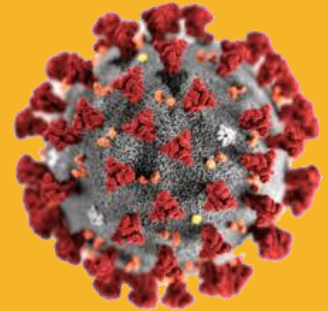




TEAMSTERS SAFETY & HEALTH Coronavirus



Shipping Category B, Infectious Substances COVID-19 Test Kits

October 5, 2020

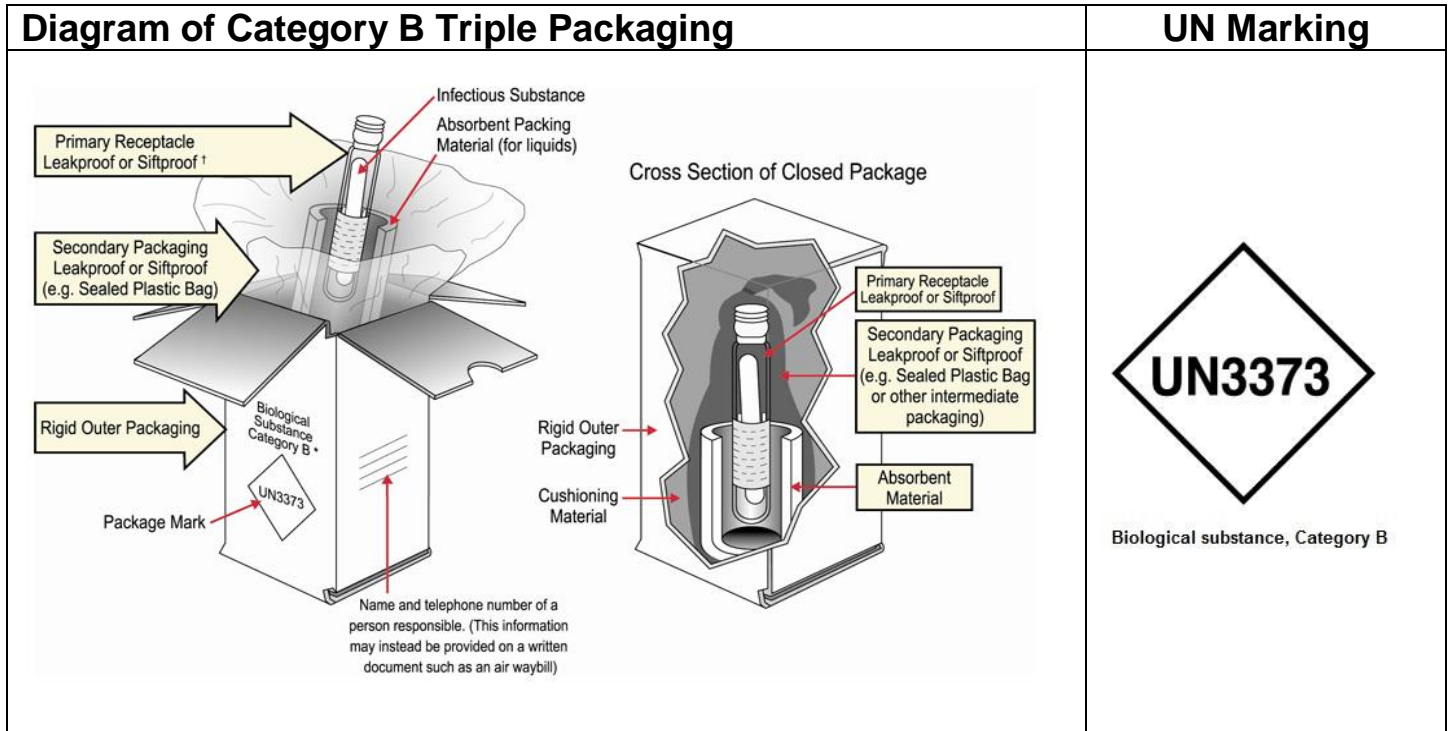
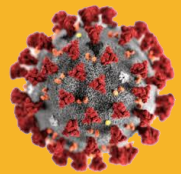
The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) has the legal authority to regulate shipments of COVID-19 diagnostic samples (e.g., nasal swabs, vials of sputum, and other related items). These samples are classified as a Category B infectious substance (Division 6.2) hazardous material under the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR; 49 CFR Parts 171-180). Human specimen samples that are used to test for severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes COVID-19, should be classed and described as “UN3373, Biological substance, Category B, 6.2.”

DO CATEGORY B, INFECTIOUS SUBSTANCES POSE A DANGER TO ME, IF EXPOSED?

A Category B, infectious substance is a material known or reasonably expected to contain a pathogen in a form or quantity not generally capable of causing permanent disability or life-threatening or fatal disease in otherwise healthy humans if exposure occurs.

HOW SHOULD CATEGORY B SUBSTANCES BE PACKAGED?

To ensure safe transportation, SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic samples must be packaged and offered for transportation as prescribed in § 173.199 of the HMR. Under this section, Category B infectious substances must be properly **“triple-packaged”**, which means the diagnostic sample is first placed in a primary receptacle that is leak-proof for liquids. The primary receptacle is then placed in secondary leak-proof packaging. The secondary packaging is then placed in a rigid outer packaging. The completed package must be designed, constructed, maintained, filled, and closed so that under conditions normal to transportation, there is no release of hazardous materials. For liquid Category B infectious substances, there must be absorbent material placed between the primary receptacle and secondary package that is of sufficient quantity to absorb the total amount of liquid.



WHAT MARKINGS ARE REQUIRED ON THE OUTER PACKAGING?

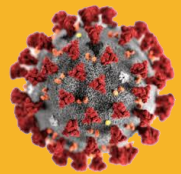
On outer packaging and on overpacks, the proper shipping name “Biological Substance, Category B” must be marked on the surface of the outer packaging adjacent to the diamond-shaped mark containing the UN package marking “UN3373”. Package markings must be visible and contrast in color to the background.

WHAT TRAINING IS REQUIRED TO TRANSPORT CATEGORY B SUBSTANCES?

Each person who transports a Category B, infectious substance, must be trained on the shipping requirements detailed in § 173.199 of the HMR. Training should cover the following topics: triple packaging requirements, required markings, packaging capability requirements, requirements for transport by air, overpack markings, emergency response information, and package closure instructions.

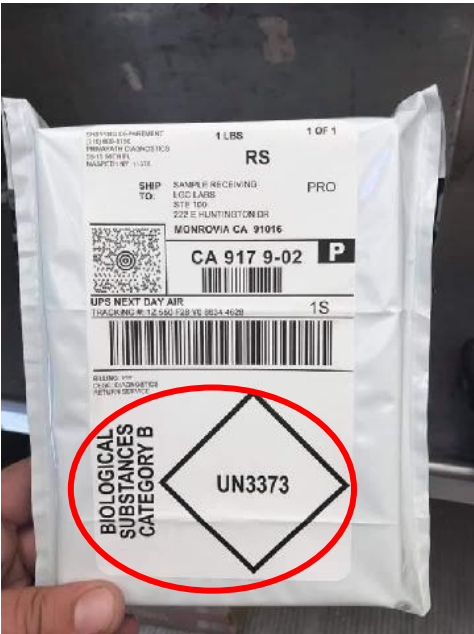
IS PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) REQUIRED TO HANDLE PACKAGES CONTAINING CATEGORY B, INFECTIOUS SUBSTANCES IN GENERAL TRANSPORT?

PPE is not recommended for the general handling and processing of packages containing Category B infectious substances. Gloves or other PPE may be used by employees voluntarily.



WHAT IF A PACKAGE CONTAINING CATEGORY B SUBSTANCES LEAKS?

If a package containing Category B infectious substances is broken or leaking, do not touch it unless you have been trained to do so. Hazardous Materials responders should use proper PPE when handling leaking packages, including but not limited to: gloves, goggles, respirators, face shields, boot covers, and coveralls. All contaminated areas should be first cleaned and then disinfected with products claiming to be effective against the Novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and which are found on EPA list "N". The shipper who is familiar with package contents should be contacted for emergency response instructions. The shippers' contact information can be located on the outer packaging or on a written document attached to the package, such as the air waybill or bill of lading.

Correct Labeling ✓	Incorrect Labeling ✗
	

Source:

Transporting Infectious Substances Safely, PHMSA, Published April 2020:

<https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/transporting-infectious-substances/transporting-infectious-substances-safely>

Shipping SARS CoV 2 Specimens, Cultures, Isolates and Waste, PHMSA, Published May 2020

<https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/news/phmsa-safety-advisory-notice-transportation-covid-19-diagnostic-samples>