

Service update

Updates to formalin and liquid shipping/packaging requirements for Australian histology submissions

At IDEXX, safe handling and transport of specimens from your patients to our laboratories is our number one priority. Optimal submission preserves the integrity of the specimen prior to testing. This is why we are introducing improvements to formalin packaging and handling.

Shipping formalin is subject to commercial airline International Air Transport Association (IATA) regulations. Per IATA regulations, the formalin concentration must be clearly labelled on the jar, and concentrations > 10% buffered formalin cannot be shipped. These regulations also require indicating what type of liquid is being submitted if using anything other than 10% buffered formalin.

If a biopsy submission containing liquid of any kind is sent to IDEXX Reference Laboratories without indicating what the liquid is, processing will be delayed. Specimens submitted in > 10% buffered formalin will not be accepted in the laboratory.

Formalin concentration preparation and jar labelling

- The amount of formalin used should completely cover the specimen, but it should not exceed > 50% of the overall volume of the jar.
- IDEXX provides formalin jars (free of charge) that are pre-filled with 10% buffered formalin and include the approved formalin labelling, so no additional labelling work is needed if submitting specimens in them.
- If using a biopsy jar that is not pre-filled with formalin to submit a patient specimen, only add 10% buffered formalin, per the above instructions. The formalin concentration must also be indicated on the jar using a 10% buffered formalin sticker (if available) or by writing the formalin concentration on the jar.
- If submitting large specimens too large to fit in IDEXX-provided formalin pots/containers:
 - For optimal fixation of large lesions and tumours, you can make partial slices through the centre of the specimen if required. For large organs such as spleens, making a series of slices 1–2 cm apart through part of the specimen (maintaining architecture, i.e. like partially sliced garlic bread loaf).
 - Large specimens must be appropriately packaged prior to transportation. Use gauze wetted with formalin (not soaked) and wrap the prefixed tissue specimen so that it completely covers all of the tissue. All excess formalin should be drained prior to packaging.
 - Large specimens too big to fit in IDEXX-provided packaging supplies should be double bagged and placed in a rigid outer container large enough to fit the specimen. Place absorbents and cold packs in the second bag. Store in the refrigerator (not freezer) until pickup. Please anticipate a longer turnaround time for large specimens.

Submitting biopsy specimens in appropriate formalin-approved biopsy jars

- Only use formalin-approved biopsy jars of adequate size.
- Use the correct amount and type of fixative (10% buffered formalin only).
- DO NOT submit needles or sharps of any kind with your specimens.
- DO NOT submit tiny specimens in glass tubes, as these tubes risk breaking in transit.

Do:



Don't:



What to include on biopsy submission jars/bags

- Patient's first and last names
- Collection date
- Specimen ID
- Submitting veterinarian's name
- Formalin concentration (10% buffered formalin)
- If submitting specimens in a liquid other than formalin (e.g., saline), this information must be provided on the jar/bag.
- Adequate absorbent material between the primary container and the secondary container, which will allow absorption of any spilled liquid.

Note: You risk your submission being delayed if >10% buffered formalin is used or the type of liquid added is not clearly labelled. You can find additional information for how to prepare and submit pathology specimens at www.idexx.com.au/complexbiopsy and in the online Directory of Products and Services.

Order submission supplies for free through IDEXX Online Orders. Reach out to your Veterinary Diagnostic Consultant with any questions.