207 315-2567 x310 | services@bigelow.org | bigelow.org
60 Bigelow Drive | East Boothbay, Maine 04544

Shipping Samples to Bigelow Laboratory

General guidance for in-person, domestic, and international sample delivery

Contact Bigelow Laboratory before sending samples
Before shipping, confirm the receiving contact, required sample condition, expected arrival date, analysis-specific requirements, and approval of the completed sample intake form. ***Do not*** ship until your Bigelow contact confirms that the laboratory is ready to receive the samples. Send the tracking number and shipment details once the package has been dispatched.

Bigelow Shipping Address:

Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
c/o *[include name of Bigelow contact here]*
60 Bigelow Drive
East Boothbay, ME 04544-3800
United States (*if shipping international*)
Phone number: (+1) 207-315-2567

Plan your shipment

- **Ship early in the week.** Monday shipment is recommended so samples are less likely to remain in a warehouse over a weekend.
- **Avoid holiday weeks whenever possible.** Reduced courier and laboratory schedules increase the chance of delays and sample loss.
- **Use the fastest practical tracked service** and send the tracking number and sample inventory to your Bigelow contact as soon as the package is dispatched. Bigelow is in a remote location, and transit may take longer than expected. Plan for delays during severe weather, holiday periods, customs processing, or other carrier disruptions.
- **Allow extra refrigerant** and packaging capacity for any unexpected delays.

Choose the appropriate delivery condition

Frozen samples

- Ship in an insulated container with sufficient dry ice or other approved refrigerant for the expected transit time plus a delay allowance.
- Some frozen samples may be shipped without dry ice. Confirm the required shipping condition with your Bigelow analyst.
- Use leakproof primary containers and sealed, watertight secondary packaging, such as heavy-duty resealable freezer bags.
- Confirm dry ice labeling and documentation requirements with the courier if using dry-ice.

Room-temperature or Dried samples

- Use secure primary and secondary packaging that protects samples from leakage, breakage, heat, and moisture.
- Do not assume room temperature means temperature-insensitive; discuss seasonal heat or cold exposure with Bigelow.
- For dried samples confirm that samples are fully dried before packaging.
- Use moisture-resistant containers.
- Protect filters, powders, and fragile materials from crushing and cross-contamination.

Refrigerated Samples

- Use an insulated container with adequate cold packs to maintain the required temperature.
- Prevent direct contact between samples and cold packs when freezing would damage the sample.
- Include absorbent material where leakage is possible.

Regulated or hazardous samples

- Contact the Bigelow analyst before shipping regulated or hazardous samples.
- A transfer permit must be obtained for any organisms transferred to Bigelow from within Maine. Please contact the Maine DMR at DMR.Pathology@maine.gov for additional guidance
- Shipping of Biosafety Level (BSL) materials requires compliance with U.S. Department of Transportation and International Air Transport Association regulations.
- Declare all preservatives and hazardous materials in advance, including the chemical name, concentration, and quantity.
- Include required documentation and identify hazards on the sample inventory and shipping documents.
- The client is responsible for meeting all courier and regulatory requirements for classification, packaging, labeling, and documentation.
- **Do not ship undeclared or unknown materials.**

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Carrier guidance

FedEx is Bigelow's preferred carrier because it has generally provided the most consistent service. However, delays can occur with any shipping company.

DHL shipments often take two to three days longer than the delivery time shown in the shipping documentation. This additional time should be considered when selecting refrigerant, packaging samples, and assessing whether sample quality can be maintained.

Client responsibility for sample condition

The quality and condition of samples when they arrive at Bigelow are the responsibility of the client. Bigelow cannot guarantee analytical quality for samples that arrive thawed, warm, damaged, leaking, improperly preserved, mislabeled, or otherwise outside the agreed acceptance conditions. Bigelow Laboratory is not responsible for any late deliveries due to operational failure, weather or lab closure.

Delivery Options and Documentation

Use the section that applies to your shipment

In-person delivery

- Arrange a delivery time with your Bigelow contact before traveling to the laboratory.
- Bring a printed sample inventory that includes sample IDs, requested analyses, preservation, and any handling notes OR confirm receipt of electronic versions before delivery.
- Transport samples under the required temperature and light conditions until they are transferred to Bigelow staff.
- **Do not** leave samples unattended or outside the facility.

Domestic shipping within the United States

- Confirm the complete receiving address and the name and telephone number of the Bigelow contact.
- Email the final sample inventory to your Bigelow contact and place a printed copy inside the package in a sealed plastic sleeve.
- Clearly identify the Bigelow receiving contact on the outside shipping label.
- Clearly mark temperature-sensitive, fragile, dry-ice, or regulated shipments as required by the courier.
- Email the courier, tracking number, shipping date, and expected arrival date to Bigelow contact.

International shipping

- The client is responsible for working with the courier and the client's institutional export or customs office to determine required permits, classifications, declarations, and documentation.
- The client is responsible for shipping, customs, duties, brokerage, permit, and return-shipping costs unless otherwise stated in the quotation.
- Prepare an accurate commercial or pro forma invoice that identifies the contents, number of samples, country of origin, declared value, and purpose of shipment.
- A commonly useful description is: "Environmental research samples for laboratory analysis. No commercial value. Not for human or animal consumption." ***This wording must only be used when it accurately describes the shipment and is accepted by the courier and customs authority.***
- Provide the Bigelow receiving contact and project or quotation reference on the documentation.
- Allow for customs delays and ensure the packaging can maintain sample quality beyond the courier's estimated transit time.
- Contact Bigelow immediately if the shipment is held by customs or the expected arrival date changes.

Return of materials and remaining samples

Packaging materials, coolers, and remaining samples will not be returned unless arrangements are made in advance and in writing. Return shipping costs are the responsibility of the client.

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When samples arrive

Bigelow Analytical Service providers will document the apparent condition of the shipment at receipt. The laboratory may contact the client before analysis if samples are damaged, delayed, thawed, warm, leaking, mislabeled, inconsistent with the inventory, or outside the agreed acceptance criteria. Analysis may be delayed or declined when sample integrity or safety is uncertain.

Minimum information to include with every delivery

Shipment information	Sample information
Client institution and contact	Unique sample ID
Bigelow contact and quotation/project reference	Sample type or matrix
Courier and tracking number	Requested analysis
Shipping date and expected arrival	Collection date and location
Number of containers	Preservation and storage condition
Known hazards or special handling	Filtered volume, mass, or other required metadata