

 University of Michigan Medical School	<h1 style="margin: 0;"><u>U L A M</u></h1> <p style="margin: 0;">Unit for Laboratory Animal Medicine</p>	Standard Operating Procedure
Title: 10.003.01 Submission and Shipping of Rabies Specimens to MDCH		
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**I. PURPOSE:**

- A. To describe procedures to appropriately package and ship samples for rabies testing to the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH).

**II. DEFINITIONS:**

- A. Rabies – A viral disease transmitted from animals (e.g. dogs, cats, ferrets, skunks, bats, raccoons) to other animals or humans. Rabies infects the central nervous system, ultimately causing disease in the brain and death if early treatment is not given.
- B. PPE – Personal Protective Equipment
- C. PCAR – Pathology Cores for Animal Research

**III. RESPONSIBILITY:**

- A. ULAM Veterinary Staff – collect and submit appropriate samples for rabies testing by MDCH.
- B. PCAR Animal Diagnostic Laboratory (ADL) Staff – package and send samples for rabies testing by MDCH

**IV. PROCEDURES:**

**A. Veterinary Staff**

1. Veterinary staff that have been vaccinated for rabies are the **only** personnel allowed to handle suspected rabies animals and other non-contained tissues from suspected animal.
2. PPE described in this SOP **must** be worn while collecting and processing suspected rabies samples.
  - a. This includes:
    - i Dedicated outer-covering with long sleeves or disposable outer-covering with long sleeves
    - ii Sealed eye protection
    - iii N95 respirator
    - iv Two layers of disposable gloves
    - v Waterproof shoe covers
  - b. Directions for appropriate tissue dissection can be found at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/DCH-0676\\_Rabies\\_Instructions\\_74092\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/DCH-0676_Rabies_Instructions_74092_7.pdf)
3. The submitting veterinarian must complete the ADL submission form and the MDCH test request form. Make a copy of the MDCH form for submittal with packaging (as indicated below).

- a. MDCH test request forms can be found at [http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2945\\_5103---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2945_5103---,00.html)
  4. Remove the head of the suspected animal.
    - a. Use of a high-speed saw to remove the head should be avoided as this can aerosolize the rabies virus. A hand saw should be used instead.
  5. Place head/brain in plastic bag that is provided and place absorbent material (small white squares provided) in the plastic bag. Securely seal bag so it will not leak.
  6. Place the sealed plastic bag into the bucket.
    - a. Contact MDCH for a larger container as needed.
  7. Lock and seal the lid on the bucket and secure with tape.
  8. Place the original MDCH sheet in the plastic provided and attach to the outside of the plastic bucket with tape. Give copy of form to ADL staff.
  9. The specimen **must** be kept refrigerated until shipment (**DO NOT FREEZE**).
    - a. Properly packaged specimen may be kept in ADL refrigerator until shipment.
  10. Disinfect necropsy and sample preparation areas and equipment with a 10% bleach solution.
    - a. Bleach must be used to ensure adequate sanitization.
  11. Coordinate with ADL staff on storage and final packaging of samples as this type of sample is considered a Category B shipment.
  12. MDCH will **NOT** test the sample if the container is received leaking, is not properly labeled, if the test requisition is not completed, or if the specimen label does not match the test requisition.
- B. ADL Staff**
1. Provide veterinary staff with MDCH one gallon bucket & applicable materials or blank forms for packaging animal head when requested.
    - a. Re-order another container to have on hand for future rabies submission to MDCH.
  2. Assist veterinary staff with any questions related to shipping or packaging.
  3. Place the plastic bucket in the corrugated cardboard box along with a cold pack. Use additional packing material, if necessary, to insulate the bucket from shifting when mailed.
  4. Complete and apply the return address and biological substance label to the corrugated shipping carton, do not use any other labels other than those provided by MDCH.
  5. Create an airway bill and schedule a pick up through FedEx per the FedEx Shipping SOP.
    - a. Specimens must be received by MDCH within **48** hours of shipment. Samples being shipped on weekends or holidays must be pre-authorized by MDCH (517-335-9030).
  6. Send results to requesting veterinary staff if received within ADL laboratory.

**V. References**

- A. [www.cdc.gov/rabies](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies)
- B. [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/DCH-0676 Rabies Instructions 74092 7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/DCH-0676_Rabies_Instructions_74092_7.pdf)