



September 28, 2016

Office of Water Quality Water-Quality Information Note 2016.06

Subject: Avoid Late Sample Delivery of Chilled Samples

Several science centers and analytical laboratories have reported delayed delivery of chilled water-quality samples that were shipped over-night by Federal Express (FedEX). Delayed delivery may result in samples warmer than adequate for proper preservation and, therefore, data of increased uncertainty.

The Office of Water Quality and the National Water Quality Laboratory are working with FedEx to increase successful on-time delivery of sample coolers and to test alternative shipping containers. The purpose of this WaQI-Note is to provide interim guidance to track and avoid late sample deliveries to analytical laboratories, and minimize the occurrence of warm or spoiled samples. Please consider the resources below to increase successful delivery of water-quality samples to analytical laboratories.

- Report late deliveries to FedEx and on the USGS [tracking spreadsheet](#).
- Ship chilled samples with sufficient ice to keep samples chilled (less than 6 degrees Celsius) for up to 3 days.
- The USGS agreement with FedEx stipulates the level of service is “**Priority Overnight**” and all temperature dependent samples should be shipped with this priority designation.
- When possible ship samples Monday through Wednesday.
- Double bag all samples and ice with 2-mil bags that can be sealed or are secured with the fold-over method (see the FedEx link below).
- Line shipping containers with two (one bag inside of the other) clean, heavyweight (2 mil or greater) plastics bags. Place samples and ice inside, seal the inner bag then seal the outer bag.
- Avoid dead space – after samples and ice have been properly packed completely fill all space in the cooler or shipping container with packing material such as air-cushion packs. **DO NOT USE WATER-SOLUBLE OR STYROFOAM PACKING PEANUTS.**
- Additional guidance for shipping with wet ice is available on page 6 of the [FedEx document for packaging perishable shipments](#) and the attachment for Packaging Tips for Wet Ice Shipments.
- Avoid shipping coolers or containers in excess of 75 pounds.
- Record the tracking number conspicuously on the outside of the cooler.
- Avoid handwritten airbills.

- Deliver the cooler or container to the drop-off point **before** pick-up time.
- In the event of a shipping problem at a drop-off location, immediately call 1-800-GO-FEDEX and say "representative" and provide the address of the location & explain the situation; the problem should be resolved quickly.

For technical assistance regarding this WaQI-Note, please contact Stan Skrobialowski (sski@usgs.gov)

Signed,

The Office of Water Quality

Distribution: All WMA Employees