



UW Veterinary Care
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
UW Veterinary Medical Center

Surgical Biopsy Submission Guidelines

University of Wisconsin Veterinary Care – Anatomic Pathology Service

Thank you for choosing UW Veterinary Care for your biopsy submission. Following these guidelines will help ensure timely processing and accurate interpretation of your case.

1. Complete the Surgical Biopsy Submission Form

Please download, print, and complete the Surgical Biopsy Submission Form <https://uwveterinarycare.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Surgical-path-submission-form-template-Rev2.pdf>

Required Information

- Complete all fields on the submission form:
- Include the referring veterinarian's email address: Pathology report(s) will be sent to this email address.
- Patient name, age, sex and date of birth
- Date and time of sample collection
- Anatomic location of lesion/sample
- Sufficient clinical history, including: Presenting complaint, clinical findings, relevant treatments, differential diagnoses, pertinent laboratory findings

Supporting Documentation

Include printed copies of any relevant materials, such as:

- Laboratory results
- Clinical photographs
- Previous biopsy or pathology reports
- Imaging reports
- Other pertinent medical records

2. Specimen Fixation

Formalin Requirements

Submit tissues in **10% neutral buffered formalin** whenever possible.

For optimal fixation:

- Use a formalin-to-tissue volume ratio of at least **10:1**.
- Ensure tissue is completely submerged in formalin.
- Avoid overcrowding specimens in containers.

****Special Considerations for Large Samples (Livers, spleens)**

Large, dense organs may not fix adequately if submitted intact.

For optimal preservation:

- ◆ Make several deep cuts into the parenchyma to improve formalin penetration. Ensure cuts extend well into the tissue but do not completely section the organ
- ◆ Allow at least 24–48 hours of fixation before shipment.

Failure to adequately section and fix large specimens may result in incomplete fixation and autolysis, which can compromise histologic evaluation.

Amputated Limbs

Amputated limbs may be submitted fresh (unfixed).

- Double-bag the specimen in leak-proof biohazard bags.
- Keep the specimen refrigerated and ship with cold packs.
- Do not freeze the specimen.
- Ship as soon as possible after collection.

Slides

Do not ship formalin-fixed tissues and cytology or hematology slides in the same container. Slides should be packaged separately to prevent damage and formalin exposure.

3. Shipping Formalin-Fixed Specimens

Acceptable Containers

- Use a wide-mouth, leak-proof plastic container large enough to hold the specimen and an adequate volume of formalin.
- For large specimens, use a sturdy screw-top polypropylene specimen container with a gasketed, leak-proof lid.

Container Sealing

Seal the primary specimen container securely prior to shipment. Acceptable methods include:

- ✓ Waterproof tape
- ✓ Parafilm
- ✓ Duct tape

Double Containment Requirements

All formalin-fixed specimens must be shipped using double containment:

1. Seal the primary specimen container securely.
2. Place the container inside a secondary leak-proof plastic bag.
3. Include sufficient absorbent material (e.g., puppy pads or absorbent packing material) to contain any potential leakage.
4. Place the bagged specimen in a rigid outer shipping box.

Unacceptable Containers

Please do **not** use:

- Food storage containers (e.g., Tupperware®)
- Snap-lid containers
- Glass jars
- Any container that is not completely leak-proof

Specimens received in leaking or improperly sealed containers may be rejected due to safety concerns.

4. Documentation

Include the completed Surgical Biopsy Submission Form and any supporting documentation in a separate plastic sleeve or sealed plastic bag to protect paperwork from moisture during transit.

5. Labeling Requirements

Clearly label each specimen container with:

- Patient name
- Specimen/site identification
- Collection date
- Submitting veterinarian's name/Clinic's name

6. Shipping Recommendations

To minimize transit delays and avoid weekend holds, we recommend shipping specimens **Monday through Thursday** whenever possible.

Shipping Address

Attn: Cecilia Escobar / Anatomic Pathology – Room 1437
University of Wisconsin–Madison
School of Veterinary Medicine
2015 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706
Phone: 608-263-7600

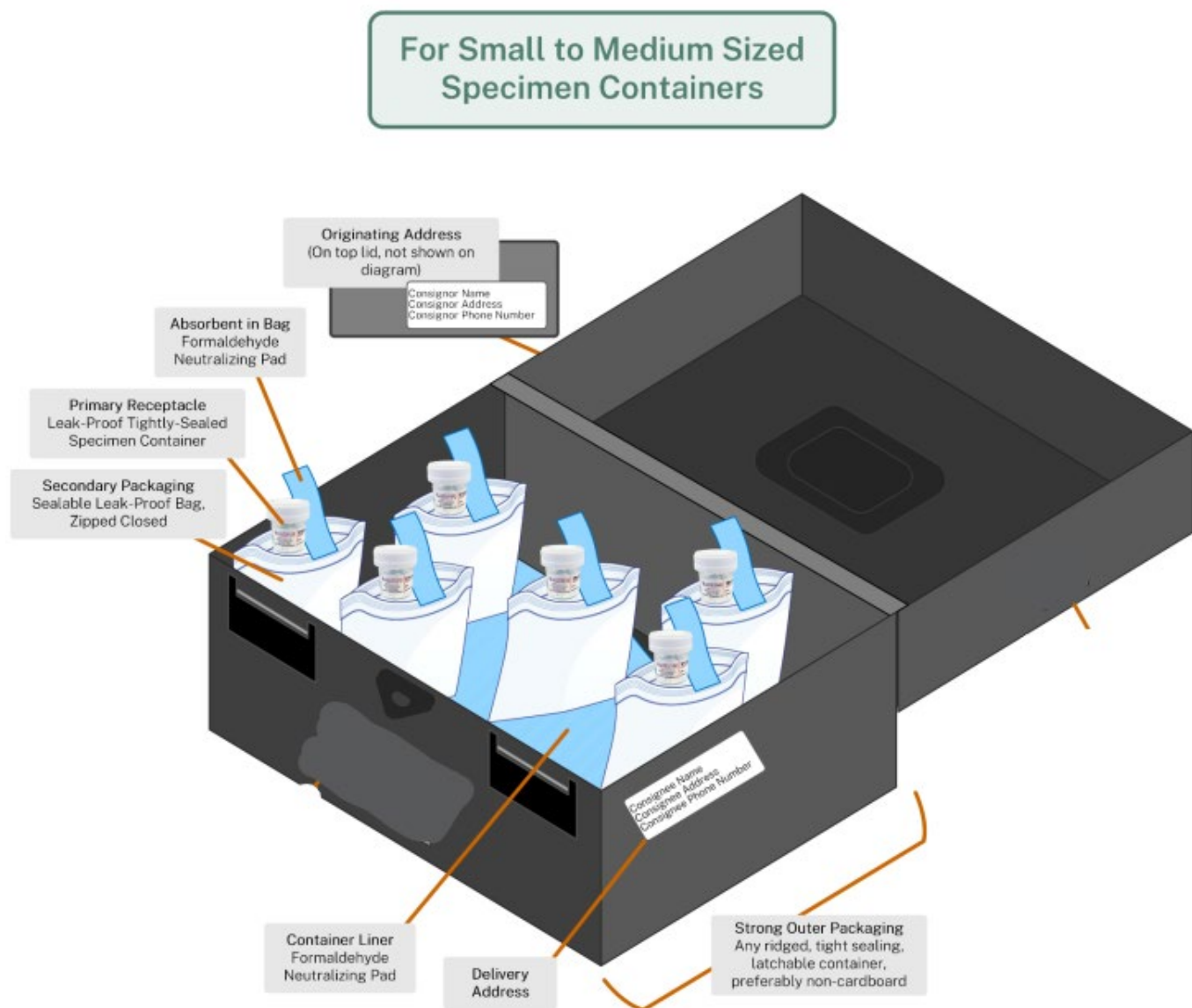
If you have questions regarding specimen collection, fixation, packaging, or shipment, please contact the UW Veterinary Care Anatomic Pathology Service at uwcs-path-inquiry@vetmed.wisc.edu before submitting your specimen:

UW Veterinary Care Anatomic Pathology Faculty:

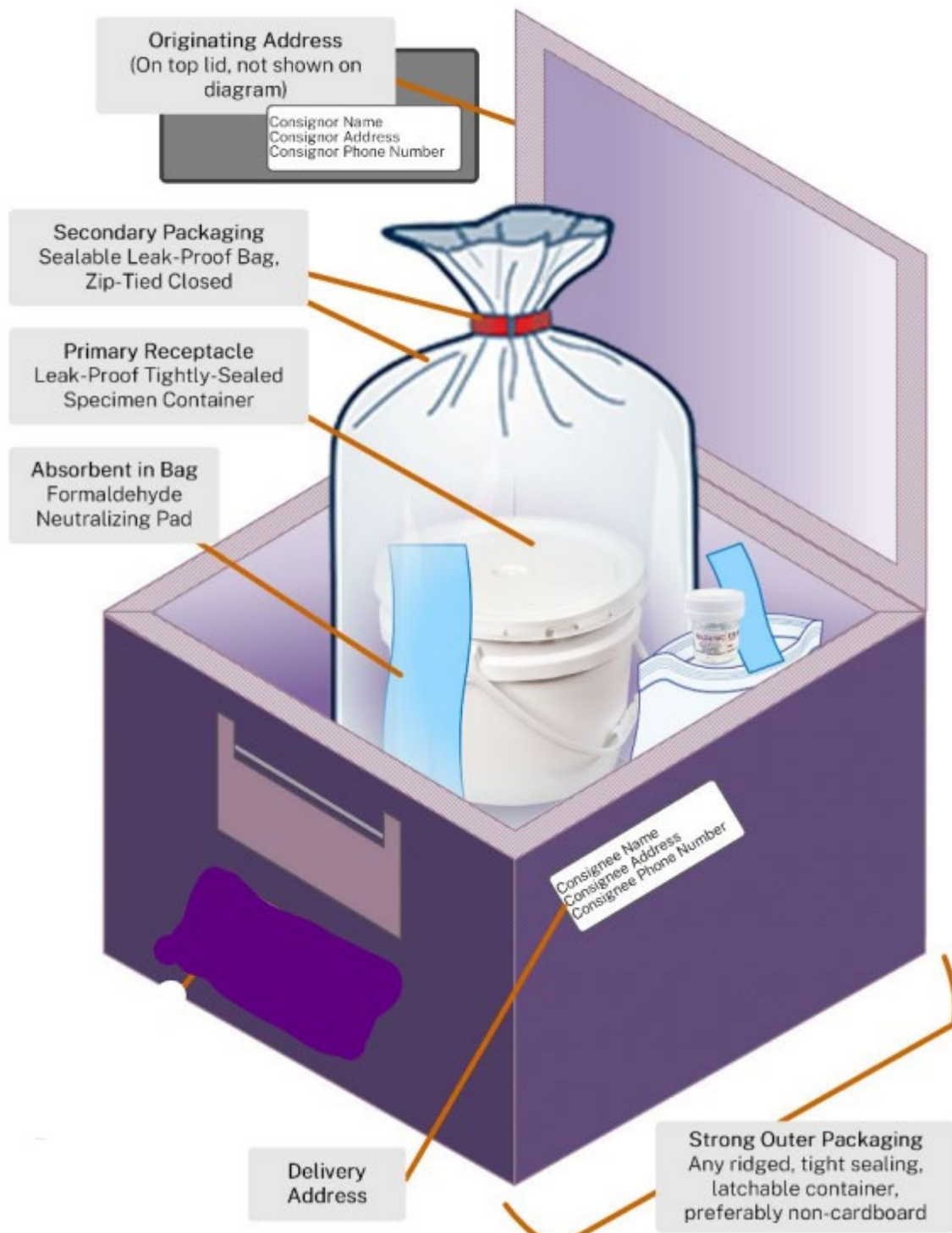
- David Gasper, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVP
- Lorelei Clarke, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVP
- Jennifer Hu, DVM, Dipl. ACVP
- Kimberly Sebastian, BVSc MS BSc (Hons.) Dipl. ACVP
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Diagrams

Shipping Formalin Containers



For Medium to Large Sized Specimen Containers



Updated 6-22-26