Shipping & Transporting Research Materials Overview

All shipments of hazardous materials or dangerous goods are regulated by the U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Harvard personnel, who package, label, ship, prepare shipping documents, or offer packages of hazardous materials to carriers for shipment are required to receive and complete appropriate training and comply with all federal, international and local regulations.

Within the United States:

The Department of Transportation (DOT) regulates all activities involved with the shipment and transport of hazardous materials (e.g. chemicals, gases, etc.). The Hazardous Materials Regulations apply to each person who performs functions related to the transportation of hazardous materials. The Department of Transportation (DOT) oversees the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR 49 CFR Parts 171-180) that regulate all activities involved with the shipment and transport of hazardous materials (e.g. chemicals, gases, etc.). This includes shipping hazardous materials interstate, intrastate, through commerce by rail car, aircraft, motor vehicle and vessel. These comprehensive regulations govern transportation-related activities by offerors (e.g., shippers, shipping/receiving departments, brokers, forwarding agents, freight forwarders,); carriers (i.e., common, contract, and private trucking and other transport companies). In most cases Harvard acts as an offeror of hazardous materials.

Outside of the United States:

Air shipment is regulated by the International Airline Transportation Association (IATA). Shipments of hazardous materials by Fed Ex are governed by the IATA regulations, even though the shipment is not an international shipment. Please note if using Fed Ex to transport dangerous goods by air, then IATA requirements are used for both domestic and international shipments. IATA is not a regulatory agency, but instead a trade organization. IATA tends to be more restrictive than DOT regulations.

Training:

DOT and IATA require that any person involved in the shipment of dangerous goods receive periodic function specific training (at 2 year intervals for IATA, every 3 years for DOT). For more details on training requirements, please contact EHS for training at lab_safety@harvard.edu