

To (in bcc:): National IHR Focal Point Offices (NFPO) and, through the NFPO, to national competent authorities in charge of preparedness and response to Ebola virus disease

To (in bcc:): National Public Health Laboratories, or equivalent, in charge of the international shipment of samples for Ebola virus disease diagnosis

Cc (in bcc:): PAHO/WHO CHA Focal Points

28 August 2014

Dear Colleagues,

This is to inform you about the procedures for submitting samples for testing for Ebola virus infection to the **WHO Collaborating Centre (WHO CC)** for Zoonotic Diseases and Special Pathogens, National Microbiology Laboratory (NML), Infectious Disease and Emergency Preparedness Branch, **Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.**

Please note that these procedures are the result of consultation between PAHO/WHO and the WHO CC at PHAC to provide international assistance in relation to the current Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in West Africa.

- Should a patient with a clinically and epidemiologically compatible illness with Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) be detected, the WHO IHR Regional Contact Point at PAHO/WHO (Email (24/7): ihr@paho.org, Tel. (24/7): +1 202 368 8929) should immediately be informed through the National IHR Focal Point (NFP).
- While informing the WHO CC, PAHO/WHO will also provide national authorities with the following documents in order to proceed with the shipment:
 - Import Permits for Canada - one from the Public Health Agency of Canada and one from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. These will already be completed with all necessary information and a copy of each of those should accompany the shipment;
 - Shipper's Declaration that can also be downloaded from: <http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/cargo/dgr/Documents/Shippers-Declaration-Column-Format-Fillable.pdf>. An example of the completed Shipper's Declaration is enclosed (1. Shippers Declaration). The original of the Shipper's Declaration should accompany the shipment.



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- In addition to the Import Permits for Canada and the Shipper's Declaration, each sample should be accompanied by the clinical and epidemiological basic information of the patient, together with information about the sample. An example of the form to submit such information is attached (2. PHAC Sample submission form).
- Please be aware that the courier or airlines utilized to ship the sample/s should provide and include in the shipment the Air Waybill (an example is attached: 3. Air Waybill).
- As indicated in the Shipper's Declaration, the package should be addressed to:

Dr. Gary Kobinger
National Microbiology Laboratory
1015 Arlington Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3E 3P6
Tel. +1 204 784 5923

- Samples must be sent as a "Suspect Category A infectious substance" under regulations of UN2814 6.2, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) standards and packed by personnel with international IATA certification for shipping and handling. As part of the preparedness process, IATA certified personnel should be identified and easily accessible to authorities responsible for the shipment.
- Once the shipment is under way, the WHO IHR Regional Contact Point at PAHO/WHO (Email (24/7): ihr@paho.org, Tel. (24/7): +1 202 368 8929) should be informed by competent national authorities accordingly, so that close follow-up with the WHO CC at PHAC can be ensured. At this stage, national authorities will be asked by PAHO/WHO to indicate whether the results of the laboratory tests for EVD diagnosis performed by the WHO CC at PHAC could also be shared with PAHO/WHO, so that the PAHO/WHO can inform the WHO CC at PHAC accordingly.
- The international transportation of samples should be done by IATA certified carriers. This requires preparations in advance.
 - Arrangements between national authorities and any IATA certified carriers / airlines are acceptable. Information about the selected carrier should be provided prior to the shipment to PAHO/WHO;
 - Within the framework of the existing agreement between WHO and World Courier, enclosed is the list of countries and territories where World Courier is operating, specifying the local capacities of the representatives (4. AMRO_World Courier_Shipping capacity). Within that framework, PAHO/WHO would directly cover the cost of the shipment. To be optimally prepared, authorities who wish to use World Courier as carrier should establish the necessary contacts with the local World Courier representative. Prior to the shipment, national authorities should indicate to PAHO/WHO that World Courier will be used. This information is critical for PAHO/WHO to activate the payment of the shipment.



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- In countries and territories where World Courier is not operating, taking into account the enclosed Electronic Bulletin by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), dated 21 August 2014 (5. ICAO_EB 2014/57), health and Civil Aviation Authorities should approach airlines operating in their jurisdiction to ensure that samples can be shipped.
- In case national authorities, following exhaustive explorations of local options for the shipment, determine that by no means the international shipment would be possible should inform Dr Jairo Mendez (Email: ricoj@paho.org; Tel.: +1 202 974 3070).
- Please note that, in case national authorities wish to test the shipment mechanisms, PAHO/WHO should be informed in advance so that the necessary documentation is generated by the WHO CC at PHAC.

Should there be the need to substantially modify these procedures, changes will be communicated immediately through these same channels.

For any doubt or question regarding the international shipment, please do not hesitate to contact:

- Dr Jairo Mendez (Email: ricoj@paho.org, Tel.: +1 202 974 3070)
- Dr Roberta Andraghetti (Email: andragro@paho.org, Tel.: +1 202 974 3129).

Kindest regards

Jairo Mendez and Roberta Andraghetti

Enclosures: Five (5)