Transport of Biological Agents

If moving biological agents from a site/place of work, consideration must be given to the Dangerous Goods Modal Transport Regulations –

Classification

Biological agents which are classed as pathogenic (as defined by ADR - see below) will be assigned to Class 6.2, infectious substance of ADR. Genetically modified microorganisms (GMMs) will generally be assigned to Class 9 if they do not meet the definition of toxic substances or of infectious substances under ADR but are capable of altering animals, plants or microbiological substances in a way not normally the result of natural reproduction.

Note: Class 6.2 of ADR does not refer specifically to biological agents but instead refers to infectious substances. Infectious substances are defined under ADR as substances which are known or are reasonably expected to carry pathogens. Pathogens in turn are defined under ADR as microorganisms (including bacteria, viruses, rickettsiae, parasites, fungi) and other agents such as prions, which can cause disease in humans or animals. It should be noted that ADR is broader in scope than the Biological Agents Regulations as it covers microorganisms which cause disease in animals also.

Class 6.2

Substances of class 6.2 are subdivided as follows:

1. Infectious substances affecting humans;
2. Infectious substances affecting animals only;
3. Clinical waste;
4. Biological substances.

More information regarding transport of biological agents can be found on the HSA website https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/biological_agents/biological_agents_introduction/transporting_biological_agents/

Infectious substances that fall into Class 6.2 are divided into 2 categories (category A and B) and should be assigned as appropriate to United Nations (UN) numbers 2814, 2900, 3291 or 3373 (UN numbers are four-digit numbers that identify hazardous materials and articles, these numbers assist people involved in the transport chain - for example, in the event of a road traffic collision fire fighters will know what was being transported).

Category A: An infectious substance which is carried in a form that, when exposure to it occurs (when it is released outside of the protective packaging, resulting in physical contact with humans or animals), is capable of causing permanent disability, life-threatening or fatal disease in otherwise healthy humans or animals. An indicative list of infectious substances is provided in the ADR.

Category B: An infectious substance which does not meet the criteria for inclusion in category A and such substances are assigned to UN No. 3373.
For assistance in classification, please contact Trinity College Dublin DGSA personnel in HMF (MSWEENE9@tcd.ie)

Packaging and Labelling

Infectious substances in Category B are assigned to UN 3373, proper shipping name “BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE, CATEGORY B”, and must be packaged for carriage by road in accordance with ADR Packing Instruction P650.

The packaging shall consist of;

- Primary receptacle
- Secondary packaging
- Outer packaging

Further guidance documents are available from HSA and HSE

Transport of Biological agents (UN3373) by air.

For international shipping of dangerous goods the IATA regulations apply. If you are shipping UN3373 or UN1845 Dry Ice you must complete the online course outlining the requirements and trainees will be issued with the relevant IATA certificate. Please ensure DHL have been notified about certification when authorising an account for these specific dangerous goods.

For advice in shipping UN3373 and/or UN1845, please contact Trinity College Dublin IATA personnel in HMF (MSWEENE9@tcd.ie)

Training Courses

The University Safety office arrange training covering transport of biological agents on the following course;

- The University Biological Workshop (Held in May and October each year)
- Transport of dangerous goods by air (Held in February each year)

Please visit the University Safety Office training page to register for these courses;