

Safety Guidelines on Transport of Clinical Specimens and Infectious Substances for Courier Team

I. Introduction

In day-to-day transport of specimens, breakage of containers and spillage of specimens may occur inadvertently. Although the risk of exposure to infectious substance is minimal if specimens are appropriately packaged, courier staff are advised to adhere to the following safety precautions.

II. General safety measures

1. Maintain good personal hygiene.
2. Wash hands after each session of work, when contaminated or soiled, or after removal of gloves.
3. Do not touch mouth, eyes and nose with gloved hands or before washing hands.
4. Gloves are not necessary for routine handling of properly packaged specimens.



Maintain good personal hygiene

III. Specimen handling during transport

1. Use a transport container/box for routine transport of clinical specimens. Ice packs should be included in the transport box. The transport box should be robust enough for its capacity and intended use, and be made of material that can be cleansed and disinfected.
2. The lid/cover of the transport box should be closed properly and securely during transport.
3. Transport boxes must be handled gently with care during the whole transport process. Throwing, dropping or dragging the transport boxes on the floor is prohibited.



Use robust transport container

IV. Handling of specimen spillage during transport

1. Biological spill kit
 - i. If a large number of specimens are transported using designated vehicle, a biological spill kit should be available in the vehicle. See **Appendix** for the suggested contents of the spill kit.
 - ii. For transporting a small number of specimens not using a designated vehicle, a prepackaged bag containing gloves, disposable absorbent material, a small bottle of ready-to-use disinfectant, an alcohol-based hand hygiene product and a clinical waste bag would be appropriate for clean up of a minor spillage.
2. Report any spillage incident to supervisor.
3. Clean up the spill as soon as possible:
 - i. Wear disposable gloves and other appropriate personal protective equipment if splashing is anticipated.
 - ii. Cover the spill with absorbent material (e.g. cloth or paper towels) to contain it.



Biological spill kit

- iii. Pour disinfectant over the cloth or paper towels and the immediate surrounding area. Apply the disinfectant concentrically beginning at the outer margin of the spill area, working towards the centre.
- iv. Leave for 30 minutes and clear away the materials, followed by a wipe / rinse of the disinfected area with clean water.
- v. Place waste materials in a clinical waste bag and seal for disposal.
- vi. Remove gloves (and other personal protective equipment if used), taking care not to contaminate oneself, and wash hands (or perform hand hygiene using an alcohol-based product if there is no visible contamination).

VI. Staff Training

1. Courier staff should receive appropriate training with training record.
2. Periodic refresher training should be arranged.

Appendix

The following items should be included in the biological spill kit for designated vehicle for transporting specimens.

1. Disposable latex gloves
2. Disposable protective gowns
3. Face / eye protection devices
4. Surgical mask
5. Disposable absorbent material such as paper towels or cloth
6. Disposable waste bags (red) for clinical waste
7. Ready-to-use disinfectant (e.g. 1 part of household bleach in 4 parts of water)*
8. Hand hygiene products (e.g. alcohol-based hand-rubs)

** Other ready-to-use disinfectant products can be used. The disinfectant must be prepared according to the instructions by the manufacturers and must be replaced when it is expired after preparation.*

