

Section 12

Shipment of Radioactive Materials

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A. Shipping Regulations

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) issue domestic regulations for the safe transportation of radioactive materials. These regulations are adopted from those issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) also has regulations for shipment of hazardous materials, radioactive materials, or biohazards as air cargo.

B. Shipment

All shipments of radioactive materials will be performed by or with the direct oversight of the Radiation Safety Office (RSO). Notify the RSO prior to any shipment of radioactive materials, either on or off campus. This is to ensure that shipments are being made in accordance with all applicable transportation regulations.

Occasionally the RSO will instruct a laboratory in the proper procedures for “empty,” “limited quantity,” or “instruments and articles” shipments of radioactive materials, which are made on a regular basis and are similar in nature.

1. Legal Authorization

Before shipment of radioactive materials, the University of Washington must have written documentation that recipients have legal authorization to have this radioactive material and this activity in their possession.

2. Packaging

Radioactive materials must be shipped in properly authorized containers and be checked for contamination prior to shipment.

3. Shipping Documents

All commercial shipments of radioactive materials must be accompanied by proper shipping documents. Intra-campus shipments may have UW generated documentation.

4. Fines

Improper shipment of radioactive materials can lead to severe fines against individuals and organizations.

C. Portable Devices Containing Sealed Sources

The Radiation Safety Office must be informed prior to the transportation of portable devices away from campus locations. This allows the Radiation Safety Office to notify the State of Washington Department of Health and request use of these devices at locations where the UW Radioactive Materials License does not apply. This notification must include the location to which the device will be moved and the duration of time it will remain at that location.

Portable devices are numbered and listed in the RSO computer database sealed source inventory. All portable devices must be in secured locations and are subject to periodic testing and inventory (see Section 15 - Sealed Sources).

D. Transport within the University System

Regulations cover the commercial shipment and transport of radioactive materials and do not strictly relate to transport within the University system, where commerce is not involved. However, in order to protect the university community, the Radiation Safety Office continues to follow guidelines and regulations to the extent deemed appropriate for any campus transfer of radioactive materials.

1. Hand Carried Transport

When transporting radionuclides between rooms or buildings on campus,

precautions must be taken to minimize the risk of accidents and the risk of exposing the public to radiation. Examples of precautions would be secondary containers to avoid breakage of the primary container and absorbent material to retain the radioactive materials in case of breakage. The container must also be labeled radioactive, indicating radionuclide and activity, and should provide adequate shielding.

2. Vehicular Transport

According to UW policy, radioactive materials must never be transported by public conveyance or via the campus shuttle. In special approved situations, private or University owned vehicles may be used for the transport of radioactive materials. Contact the RSO for help in safe campus transport of radioactive materials by vehicle.