

Shipping Hazardous Materials

Shipping of hazardous materials is a difficult business. It requires careful attention from scientists and shipping personnel - and sometimes even the best efforts fail because the shipment can be refused transport at several points on its journey.

Regulations published by the Department of Transportation (DOT), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), and the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (IMCO) state that certain types of cargo are subject to transport restrictions. These regulations list and define restricted articles, noting which ones may or may not be carried, the quantity allowed, and the packaging and documentation required. The list includes flammables (solid, liquid, or gaseous), corrosives, poisons, radioactive and magnetic material, noxious or irritating substances, and articles possessing inherent qualities that make them unsuitable for carriage without special provisions. The regulations state what type packing is required and what type vehicle may carry the articles. When hazardous materials are tendered to carriers (air, ground, or ocean), the proper shipping name must be used on the shipping documents; trade names are not acceptable. Hazardous material will not be accepted by carriers unless the shipper has certified that the shipment complies with all applicable regulations and articles are properly marked and labeled. The Shipping Department has personnel qualified to answer any questions you may have regarding hazardous material, and they will assist you in preparing the shipment. Please remember that Shipping can pack, label, and ship, but only you can tell us what you are shipping. Failure to notify the Shipping Department that hazardous material is in your shipment can result in serious fines to you and the Institution, should an undisclosed or improperly identified hazardous material be found.

NOTE: Carriers will refuse shipments containing hazardous material when documentation, packaging, and labeling requirements are *not exact*. Once a shipment is accepted by the restricted articles agent, there is no guarantee that the shipment will be transported. This is especially true with airlines, where the pilot has the last say on whether the shipment will be placed aboard the aircraft. It is the recommendation of the Shipping Department that when you need chemicals or other restricted articles for your work that you make arrangements with your suppliers to ship the material directly to your intended destination. They have all the proper DOT boxes, product names, and other essential information required by the shipping companies to safely transport your "HAZMAT" shipment. If the manufacturer declines to ship your goods, the Shipping Department must be supplied with the proper United Nations specified packaging for air shipments, and the proper DOT cartons for ground shipments. We must also be supplied with the manufacturers data sheets (MDS) that must be included in the shipping information packet. The Shipping Department does not and cannot keep a supply of cartons on hand for the many chemicals used at WHOI.