

## Submission of Human Skeletal Remains to the Center for Human Identification: Shipping Guidance

The following guidance for shipping skeletal remains to the Center for Human Identification (CHI) for forensic anthropological analysis is provided for your benefit. These practices are based on many years of experience receiving skeletal remains and are designed to ensure the integrity of the evidence and to protect the remains from damage or loss. In general, shipments should follow or exceed the best practices for the shipment of any critical evidentiary material.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the CHI Evidence Unit at 800-763-3147 or the Forensic Anthropology Unit at 817-735-2190.

### **Dry Bone Cases with No Decompositional Odor**

Skeletal cases without any decompositional odor should be shipped in unused heavy-duty boxes (see link below). The box should be of an appropriate size so that the bones can be cushioned with some padding but not have any empty space within the box that would allow either the evidence to shift or for external forces to collapse the box. Within the shipping box, the bones should be packaged in an evidence-sealed container (small body bags work well; see link below) clearly labeled with your agency name and case number. The submission forms should be packaged within the shipping box, but outside of the sealed body bag or other evidence-sealed packaging. All seams (top, bottom, sides) of the box should be sealed with packaging tape.

### **Cases with Decompositional Odor**

Skeletal cases expressing a decompositional odor should be shipped in such a way that the odor is controlled and not detectable by the transport company. Prior to shipment, decomposing tissue should be removed by the submitting agency, and remains should be disarticulated so that they fit in a reasonable-sized shipping container (contact the Forensic Anthropology Unit if you have any questions regarding cleaning and preparation for cases with soft tissue).

Insulated shipping kits (see link below) should be used, and are HIGHLY recommended. The Styrofoam liner should be of an appropriate size to prevent unnecessary movement of the contents. Within the Styrofoam liner, the remains should be packaged in a small, evidence-sealed body bag with appropriate padding added to cushion the body bag. The top of the Styrofoam container should be sealed with packaging tape prior to placing it in the outer cardboard shipping box. Your agency name and case number should appear on the top of the Styrofoam container. For insulated shipping kits, the submission form should be placed in an envelope and packaged within the external cardboard box but outside of the Styrofoam liner.

NOTE: This applies to fitted shipping kits as shown below. Remains should not be placed in recreational Styrofoam coolers placed within boxes that are not designed for that cooler. Likewise, the shipment of remains in a Styrofoam cooler without a shipping box is not appropriate.

### **Shipping Method**

Do **NOT** ship either case type via US Postal Service when possible. Instead, FedEx or UPS with priority overnight or next-day service is recommended (FedEx preferred). Do not use weekend delivery, as mail is only accepted during regular business hours, Monday through Friday.

## Suggested Shipping Material Resources

### Uline heavy-duty boxes

[https://www.uline.com/BL\\_417/275-Lb-Test-Single-Wall-Boxes](https://www.uline.com/BL_417/275-Lb-Test-Single-Wall-Boxes)

Example size:

<https://www.uline.com/Product/Detail/S-4772/Heavy-Duty-Boxes/24-x-12-x-12-275-lb-Heavy-Duty-Corrugated-Boxes>

### Affordable infant body bags

<https://www.affordablefuneralsupply.com/removal-first-call/body-bags/infant-body-bag/>

### Insulated shipper kits:

[https://www.uline.com/BL\\_2157/Insulated-Shipping-Kits](https://www.uline.com/BL_2157/Insulated-Shipping-Kits)

Example size:

<https://www.uline.com/Product/Detail/S-20422/Insulated-Shippers-and-Supplies/Insulated-Foam-Shipping-Kit-25-x-16-1-2-x-12>

## Return Shipping

The Forensic Anthropology Unit will return remains in a similar fashion:

- Remains are wrapped and/or bagged in paper to protect the bone from shipping damage
- Remains are sealed in a new body bag with your case information written on the outside of the bag
- The sealed body bag and appropriate packaging material (Kraft paper) are packed within a new heavy-duty cardboard box
- The sealed shipping box is transferred to the Evidence Unit to be returned to your agency