locations.
2. Compliance with this guidance ensures efficient, cost-effective shipping services through the Freight Forwarding Section (FFS), Transportation Management Branch (TMB), Division of Logistics Services (DLS), Office of Logistics and Acquisition Operations (OLAO).
3. Shipping Exceptions. The following types of shipments are not covered by this policy manual and will not be processed through the Freight Forwarding Section:

- a. U.S. Postal Service shipments via the [NIH Mail Management Services](#) 301-496-2586 (includes non-urgent letters in accordance with the Private Express Statutes)
- b. Shipments to Post Office Boxes
- c. Local Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) for Courier services
- d. Radioactive shipments. Contact the [Division of Radiation Safety, Office of Research Services](#), 301-496-3277
- e. Office Moves, Local BPA Movers
- f. Domestic Express Delivery Service Contract (FEDEX) shipments (excluding all International shipments, Infectious Substances and Hazardous Material).
- g. Select Agent shipments are coordinated and transported only through the [Division of Occupational Health and Safety, Select Agent Program](#), 301-496-2960

B. References

1. [49 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) Part 173](#)
2. [Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\) Logistics Management Manual \(LMM\)](#)
3. [NIH Manual Chapter 1340-1, Permits for the Import, Transfer or Export of Biological Materials](#)
4. [NIH Manual Chapter 26101-25-2, Personal Property Management Guide](#)
5. [NIH Manual Chapter 1743, Keeping and Destroying Records](#)

C. Definitions

1. *Bill of Lading* – The contract between a shipper and a carrier that lists the items or commodities shipped, their quantities, any special transportation requirements such as inside delivery required, special equipment required, and the terms and conditions of the contract.
2. *Carrier* - the transportation company consigned to transport and deliver a shipment.
3. *Commercial Bill of Lading* - the commercial version of the bill of lading contract.
4. *Consignor* - the shipper or shipping activity.
5. *Consignee* - the designated receiving activity or individual of the shipment.
6. *Courier Service* - a company that provides door-to-door delivery services.
7. *Diagnostic Specimen (Patient Specimen)* - any human or animal material including, but not limited to, excreta, secreta, blood and its components, tissue and tissue fluids, being transported for diagnostic or investigational purposes (excluding live infected animals)
8. *Department of Transportation (DOT) Hazardous Materials Regulation (HMR)* - Transportation regulations issued by the U.S. DOT in Title 49 – Transportation, Code of Federal Regulations (49 CFR). The Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR) govern the transportation of hazardous materials in all modes of transportation; air, highway, rail and water.

9. *Express Service* - a carrier that provides delivery services by a specified date and time.
10. *Freight* - property or any package that exceeds the shipping standards for small packages, that is moving via a carrier, usually in large quantities or volumes.
11. *Freight On Board (FOB) Destination* - the transportation carrier works for the shipper and the property becomes NIH property when delivered.
12. *FOB Origin* - the transportation carrier works for NIH and the transported property becomes NIH property at pickup.
13. *Government Bill of Lading* - the Government version of the bill of lading contract. The Federal Property Management Regulations require that Government agencies use this form because its use automatically incorporates various negotiated Government wide discounts (special tariffs) with carriers.
14. *Hazardous/Infectious Substances* – those substances known to contain, or reasonably expected to contain pathogens. Pathogens are defined as microorganisms or recombinant microorganisms that are known or reasonably expected to cause infectious disease in humans or animals when exposure to them occurs.

Category A – infectious substances capable of causing permanent disability, life threatening or fatal disease to humans or animals when exposure to them occurs. (UN 2814, infectious substances affecting humans) (UN 2900, infectious substances affecting animals)

Category B – infectious substances that are infectious, but do not meet the criteria for Category A. (UN 3373)

15. *International Air Transport Association (IATA) Dangerous Goods Regulation (DGR)* – the global reference for shipping dangerous goods by air and the only standard recognized by commercial airlines.
16. *Local* - within the Washington/Baltimore Metropolitan Area.
17. *Messenger Service* - local courier services.
18. *Office Move* - local or on-site movement of Government property between Government locations.
19. *Requester* - the Individual who requires shipping services.
20. *Shipper* - the office or individual responsible for arranging transportation services, preparation of transportation contract documents, and processing of property for shipment.
21. *Shipping Supervisor* – the supervisory transportation specialist at each NIH location.
22. *Ship To* - the designated location for delivery of a shipment.
23. *Transportation Officer* - the individual responsible for the overall operation of the Shipping Activities at an agency.
24. *Transportation Service Order (TSO)* – the Government version of the bill of lading contract. Government agencies use this form because its use automatically incorporates various negotiated Government wide discounts (special tariffs) with carriers.

D. Responsibilities

1. Director, DLS – the designated NIH Transportation Officer responsible for the oversight and operation of the NIH central shipping services.
2. Supervisor, FFS – the NIH Transportation Officer’s agent responsible for the FFS operation performing traffic management functions for the handling and coordinating and obtaining transportation services from commercial carriers for inbound and/or outbound packages and freight.
3. Requester – the Institute or Center (IC) customer (individual) requiring shipping services who is responsible for completing the NIH Form 1884, "Request for Shipment" with the required signatures. The Requester must also ensure all packages containing hazardous/infectious substances and/or materials are properly declared and its packaging is compliant with DOT HMR/IATA DGR requirements.
4. IC Property Accountable Officer (PAO) or Property Custodial Officer (PCO) – responsible for coordinating and documenting all shipments (domestic and international) of Government property.
5. Administrative Officer – responsible for ensuring the correct common accounting number (CAN) for the shipping customer is cited on the NIH 1884 for funding purposes.
6. Shipping Supervisor – responsible for ensuring that their location’s shipping activities comply with NIH shipping policies.

E. Policy

2. Shipping Authority.
 - a. The Director, DLS is the NIH Transportation Officer.
 - b. The NIH Freight Forwarding Section (FFS), TMB, DLS is the central activity responsible for most of the NIH outbound shipping services. This includes all international shipments and packages containing infectious substances and/or hazardous materials. NIH activities must route outbound shipments through the FFS, except for locations/activities with specific delegated authority. The FFS is the only office authorized to:
 - i. Procure shipping services,
 - ii. Issue Transportation Service Orders (TSO), or
 - iii. Use other appropriate mechanisms to pay delivery charges.
 - c. There are designated NIH IC locations/activities ([Appendix A](#)) delegated specific authority to procure shipping services and issue Government Bills of Lading (GBL), or to use other appropriate mechanisms to pay delivery charges. These IC locations/activities must produce written procedures to assure compliance with this policy and will forward those procedures to the Director, DLS for approval. Report of shipping activity will be provided as required by the Director, DLS.
3. Personal Property Requirements (Government property).

The IC Property Custodial Officer (PCO) and the Supervisor of the activity requesting shipment of Government property must approve and record the shipment/movement of all personal property in the NIH property system. The respective Property Accountable Officer (PAO) or PCO must sign in block 20 on the NIH 1884, "Request for Shipment" for all personal property shipments. Contact the IC PAO/PCO for additional documentation and approvals that must be included with the NIH 1884 as applicable;

- a. Property Loans
- b. Property Exchanges or Trades
- c. Property returned for repair or replacement
- d. International shipments

Refer to [NIH Manual Chapter 26101-25-2](#), Personal Property Management Guide and related subchapters or contact the [Property Management Branch, DLS](#) at 301-496-5711 for more information.

F. Procedures

1. Request for Shipment.
 - a. Requesters will complete a [NIH 1884](#) form for each package. Packages cannot be accepted without a completed NIH 1884 (or other supporting documents that may be required for the shipment).
 - b. The NIH 1884 must be complete with correct return/destination addresses, required signatures, applicable boxes checked, and all information is legible. The Serial Number on the NIH 1884 is assigned by FFS upon completion of the shipment process.
 - c. All packages for shipment from NIH in the Bethesda/Rockville, MD area will be processed through the NIH shipping service at FFS, Building 13, Platform E, Room 1336, NIH main campus (see A.3. and E.1.c. for exceptions and specific delegations).
 - d. Package Receiving Times.
 - i. The FFS hours of operation for shipping services are Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Packages requiring same-day delivery at destination must be received at FFS no later than **9:00 a.m.** that day.
 - ii. Walk-in packages received before **2:30 p.m.** will be processed for outbound shipment that same day.
 - iii. To request package pick-up call FFS at 301-496-5921. FFS must be contacted before **1:00 p.m.** to be processed for outbound shipment that same day.
 - iv. Packages received for shipping after the shipping times as stated above will be processed for outbound shipment on the next business day.

- e. For shipments of non-hazardous material weighing more than 75 pounds, the Requester should call a local BPA courier to arrange for pick-up service.
 - f. If the shipment is too cumbersome to send through FFS, submit the NIH 1884 to the FFS, Building 13, Room 1336 or fax to 301-402-1854 with instructions for the Carrier to pick-up at the location of the shipment.
 - g. Requesters must label all packages with both return and destination addresses. Complete addresses (including name, building and room number, street address, zip code and phone number) facilitates accurate and swift deliveries. Post Office (PO) Box numbers are not acceptable. Packages with PO Box addresses must be sent through the NIH Mail Management Services.
 - h. When an Air Courier Express Service is required, requesters must send the letter/package in an addressed envelope to the FFS with a completed NIH 1884.
2. Shipments with Special Requirements.
- d. Biological Materials:
 - i. Materials known or presumed to contain a viable microorganism or its toxin that causes or may cause human disease are subject to additional packaging and shipping requirements.
 - ii. 49 CFR Part 171-180 specifies requirements for proper packaging and shipping of biomedical materials. [49 CFR Part 173, §173.196](#) and [§173.199](#) prescribes packaging requirements for diagnostic specimens and biological products, to include etiologic agents.
 - iii. For more information regarding permits and/or training classes for the shipment of biological materials, call the [Division of Occupational Health and Safety](#) at 301-496-2960.
 - iv. The [Division of Occupational Health and Safety, Quarantine Permit Service Office \(QPSO\)](#) must authorize overseas shipment of all biological materials (infectious or non-infectious) imported to the NIH and all biological materials leaving the NIH.
 - e. Hazardous Materials/Infectious Substances (Category A and Category B):
 - i. Requesters must ensure all hazardous/infectious shipments are properly packaged for ground and/or air transport. Employees handling and/or packaging these types of materials/substances must be trained and certified in accordance with 49 CFR Part 172.704.
 - ii. Arrangements must be made with FFS to pick-up all packages containing hazardous materials/infectious substances, unless the package can be safely hand-carried to Building 13. The NIH 1884 can be faxed to 301-402-1857, or contact the FFS Shipping Officer at 301-496-5921.
 - iii. When shipping by air, requesters must assure that packaging is tested and marked according to the United Nations performance standards. The [International Civil Aviation Organization's \(ICAO\) Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air](#) and the [International Air Transport Association's \(IATA\) Dangerous Goods Regulations](#) outline the packaging instructions and requirements.

- iv. The detailed description (proper scientific name) of the material, the amount (in milliliters or kilograms), and the recipient's complete address and phone number must be provided on the NIH 1884 form.
 - v. All radioactive shipments must be coordinated with the [Division of Radiation Safety](#), 301-496-3277.
 - vi. All select agent shipments must be coordinated through the [Division of Occupational Health and Safety, Select Agent Program](#), 301-496-2960.
- f. Live animals (Domestic):
- i. Generally, the airline's courier express companies will provide door-to-door pickup and delivery service. However, they will not transport live animals when the temperature is below 45 degrees Fahrenheit or above 85 degrees Fahrenheit. For more information, refer to the [NIH Animal Transportation Policy](#) or call the [Office of Research Services, Division of Veterinary Services](#), 301-496-8184.
 - ii. Send (or fax 301-402-1857) the NIH 1884 form to the FFS, Building 13, Room 1336, MSC 5725. FFS must be notified at least 48 hours in advance to ensure acceptance by the selected Carrier. FFS will notify the sender when the routing and shipping documents are ready.
 - iii. Commercial airlines will only provide airport-to-airport service. For animals shipped by commercial airline:
 - The requestor must call the [Division of Veterinarian Services, Animal Transportation Section](#) 301-496-8184 or email oddvtrtrans@mail.nih.gov at least 24 hours in advance to arrange transportation to the local airport when using commercial airlines.
 - The requester must arrange to have the animal shipment picked up at the destination airport by the consignee.

g. Dry Ice shipments:

Pack perishable shipments with enough dry ice to last several days in case of possible Customs delays. Requesters should bring these packages to the Freight Forwarding Section in the beginning of the week (Monday-Wednesday) by 10:30 a.m.

e. Insurance:

The Government rarely insures shipments beyond the limited liability of the Carrier/Courier. However, if additional insurance is necessary and in the Government's best interest, note the dollar value and a brief justification for increasing the Carrier liability on the NIH 1884 form in block 18, Additional Information, Instructions or Justification. (See [FAR 47.102, Transportation Insurance](#))

3. International Shipments.

- a. All international shipments must be processed through the FFS.

- b. The FFS will assure that the State Department processes shipments to foreign countries in accordance with Federal Property Management Regulations.
- c. Commercial Invoice Shipments:
 - i. Customs Service regulations change constantly. To ensure expeditious delivery, include the [NIH 1884-1, "Commercial Invoice"](#) form with [NIH 1884](#) for all non-letter shipments.
 - ii. On the Commercial Invoice, the total commercial value placed on each shipment will determine the charge billed per Country for Duties, Taxes, Customs, and Other Fees.
- d. Imports or Exports of Biological Materials:
 - i. [NIH Manual Chapter 1340-1](#), Permits for Import or Export of Biological Materials, sets forth the requirements and procedures for obtaining permits for the import or shipment of etiologic agents, their vectors, animals and plants, and for the export of biological materials.
 - ii. The [Division of Occupational Health and Safety, QPSO](#) must authorize the overseas shipment of all biological materials imported to the NIH and all biological materials leaving the NIH.
 - iii. Individuals who fail to comply with import and export requirements may experience delays in obtaining the release of the shipment or may experience confiscation and/or destruction of the shipment by the quarantine officer at the port of entry.
 - iv. Requesters must assure that biological and materials packed on dry ice, ice packs, are prepared according to Government guidelines with proper inner and outer packaging and absorbent material. Requesters must pack perishable shipments with enough dry ice to last several days in case of delays during transit. It is recommended that packages with dry ice be brought to the FFS in the beginning of the week (Monday-Wednesday) by 10:30 a.m.
 - v. When shipping by air, infectious substances require the use of packaging that is tested and marked according to the United Nations performance standards.
 - vi. The Commercial Invoice must include a detailed description of the material, the origin, (if animal, specify species), the number of vials, the amount per vial and any identification numbers on the vials.
 - vii. Requesters must complete a [NIH 2388, Declaration for Exportation of Biological Materials](#) form and send it to the QPSO as stated in the [NIH Manual Chapter 1340-1](#).
 - viii. For information on permits and/or training classes for the shipment of biological materials, call the [Division of Occupational Health and Safety](#) at 301-496-2960.
- e. Direct-to-Receiver or Airport Delivery:

Overseas "Direct-to-Receiver" delivery service may take between 2-5 business days, excluding weekends and holidays, depending on the destination and

possible Customs delays. Airport deliveries usually reach the nearest Customs airport in 1-2 days. For flight information, call FFS 301-496-5921 during the afternoon of the shipment. The consignee is responsible to clear airport deliveries through Customs and arrange for pickup and delivery from the airport. Note, in writing, the preference of service on the NIH 1884.

- g. Live Animals (International):
 - i. FFS arranges all international animal shipments directly on commercial airlines.
 - ii. Requesters must send forms [NIH 1884](#) and [NIH 1884-1](#) to the FFS. FFS will notify the shipper when the arrangements for the shipment is completed.
- h. Personal Property (Government property):
 - i. All shipments of personal property must be coordinated with the IC PAO/PCO to ensure proper approvals are obtained, the property record in the NIH property system is updated to accurately account for the movement of all personal property, and the required documentation is completed.
 - ii. Requesters must provide the Export Control Classification Number (ECCN) on the [NIH 1884](#) and [NIH 1884-1](#) if the property identified for shipment requires an export license. The ECCN is an alpha-numeric code that describes the item and indicates licensing requirements. All ECCNs are listed in the Department of Commerce [Commerce Control List \(CCL\)](#).
 - iii. NIH employees, who must ship property while overseas, will request shipping assistance from the nearest United States Embassy or Consulate.

4. Inbound Shipments.

- a. NIH may also be the “Shipper” for inbound shipments. Though there are many circumstances in which this may occur, typical examples are: purchases of property are designated “FOB (Freight On Board) Origin”, NIH personnel return shipped property or documents from the field, or when NIH activities direct shipments between each other.
- b. There may be the occasion that NIH is responsible for the delivery charges for inbound shipments. It is possible for shippers, including NIH personnel in the field, to consign property to NIH or to a third party. NIH may be responsible for shipping charges. (i.e. an NIH official is required to send exhibit material at a show in Chicago back to NIH in Bethesda or to a second show in Kansas.) In this situation, a [NIH 1884](#) form with any additional documents must be provided to the Shipping Officer, FFS. A Transportation Service Order (TSO) will be generated to authorize payment to the Carrier for related shipping charges.

- c. Whenever possible, NIH personnel who require shipping services while working in the field must contact the FFS before contracting for transportation service. This affords the opportunity to route the freight by the most cost-effective method and Carrier, and to assist the NIH personnel in preparation of documentation and coordination of transportation services.
- d. Campus and Local Deliveries:
 - i. The NIH campus and NIH activities in the surrounding area have no designated central receiving areas or activity. As a rule, shippers must route inbound shipments directly to the receiver's room or laboratory location. Individuals or activities consigned deliveries are responsible for completing the receiving process for their deliveries/shipments.
 - ii. Transportation documents generated by shippers other than the FFS must specify "Inside Delivery" to a specific building, room and individual.
 - iii. Procurement officials must require "Inside Delivery" to a specific building and room location on acquisition documents or credit card orders.
 - iv. If shipment to a loading dock is necessary, requesters must arrange for all personnel and equipment needed to assist in unloading and redistributing the delivered shipment. If the requester cannot coordinate or arrange for these activities, they must specify "Inside Delivery" to a specific building, room and individual. If resources are not available in the building, the requester may utilize a local mover on the NIH BPA list.

G. Records Retention and Disposal

All records pertaining to this chapter must be retained and disposed of under the authority of [NIH Manual 1743](#), "Keeping and Destroying Records," Appendix 1, "NIH Records Control Schedules" (as amended). These records must be maintained in accordance with current NIH Records Management and Federal guidelines. Contact your [IC Records Liaison](#) or the NIH Records Officer for additional information.

H. Internal Controls

The purpose of this manual issuance provides policy guidance for outbound and inbound shipments through the NIH Shipping Services for the Bethesda/Rockville, MD locations.

- 4. **Office Responsible for Reviewing Internal Controls Relative to this Chapter:**
OD/OM/OALM/OLAO/DLS
- 5. **Frequency of Review:** Ongoing, visual inspections conducted of shipping request forms and packages received into the shipping process and freight operations.
- 6. **Method of Review:**
 - a. Quality assurance (QA) inspections are built into the process for accepting, handling and preparing packages for outbound shipment.

- b. Review shipping documentation to verify all official shipments are in compliance with established policy and regulations.
 - c. Communicate to the NIH community as changes to the shipping procedures and policies occur.
 - d. Generate reports and periodically review data for shipping transactions captured in the Transportation Management Billing System.
7. **Review Reports are sent to:** Reports are developed on an exception basis as needed and sent to the Deputy Director for Management and the Director, Office of Acquisition and Logistics Management.

Appendix A: Supplement to Manual Chapter 26101-42-F; Section E.1.c.

Delegated Authority to Procure Shipping Services

The NIH Institutes/Centers (IC) activities below are delegated specific authority to procure shipping services and issue Government Bills of Lading (GBL), or to use other appropriate mechanisms to pay delivery charges. These IC locations/activities must produce written procedures to assure compliance with this policy and will forward those procedures to the Director, DLS for approval. Report of shipping activities will be provided as required by the Director, DLS.

- a. Gerontology Research Center (GRC), National Institute on Aging (NIA), Baltimore, MD
- b. Frederick Cancer Research Development Center (FCRDC), National Cancer Institute (NCI), Ft. Detrick, MD
- c. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), Detroit, MI
- d. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), Research Triangle Park, NC
- e. Rocky Mountain Labs (RML), National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), Hamilton, MT
- f. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), Phoenix, AZ
- g. Addiction Research Center, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), Baltimore, MD
- h. Building 21 (Division of Radiation Safety), NIH, Bethesda, MD
- i. Acquisition Activities may obtain transportation services in connection with a contract, purchase order, or other procurement method in accordance with FAR Part 47 and this guidance.