



Standard Operating Procedure – licensing arrangements for import and distribution of biological samples collected from Antarctica

Adapted for AFI participants, from BAS internal version 2.1.0 (17th September 2008)

1. All biological samples derived from BAS Southern operations must be returned on BAS vessels. Biological samples may not be returned by air freight or hand carried.
2. BAS has a legal responsibility to ensure the importation to UK complies with regulatory authorities.
3. BAS currently applies for four different import licences:

Plants and Soils (*including shallow freshwater sediment samples within first metre depth*)

Licence holder: Dr P. Convey (pcon@bas.ac.uk). 2nd signatory: Dr K. Newsham (kne@bas.ac.uk).

For a copy of the plant license conditions, see: http://www.bas.ac.uk/afi/docs/plant_licence_conditions.pdf.

For a copy of the soil license conditions, see: http://www.bas.ac.uk/afi/docs/soil_licence_conditions.pdf.

CITES (*endangered species, mainly whale and fur seal*)

Licence holder: Mr D. Briggs (drbr@bas.ac.uk). 2nd signatory: Dr I. Staniland (ijst@bas.ac.uk).

Animal Pathogens (*animal tissue or culture*)

Licence holder: Mr D. Briggs.

To see a copy of the license conditions, see http://www.bas.ac.uk/afi/docs/animal_pathogen_conditions.pdf.

See also Annex 2 of the current document for additional conditions.

Research Import Licence (*preserved samples; products of animal origin, including fishery products*)

1st Signatory: Prof. P. Bridge (pdbr@bas.ac.uk); 2nd Signatory: Sandra J. McInnes (sjmc@bas.ac.uk).

4. A CITES export licence is also required for samples of, or from, CITES listed species which are to be exported from South Georgia. ***For AFI purposes, it should be noted that this includes samples from Bird Island. No fieldwork on South Georgia itself is permitted under the terms and conditions of AFI.***
5. For all biological samples to be exported from South Georgia (***including Bird island***), a South Georgia Export Licence is required. This will be arranged by the AFI Coordinator, from the Government Officer (GO) at King Edward Point (KEP). Any person wishing to export samples from South Georgia (***including Bird island***) will need to provide full details of the samples, prior to export, so that the GO at KEP can be informed.
6. Each case must have a Biological Samples Bill of Lading (BOL) extension form completed following the instructions provided with the BOL extension and attached to a Normal or Hazardous Northbound BOL as per instructions in the Specimen Consignment Procedures. These documents should be sent to the nominated base or cruise biosample coordinator by early March or before the scientist responsible for collecting the material leaves an Antarctic station or research vessel at the end of their field season. The base or cruise biosample coordinator will check that the BOL has been completed correctly before forwarding to the base or ship logistics officer and sending collated details to Dr Paul Geissler (page@bas.ac.uk). For the UK import licences, the various UK licensing authorities require a minimum of six weeks to process applications. Therefore, the information required to complete the applications must be forwarded to Paul Geissler and copied to Sandra J. McInnes (sjmc@bas.ac.uk) by early March or before the scientist responsible for collecting the material leaves an Antarctic station or research vessel at the end of their field season.
7. Sample details will be collated by Dr Paul Geissler (copied to Sandra J. McInnes) and forwarded to the Licence holder or signatory, who will complete the licence application and submit it to BAS Shipping Section (contact: Kath Nicholson, kani@bas.ac.uk) for onward transmission to the licensing authority.

8. The BAS Licence Holder is the designated Senior Scientist in BAS Biological Sciences Division, who is the signatory of both the Import Licence and the site storage licence; therefore has full responsibility for the material held. If the Licence Holders cannot, because of absence in the Antarctic, discharge this duty, it must be delegated. The exception to this is the Animal Pathogens licence, which cannot be delegated (DEFRA requirement), and can only be signed by the Licence Holder.
9. BAS Shipping Section requires the licences for presentation to HM Customs and Excise in order to support the import documentation.
10. UK port authorities have the power to refuse entry to unlicensed material.
11. The BAS scientific sponsor of a collaborative research project (AFI collaborations are referred to in Annex 1) will be responsible for ensuring that the leading field scientist for each project prepares a detailed and accurate listing of the project sample collection, on completion of fieldwork. The list must be submitted to the relevant BAS Field Assistant and the Base Commander before the collaborative scientist(s) leaves an Antarctic station, or before the ship reaches the Falkland Islands, if samples have been collected. The BAS scientific sponsor will ensure that BAS is given the information needed to make the licence and exemption applications in a timely fashion, and to ensure that the biological material will be transferred to laboratories/institutions that hold an appropriate licence. External organisations requiring licensed material from the BAS system must hold an appropriate import licence and comply with relevant transfer documentation. For preserved samples of animal origin under the Research Import Licence that have received authorised exemption from veterinary inspection at point of import, details of samples transferred to external organisations need to be submitted to DEFRA, via the 2nd signatory. After sample import to the UK, the BAS scientific sponsor is responsible for making the arrangements for collaborative institutes to promptly collect all of their samples from Cambridge.
12. **If the required information is not provided, or is incomplete, then samples will not be exported to the UK.**

Without the required documentation for each individual sample collection the whole biological sample consignment on the ship would be at risk of being impounded at the port of entry

Annex 1: Procedures to be adopted for AFI projects requiring import and distribution of biological samples collected on BAS Antarctic stations and research vessels

BAS will assume responsibility for the licensing and exemption from veterinary inspection arrangements required to import all biological samples returned from Antarctica to BAS Cambridge. The AFI Principal Investigators for each project will be responsible for ensuring that BAS is given the information needed to make the licence and exemption applications in timely fashion, and to ensure that the biological material will be transferred to laboratories or institutions that hold the appropriate licence(s).

1. The Principal Investigator for each AFI project is responsible for ensuring that a photocopy of the relevant Institution/Departmental licence(s) is sent to the AFI Coordinator before the start of the field season (at the latest). Any Institution to which the samples will be transferred from BAS must hold the appropriate licence (e.g. DEFRA, CITES, etc.). For preserved samples of animal origin under the Research Import Licence, that have received authorised exemption from veterinary inspection at point of import, details of samples transferred to external organisations need to be submitted to DEFRA, via the 2nd signatory.
2. The Principal Investigator for each AFI project should liaise with the relevant BAS licence holder / signatory, to discuss their expected requirements, shortly after submitting their Outline Field Plan (normally around June preceding the field season). Contact should be established via the AFI Coordinator.
3. The Principal Investigator is responsible for ensuring that the leading field scientist for each project prepares a detailed and accurate listing of the project sample collection, on completing their fieldwork. The list must be submitted to the relevant BAS field assistant and the Base Commander, before the AFI scientist(s) leaves an Antarctic station, or before the ship reaches the Falkland Islands if samples have been collected. In any case, an interim report must be prepared before the end of March.

4. The Principal Investigator is responsible for making the arrangements for collection of the samples from BAS at the end of the field season.
5. **If the required information is not provided, or is incomplete, then samples will not be exported.**
Without the required documentation for each individual sample collection the whole biological sample consignment on the ship would be at risk of being impounded at the port of entry.

Annex 2: Special licence condition applying to importation of animal pathogens

1. Staff having contact with the imported material must not have contact with domestic poultry for at least 48 hours afterwards. Staff having contact with the imported material must give a written undertaking to this effect.
2. The above condition must be incorporated in the Risk Assessment staff must sign before handling animal materials and their derivatives stored at BAS.

Biological Sample Packing, Labelling and Consignment Procedures



Procedures for packing, labelling and consigning biological samples from Antarctic research stations and Ships

This guidance should be read in addition to, and does not replace, the standard logistics packing procedures for research stations and ships. For further advice on packing, labelling and transport, contact the BAS Stores Manager, Mick Cliff (mpc@bas.ac.uk).

Failure to comply with procedures may result in the destruction of samples at the port of entry in the UK or upon receipt at Cambridge.

Packaging

- 1 All samples/specimens must be packed separately from equipment or personal effects.
- 2 Samples for cool or frozen stow must wherever possible be packed into easily manageable units (preferably < 25kg). (Note: pallet trucks cannot be used in the Cambridge freezers).
- 3 Heavier item requiring refrigeration through the tropics only or destined for the Cambridge Specimen Store may be consigned in cases with an integral pallet base or forklift battens.
- 4 Samples preserved in solvents or other hazardous substances must be packed separately with **no** mixing of chemicals (one case for each type of substance) in a UN-certified container, with the correct volume of absorbent. See also the Waste Management Handbook available on bases and ships.
- 5 Live samples for the ships incubators must be packed securely such that motile organisms cannot escape. Any special requirements for these samples during the voyage must be notified in advance.
- 6 Appropriate clearly marked packaging should be available for the road haulage stage between the port of entry in the UK and Cambridge.

Labelling

- 1 All old labelling (including old case numbers) must be removed or painted out from packaging/cases. (Carriers refuse to transport cases with redundant Hazard warning labels).
- 2 Samples in solvents or other hazardous substances must have the *Proper Shipping Name* (from the safety data sheets), all relevant hazard information including the appropriate UN Haz. label and orientation arrows all clearly displayed on all sides of the case.
- 3 The full Case Number should be clearly displayed on the case. This should take the form **origin/destination/year/case number** (e. g. **R/C/05/4001**) as issued by the Station Support Manager, Base Commander or Chief Officer.
- 4 The case should be marked with the recipient's name. If this is an external collaborator, the name of a full-time BAS contact should also be given. (*N.B.* Make sure that the BAS contact is aware of your samples).
- 5 As for all cargo, the correct weight in kilogrammes must be prominently displayed on the case.

Note: do not confuse BOL numbers with Case Numbers. One BOL may list any number of cases; only the Case Number should appear on the case. If in doubt ask the Station Support Manager, Base Commander or Chief Officer.

Consignment/Bills of Lading (BOLs)

- 1 All samples/specimens must be consigned separately from equipment or personal effects.
- 2 Samples should be consigned to one of the following classes:
 - Normal stow.
Items stowed in the hold not requiring temperature control. (To be collected from central stores, Cambridge).
 - Cool stow / +4°C.
Items requiring refrigeration but not freezing or light. Please distinguish cases that require refrigeration only through the tropics by stating '+4°C - Tropics Only' on the BOL.
 - Frozen stow / -20°C.
Items requiring freezing at -20°C.
 - Frozen stow / -80°C.
Critical items (e.g. for DNA work). Please note that space for this method may be limited and must be notified in advance.
 - Incubators / growth cabinets.
For live samples requiring light. Various temperatures (>2°C) may be available depending on other requirements. Space for this method may be limited and must be notified in advance.
- 3 All samples preserved in solvents or hazardous substances must have the following information clearly stated on the BOL:
 - ◆ *Proper Shipping Name* (from the safety data sheets)
 - ◆ appropriate UN Hazard information
 - ◆ net quantity of hazard
 - ◆ flashpoint (if appropriate)
 - ◆ inner packaging
- 4 Place a copy of the BOL inside each box to help identification on arrival at Cambridge.
- 5 If a BOL has been submitted for a case, do not pack the item inside any other box at the last minute. Cases must correspond to those listed on BOLs received at Cambridge.

- 6 Case Numbers - these are as issued by the Station Support Manager, Base Commander or Chief Officer (see “Labelling” above). Do not use, for example, “1/4” or “Joe’s Box 1”.

Animal and plant material

To satisfy DEFRA tracking and licensing requirements (even if the samples are eventually destined for outside the UK), all samples containing animal and/or plant material have the following additional requirements:

- 1 The BOL description must be specific (*i. e.* Species or Genus where known, and origin). ‘Biological samples’ is not sufficient.
- 2 All BOLs with cases containing any biological samples or otherwise requiring a special import licence must be copied to Sandra McInnes in addition to the Station Support Manager, Base Commander or Chief Officer. **It is a UK Customs requirement that all DEFRA regulated material must be notified prior to entry in the UK.** If in doubt contact Sandra. Failure to do this could result in the destruction of samples and the revoking of import licences.

Refer also to:

- SOP: Licensing Arrangements for Import and Distribution of Biological Samples from Antarctica
- SOP: Working with Material Requiring DEFRA Plant and/or Soil Licences