



REVISED NATIONAL TB CONTROL PROGRAMME

Health and Safety Guidelines for Staff/ Workers involved in Sputum Transportation

CENTRAL TB DIVISION

MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOI

Health and Safety Guidelines for Staff/ Workers involved in Sputum Transportation

This document describes the guidelines for transportation of all samples potentially containing bacteria that causes tuberculosis (TB).

Sputum samples have been transported across the country for several years by courier, post or human carrier. There are no recorded cases of illness due to the release/ leakage of bacteria from samples during transport, although there are reported incidents of damage to the outer packaging.

The sputum specimen is packaged in triple layers in such a manner that it arrives at the destination in good condition and presents no hazard to the transporter.

The triple layer packaging contains the following:

1. Primary container- A watertight, leak-proof, unbreakable tube containing the specimen. The tube is packaged with enough absorbent material to absorb all fluid in case of breakage or leakage.



2. Secondary packaging- A watertight, leak-proof packaging to enclose and protect the primary container. Several primary containers may be placed in one secondary packaging.



3. Outer packaging- Secondary packaging is placed in rigid outer packaging to protect the contents from physical damage during transport. Gel packs to maintain temperature along with suitable absorbent/ cushioning material is also placed inside.



The transporter must ensure the following:

1. The outer packaging is not damaged and is properly sealed.
2. Biohazard label is pasted on the outer packaging
3. "From" and "To" addresses are clearly labeled.
4. Contact details (name, phone no.) of receiver is pasted
5. Upright symbol (↑) is pasted appropriately.
6. Transport at the earliest (to reach the destination within 72 hours)

Transporter/personnel transporting the sample will be sensitized by the RNTCP (DTO/CDST/IRL) prior to engagement. Sensitization would be provided on the following:

- Symptoms of TB disease and its transmission.
- Precautions to be taken to prevent exposure.
- Hand hygiene requirements.
- Spill management.

Steps to be taken in the case accidental damage / spillage:

1. Do not accept if the outer packaging is found wet, soiled or broken.
2. In case of damage /leakage during transport, the transporter must inform sender/ receiver whoever is nearer.
3. In the event of exposure to any infectious substance, wash hands and affected part with soap and water.
4. In an unlikely event of spillage, do not leave the damaged/broken container unattended. Cover it with cloth/paper and immediately inform the nearest RNTCP laboratory for assistance and management.
5. Seek medical advice from Medical Officer (RNTCP)/ District TB Officer (DTO).

Reference:

1. Guidance on regulations for the Transport of Infectious Substances 2017–2018, WHO/WHE/CPI/2017.8.