

To Vice-Presidents/Deans, Heads of Schools, HoFAs

From Dr Melanie Taylor

Date 25 January 2008

cc Prof M Case, Dr S A Robson, Dr D Barker, G Rowe
School Biological Safety Advisors, Safety Representatives

Reference Safety Circular 1/2008

Transport of Biological Material in private (and hire) vehicles - UK only

The Safety Office has been asked to provide guidance on this topic. The health & safety legislation is complex but not the only risk factor involved in making decisions about moving a range of biological materials, eg between NHS Trust Hospital and University laboratories, to a specialist analytical facility, etc.

The attached appendix provides information on the health & safety aspects **only** of moving such material. This has been derived from protocols used in respect of moving radioactive material and verbal advice from GM Police. However, schools are reminded that staff using their own vehicles (and hire vehicles) **MUST** check with their own insurers that they are covered for transport of such materials, and also check the detail of the cover provided. Failure to do so might invalidate their own insurance cover and expose them to a charge of driving without insurance.

In addition, they should be aware that insurance is normally for third party damage and/or injury, and will not cover claims arising from a cautious reaction by police to finding suspect materials at the scene of a road traffic accident. Police / security forces response has been known to include closure of motorways / transport networks, and considerable inconvenience to large numbers of people. This brings the risk of harm to the reputation of individuals and their employer. Compliance with the appendix should assist the University to establish that it was not negligent, in the event of any claim for damages arising from such an incident.

By definition, the substances covered by the appendix are low risk from a biological safety point of view. The far greater risks are of compromising insurance cover, possible criminal charges arising from this, damage to the University's reputation, and possibly of claims arising from inconvenience caused to others.

Dr Melanie Taylor
University Safety Advisor

Appendix to Safety Circular 1/2008

From a biological safety risk point of view :

Only samples which are assigned to Biological Substance Category B and/or Class 1 GMOs may be carried in private cars but should not be carried on public transport. If transported in a taxi they must be accompanied. The samples **must be packaged and labelled to P650 standard** and a risk assessment prepared and retained which includes dealing with spillages. For details on classification and packaging go to:

http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/bio_gm/transport_of_dangerous_goods.pdf

All other infectious samples and GMOs must be transported by courier.

Before carrying samples:

- Authorisation must be granted by the Head of School
- A check must be made with the insurers of the vehicle and proof provided to the School that it is covered for carriage of this type of goods. Business cover does not necessarily mean cover for carriage of goods.
- The School must check that the driver's driving licence is valid and this must be carried for the journey.
- A mobile phone must be carried by the driver and contact details left with the School so the driver may be contacted and is able to contact others in the event of an accident.

Documents should be attached to the packaging indicating:

- The location and address from which the samples are being carried and contact details of the consignor who has specific knowledge of the samples and can reassure the emergency services of the risks (which should be very low).
- The destination and address to which the samples are being carried and contact details of the recipient who has specific knowledge of the samples and can reassure the emergency services of the risks
- The proposed route and anticipated time of the journey
- Details of the person in charge of the vehicle and driving licence carried
- Details of the vehicle being used: type, colour and registration

Samples may be transported in dry-ice but the dry ice itself must be packaged appropriately. Samples must not be transported in dewars but may be transported in dry shippers, prepared to avoid leakage, in the boot.

Where possible the vehicle should not be left unattended during transit. If this is unavoidable, the vehicle must be left locked.