

How to Mail Samples to External Lab Partners - Updated Jan. 2024

This document is meant to serve as a guide for sending samples through the mail to our partner laboratories. Please note that some of the directions and guidelines are new.

It is best to **batch** samples together when mailing for a number of reasons (i.e. fewer trips to the post office, less parcels for the lab to open, etc.). Store all samples collected within an allotted time span in a locking bag (once a week is recommended but dependent on volume). Find a recurring time to mail once enough samples have been collected. Find a system/timeline that works best for you and your organization!

Individual envelopes containing samples of interest or priority are still able to be mailed off to the lab alone/as an individual envelope with proper stampage.

Please be sure there is only one sample / sample bag in one mylar bag per envelope.

If you are going to send more than one inflexible item (cooker, pipe, container), use a padded envelope or box. If you are mailing more than 5 cookers or other containers, use a box. If a box has a lot of empty space, add bubble wrap to prevent the envelopes/samples from bashing against the sides of the box (particularly for pipe/glass samples). See the table below for more information.

Make sure each sample sent to the lab is labeled with a Sample Identifier (Sample ID) AND a Lab Code. **If you are not sending the sample ID bag to the lab please write the sample ID on the mylar bag.**

General Mailing Best Practices

DO's:

- Add samples in their sample ID bag directly into the lab coded mylar bag
 - No need to remove the sample from the sample bag - just insert the sample ID bag into the lab coded mylar bag
- If batching, you do not need to squish/compress the cooker
 - The cooker still needs to fit into the mylar bag so please ensure it is packaged properly
- When sending samples in a box/padded envelope, you can put multiple closed envelopes in the package. No need to add stamps to envelopes that are being batched.
- If sending a sample off for quantification, add the sample to a microcentrifuge tube or a Brandeis branded wax fold glassine bag before adding to the sample bag

DON'Ts:

- Do not leave the sample outside of the mylar bag - critical for safety
 - We do not want sample bags destroyed by USPS - the mylar bag protects the sample and the folks handling the envelope
- Do not send multiple samples within one envelope or multiple samples in one mylar bag
 - One sample per sample bag, in one lab coded mylar bag, in one envelope.
- Do not forget to close/seal the envelope even if batching samples into a box/padded envelope
- Do not send TOO much sample to the lab. The lab only needs a small amount of sample, never more than 50 mg.
 - Special case for pills - send the entire pill/all contents of the crushed pill to the lab

How to Mail Samples to External Lab Partners - Updated Jan. 2024

Form or packaging of the sample	Mail Packaging	Mailing Directions	Notes
Baggie	White Envelope (not padded)	One stamp is sufficient. Can mail in blue box or at post office	Procedure for priority sample. If not a priority sample, batch into a box/padded envelope.
Container (Plastic Medicinal Vial, small metal container, etc.)	Padded Envelope	Place all samples in their envelopes from that day in the padded envelope. Seal, address, bring to post office and mail at service desk.	It is best to add multiple items to a padded envelope! If heavier, shift to a box.
1 Cooker	Envelope with cooker wrapped in bubble wrap	Seal and bring to the post office to get weighed and mailed.	Not a recommended procedure unless a priority sample. Please batch and add to a padded envelope or box.
More than 1 cooker	Padded Envelope or Box	Place all other samples from that day in the padded envelope. Seal, address, bring to post office and mail at service desk.	It is best to add multiple items to the padded envelope! Typically do not send more than 5 items in a padded envelope. If items are heavier or if you have multiple cookers (≥ 5), use a box.
Pipe	Box or Padded Envelope	Place all other samples from that day in the box. Seal with packing tape, address, bring to post office and mail at service desk.	It is best to add multiple items to the box! Please add bubble wrap to the empty space in the box to prevent broken glass arriving at the lab.

If you have any questions on proper mailing procedures or if you need any supplies such as boxes, padded envelopes, bubble wrap, etc. please contact Jamie/Abby:

jamedavis@brandeis.edu

abbyedelmann@brandeis.edu