

SHIPPING Fish/Shellfish SAMPLES TO THE ADFG FISH PATHOLOGY LABORATORIES

Contact the lab – consultation is a key requirement! Consultation determines available scheduling for receiving samples, what kind of samples to send and the need for sending any samples since many common diseases and parasites can be diagnosed from emailed photos. Also, limited staffing strictly limits expended processing efforts such that samples received may not be examined if: sent without prior consultation; are decomposed or are otherwise poor quality; or lack the required sample submission form and information as indicated below.

Procedures:

Live fish are preferred for diagnostic samples. Sample several (about 6) **moribund** (or with clinical signs) fish and place them in one or more large leak-proof plastic bags containing hatchery or rearing water. Seal the bags so **space** for air remains and leakage will not occur. Label bags with fish status (moribund or healthy) and incubator or raceway number. If oxygen is available, add to bags before sealing. Alternatively, an oxygen tablet can be added to each bag. If the fish are large fingerlings or smolts, the number of fish per bag should be adjusted accordingly.

If no live clinical diseased/moribund fish are available, enclose 6-10 freshly dead fish with a damp paper towel in a smaller dry plastic bag. Do not add water. This can also be done in addition to moribund fish, so if live fish do not survive transport, then the "dry" fish, that have undergone less deterioration and contamination from the water and its bacterial flora, will be processed instead.

If only sending tissue samples, please keep chilled, not frozen (and label package as such). Keeping tissues moist can be accomplished by placing it in a Ziplock bag, but wet paper towels can be included if the sample is small. Also, please be sure to place insulating material between the sample and the gel ice packs to prevent freezing.

Sample Shipment Instructions:

1. Pack samples in a small ice chest made of plastic or sturdy Styrofoam, which will not be damaged in transit. Ice chests (other than Styrofoam) will be returned to the sender. Add pre-packaged ice substitutes. To prevent freezing, separate the samples from the ice with newspaper or other insulative material. **Place completed Sample Submission Form(s)** for each stock sampled within a waterproof plastic bag and enclose in ice chest.
2. Close, seal, and label the ice chest with appropriate instruction for the type of sample enclosed (e.g., "Live Fish – **Do Not Freeze**" for live samples, "**Refrigerate but do not freeze**" for virology . . .) Label with mailing address, laboratory telephone number and the name of the person contacted in the lab. The shipping addresses for the fish pathology laboratories are:

Anchorage Fish Pathology Lab ADF&G, CFMD Division 333 Raspberry Road Anchorage, AK 99518-1599 907-267-2244 Attention: Dr. Jayde Ferguson	Juneau Fish Pathology Lab ADF&G, CFMD Division 3333 Old Glacier Highway Juneau, AK 99801 907-465-3577 Attention: Dr. Ted Meyers
---	--
3. Ship via express air (Gold Streak) or air freight (only if you know it will not get bumped off the flight) as soon as possible. Instruct the airline to refrigerate the sample upon its arrival in Anchorage or Juneau. If sent early in the week, fewer air freight and delivery problems are encountered. Avoid shipping on Fridays. Provide the lab phone number externally on the shipping container so that the airlines may notify pathology staff to pick-up the package. Arrival information is necessary to pick up samples including the airline, air waybill number and arrival time. Be certain the lab contact number is on the outside of cooler: **Fish Pathology Section in Anchorage (267-2244); Juneau (465-3577).**

Guidelines for post-mortem time interval:

Dead fish or tissue samples should be kept cool and arrive at the lab within 72h of sampling. Decomposed samples are not acceptable.