

How to Submit a Dead Bird for Testing

Potential Cases of Avian Influenza and Exotic Newcastle Disease ONLY

The Maine Department of Agriculture can test birds for AVIAN INFLUENZA and EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE. **ONLY** these potential diseases are covered, and **ONLY** after permission is given for submission by the Maine Veterinary Diagnostic Lab or the State Veterinarian. Submissions received without this permission will be billed to you at full cost.

1. If you would like to submit a dead bird for avian influenza testing, please contact the UMaine Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (Dr. Scott Haskell 207-581-2789) or the Maine state veterinarian (Don Hoening 207-287-7615) before sending any birds for sampling.
2. Make sure that the appropriate samples are in good condition, which can improve the likelihood of a diagnosis. Any questions should be directed to the laboratory at (207) 581-2775 or (207) 581-2789.
3. If the dead bird cannot be immediately sent to the lab, please keep it refrigerated. The bird can be refrigerated up to 48 hours; any longer than that and the samples taken become less reliable. Do not freeze the bird unless it cannot be sent to the lab within the 48-hour period. Shipments should be sent so as not to arrive over the weekend when no one is at the lab.
4. Packaging and shipping: Cooperative Extension offices have Styrofoam shipping boxes with prepaid Federal Express shipping labels. FedEx is the **ONLY** courier that accepts diagnostic samples. The bird must be packaged in accordance with International Air Transport Association (IATA) requirements for diagnostic specimens not known to be infectious. Pack birds for shipment at the site of the affected flock and **NOT** at the Extension office. Wear the gloves provided with the box when packing the bird. Please follow the IATA guidelines below.

IATA Basic Shipping Requirements:

- a. Watertight primary container:** place cooled bird in well-sealed, thick (3 ml) plastic bag. Wrap birds in several layers of newspaper, paying special attention that head and feet are covered (to prevent toe nails and beak from piercing plastic bags).
- b. Watertight secondary container:** place bird bagged in primary plastic bag in another well-sealed, thick plastic bag.
- c. Absorbent material:** place several paper towels in each plastic bag.
 - Provide internal cushioning to protect contents and limit movement.
 - Always keep bird cool – ship with frozen cooler packs!
 - Include any and all information known about the death of your bird: clinical signs of disease, age of bird, and environment bird came from.
 - Please provide contact information: your name, address and phone number as well as information about your bird, housing, etc.
 - Attach the FedEx shipping label – be sure all information is provided. The address on the shipping label is Maine Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, 5735 Hitchner Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5735.
- d. Sturdy outer packaging:** we recommend using a Styrofoam inner box contained by a sturdy cardboard box.

Once the box is securely sealed, you must write the following clearly on the box near the shipping label:

Diagnostic Specimen - UN 3373

