

Shipping Hazardous Materials -- Heightened Awareness of FAA Regulations

In the past six months there have been multiple incidents at U of M where principal investigators have shipped materials inappropriately, attracting the attention of inspectors from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Several dry ice packages have been caught during random inspections at Detroit Metro Airport without the required identity of contents, dry ice marking, and the labeling with disclosure of dry ice contents in the package.

Dry ice, or carbon dioxide solid, is regulated as a hazardous material when offered and transported in commerce. Specific procedures are required for handling, packaging and shipping materials refrigerated with dry ice.

The researchers who prepared these packages for shipment were untrained and unaware of the proper methods for preparing these shipments.

In these cases, what could have been a citation and fine structure starting in the \$10,000 range was reduced to a warning, as U of M offers very good awareness level outreach and certification training to the research community upon request.

Any campus employee who intends to ship a hazardous material, including biological specimens with or without dry ice, must be trained on the appropriate methods of preparing packages, labeling, marking, and manifesting.

This includes both those who prepare paperwork for hazardous materials shipments and those who package the hazardous materials for shipment.

The Department of Occupational Safety and Environmental Health (OSEH) offers certification for shipping biological materials and dry ice to departments wishing to ship these materials. For questions and to sign up for training, please call (734) 763-6973 or visit the OSEH website at www.oseh.umich.edu

Additionally, if you are shipping a hazardous material that is a commercially available product, it may be more cost-effective to purchase the material at the location you wish to ship it to. For example, if you are planning field work which requires the use of hazardous chemicals, you may find it easiest to have a vendor ship these chemicals directly to (or near) the location where you will be working. If this is not an option, please contact OSEH (734) 763-6973 for assistance.

