



State Hygienic Laboratory

at the University of Iowa



Rabies Testing

Specimen Collection and Shipping Instructions

Submission Requirements

1. **CALL THE LABORATORY PRIOR TO DELIVERY** to allow personnel to prepare for the specimen's arrival. (319-335-4500 or 800-421-IOWA). If a call is received **outside of our normal business hours** (Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm), you will be directed to the Rabies Technologist on-call, who will instruct you on proper collection and delivery of your specimen.
2. **DO NOT** leave any animal specimen at the laboratory without handing it directly to an employee.
3. A **COMPLETED Rabies Test Request Form** MUST accompany the specimen at all times to ensure proper specimen identification and tracking.
4. Although your local hospital sends specimens to SHL, they may not accept animals for submission. Please call the hospital laboratory before bringing in animal specimens for transport to SHL.

Test Request Form

1. Complete the **Rabies Test Request Form** by going online to: <http://www.shl.uiowa.edu/>
2. Select the green button labeled "Clinical Test Request Forms"
3. In Step 1 of the on-line TRF generator, select "Rabies" for the test request form template.
4. For Step 2, scroll through the alphabetical list of Organizations to find and select your facility.
5. Step 3 will be to click the "Submit" button, generating a fillable PDF version of the Test Request Form. (Print when completed.)
6. Testing is reliant on a complete and accurate Test Request Form. Processing the specimen and results may be delayed if information is not correct or provided.
7. **The following MUST be included as required by regulatory agencies and SHL:**
 - a. Type of Animal (i.e. cat, dog, bat)
 - b. Name/age of persons exposed and/or owner (*If person exposed is a minor, contact information is needed for the legal guardian.*)
 - c. Name, address, and **24-hour phone number** for a veterinarian, physician, or public health practitioner
 - d. Results WILL NOT be provided directly to the patient, guardian, or animal owner. They will only be released to the veterinarian, physician, or public health practitioner.
 - e. Complete the section at the very bottom of the Test Request Form if you would like the results mailed to a second organization (such as your doctor's office or hospital, in addition to your veterinarian.)
8. Only one specimen submission corresponds to one test request form. If submitting multiple samples, ensure adequate means of affixing each test request form to the corresponding specimen submission.
9. To help maintain the integrity of the Test Request Form, placing it in a separate plastic bag or liner will help ensure the form is not damaged during transport and shipping.

Revision 11/01/2016

Page 1 of 3



State Hygienic Laboratory

at the University of Iowa



Rabies Testing

Specimen Collection and Shipping Instructions

Specimen Collection and Handling

Small animals <1 lb. (mice, rats, bats, etc.)

1. Only under this circumstance will the whole animal be acceptable for rabies testing. Attempting to remove the head of an animal this small may compromise the integrity of the brain material, rendering the specimen unsatisfactory for testing. Technicians **MUST** be able to identify specific brain anatomy for accurate testing.
2. **Bats Only:**
 - If the bat is presumed dead, always take caution in the case the bat is merely stunned. Take care to not crush the skull. A damaged brain may render the specimen unsatisfactory for testing. If you are unsure about the condition of the brain, continue with submission. The technologist will be able to make a final determination on the acceptability of the bat for testing.
 - If the bat is *alive*, guard yourself from any potential bite as you place the bat into a hard-sided container. Take the animal to your local vet to have it euthanized and shipped for testing. If you want to avoid fees associated with veterinarian euthanization and shipment, you can hand deliver the live bat to the State Hygienic Laboratory, and we will euthanize and test the bat at no cost.
3. For all small animal submissions other than live bats, double bag the specimen and place it inside a hard-sided or Styrofoam box. Keep the specimen cool with ice packs surrounding the double bagged specimen. **DO NOT FREEZE** or have ice directly on the specimen. Be sure to secure the lid tightly to the box.

Medium to Large Animals >1 lb. (cats, dogs, cows, horses, etc.)

1. Only the head of large animals will be accepted at SHL for rabies testing. The lab is not equipped for large animal disposal. Have a veterinarian remove the head. Attempting to improperly remove a head may compromise the integrity of the brain material, rendering the specimen unsatisfactory for testing. Technicians **MUST** be able to identify specific brain anatomy for accurate testing.
2. **TRIPLE** bag the specimen (head) and make sure each of the three bags are securely closed to prevent leakage.
3. Place the triple-bagged specimen into a hard-sided or Styrofoam box and secure the lid. Keep the specimen cool with ice packs surrounding the bagged specimen. **DO NOT FREEZE** or have ice directly on the specimen. Be sure to secure the lid tightly to the box to prevent damage during shipping.
4. **Cow and horse heads only:**
 - If you are unable to find a hard-sided or Styrofoam box large enough to hold the head, please ensure that any bags used for transport are of sufficient strength and size to hold the head.
 - Allow the head to drain sufficiently prior to packaging. Ensure that the bag containing the head has absorbent material inside to absorb any fluids that may leak during transport.
 - If there are bones or other sharp portions protruding from the head make sure they are adequately wrapped or padded in order keep them from puncturing the bags.
 - The outermost bag or container must contain enough freezer packs to keep the head cold during transport.

Revision 11/01/2016

Page 2 of 3



State Hygienic Laboratory

at the University of Iowa



Rabies Testing

Specimen Collection and Shipping Instructions

Shipping Instructions

1. Be sure there is a completed **Rabies Test Request Form** affixed to the specimen container. (Placing the form in a separate plastic bag or liner may help to prevent it from becoming damaged or contaminated.)
2. Call the Laboratory prior to departure to allow personnel to prepare for the specimen's arrival. (319-335-4500 or toll free: 800-421-IOWA)
3. ***CAUTION*** An improperly packed or shipped animal may compromise the integrity of the brain material, rendering the specimen unsatisfactory for testing.
 - **DO NOT FREEZE** the animal carcass or head. Keep it cool during transport using ice packs only.
 - A Private vehicle is the most efficient means of delivery to the lab.
4. If you must use a commercial courier service (FedEx or UPS), keep the bagged animal cool using ice packs inside another shipping container and place the bagged test request form in the outermost shipper.
5. If shipping via overnight courier, ensure next day delivery and use shipment tracking. If the animal does not arrive at SHL the next day, you will be responsible to track it.
6. If you are shipping on Friday for Saturday delivery, you **MUST** request guaranteed Saturday morning delivery. If you do not specifically request this, the delivery can be delayed until the next available workday (i.e., Monday, or Tuesday if Monday is a holiday.)
7. Delayed delivery may compromise the integrity of the brain material and render the specimen unsatisfactory for testing.

Contact Information

1. For Rabies testing questions or concerns: 319-335-4500 or toll free: 800-421-IOWA)