

Transport of suspect Emergency Plant Pests

Document revision history

Version	Date issued	Amendment Details	
		Section(s)	Details
1.0	5 Dec 2013	All	Reformatted from Appendix 3 of PLANTPLAN (V1 Nov 2011). Original document separated into two SOPs. Internal references to Appendices in PLANTPLAN removed.
2.0	17 Dec 2014	All	Guideline developed from <i>Collection and transport of Emergency Plant Pests</i> SOP (V1 Dec 2013) by the Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostic Standards (SPHDS). Original SOP separated into two guideline documents. Approved by SPHDS October 2014. Endorsed by Parties November 2014.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist diagnosticians and field officers to safely transport suspect Emergency Plant Pest (EPP) material to the diagnostic laboratory.

2. Critical issues

Transport of infested/diseased material to the diagnostic laboratory presents a potential risk of escape of exotic pests to the environment and deterioration of the sample. Critical issues include:

- The sample is appropriately contained, packaged and labelled (refer to *Collection of suspect Emergency Plant Pests* guidelines).
- The sample is transported in a way that will minimise the risk of escape of the pest during transit.
- The sample needs to arrive at the destination in the best possible condition to enable effective diagnosis.
- The transport meets any legislative requirements.
- Chain of evidence is followed at all times (refer to *Chain of evidence* standard operating procedure; SOP).

- Hygiene and disinfection protocols are followed (refer to *Disinfection and decontamination* guidelines).

3. Transport criteria

If necessary, consult with the receiving laboratory to ensure the most appropriate transport method is used for the sample.

3.1 General

- The Chief Plant Health Manager (CPHM) will select the preferred laboratory for sample diagnosis.
- The quarantine officer or CPHM will confirm with the manager of the diagnostic laboratory that they are prepared to accept the sample(s), and if required organise any permits to comply with jurisdictional biosecurity legislation.
- For submission to an overseas laboratory, the Lead Agency CPHM:
 - will notify the Department of Agriculture of the intended movement of a suspect EPP and obtain movement permits for transfer to the port and for export to the receiving country;
 - will confirm international courier arrangements and any special quarantine requirements of the importing country.

3.2 Notification

- Notify the receiving laboratory when intending to submit a sample of an EPP and advise whether it will be preserved or a live/viable sample.
- This should be done prior to packaging to ensure there are no additional precautions that should be taken and that staff will be available to take receipt of the consignment on its arrival.
- The diagnostician should be informed of any additional precautions that may be required on arrival, e.g. open the consignment in appropriate containment facilities.
- If samples are being sent interstate or by an overnight commercial courier or Australia Post (only Express Parcel Service is acceptable because this is traceable), advise the receiving laboratory of the tracking number.
- Request the receiving laboratory to confirm sample receipt.

3.3 Packaging

Quarantinable material being sent for analysis must be triple packaged using the appropriate packaging (refer to *Collection of suspect Emergency Plant Pests* guidelines).

- The receiving lab should be contacted to determine whether the sample should be sent in an insulated container with a coolant such as dry ice with appropriate International Air Transport Association (IATA 650) labelling.
- Any identifying document information required for biosecurity clearance should be placed between the outer two packaging layers or taped to the outer package.
- Sample submission information should be placed between the outer two packaging layers.
- The internal packaging should be securely sealed with 'Hold Quarantine' tape or tamper-proof evidence tape where required.
- Clearly label all samples and store securely (refer to *Chain of evidence* SOP).

The outer package should be labelled with:

- “Urgent – Diagnostic sample. Keep cool”
- the recipient’s name, address and telephone number
- the sender’s name, address and telephone number
- an emergency contact name, address and telephone number
- other labelling as required by legislation.

A label should also be included inside the outer packaging in case the outer label is destroyed.

3.4 Transport

- It is essential that the time between sampling and dispatch of the sample for identification be kept to a minimum.
- Do not send samples on a Friday unless first consulting with the receiving laboratory.
- Requirements for preserving samples for identification differ according to taxa, and those collection and preservation protocols appropriate to taxa need to be followed.
- Requirements for live samples differ from those for dead preserved samples.
- Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) requirements should be followed for safe transport of samples. These requirements may be accessed via the CASA website: www.casa.gov.au. There may be requirements that a suitably authorised person be responsible for preparing and sending material via air.

3.5 Resource equipment

Possible equipment required will depend on the sample and whether IATA or CASA packaging rules are to be followed:

- insulated, sealable container with freezer blocks for keeping samples cool
- pre-ordered tamper-proof plastic bags or zip lock plastic bags of suitable sizes for samples
- sealable (e.g. screw top with rubber seals) sample containers or vials of varying sizes (e.g. Bio-bottles)
- quarantine tape, tamper-proof tape or similar
- overnight express post packs or equivalent, corrugated cardboard packing boxes
- sample tracking spreadsheet or evidence register (refer to *Chain of evidence* standard operating procedure)
- list of contacts for the laboratory/courier/CPHM for the state.