



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ACQUISITION AND LOGISTICS
WASHINGTON DC 20420**

IL 001AL-09-11
August 11, 2009

OFFICE OF ACQUISITION AND LOGISTICS INFORMATION LETTER

TO: Veterans Integrated Services Network Directors

ATTN: Medical Center Directors and Accountable Officers

SUBJ: Guidance for Recycling of X-ray film and Precious Metals

1. The VA Service and Distribution Center (SDC) in Hines, IL is responsible for the receipt and recycling of precious metals and X-ray film for VA. This information letter provides instructions to VA medical centers to facilitate the continuity, security, and standardization of those services by the SDC.

a. SCRAP X-RAY FILM

(1) All shipments of scrap X-ray film will be shipped to the Service and Distribution Center, Hines, IL and will be funded by the SDC. Prior to the shipment of scrap film, VA *Form 134a, Combination Requisition and Shipping Ticket*, requesting shipment of scrap X-ray film from the medical facility to the SDC will be forwarded to the VA Transportation and Logistics Center (VATLC), VA Central Office, 811 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20420. Requests may also be forwarded via fax at (202) 273-6236. The VATLC will complete a Bill of Lading and forward it to the requesting medical center. Questions may be addressed to the VATLC freight desk at (202) 461-8018 or 8916.

(2) All less-than-truckload (LTL) shipments will be made using "*Sealed Divider Service*" (SDS) from YRC, Inc. or comparable services as directed by the VATLC. The trucking company will provide seals for sealed divider service and provide the serial number of the seals(s) to the VA shipper who must then record the seal numbers on a copy of the VCBL and fax it to the SDC at (708) 786-5226. **When SDS is directed by the VATCL, do not release the shipment unless the service is installed and sealed at the medical center.**

(3) Since *Sealed Divider Service* is more costly, film should be palletized or Gaylord containers utilized with the object of best use of the cubic volume of the trailer. Palletized film should never be double stacked for any reason.

(4) To enhance security of the shipments, they should be planned to be picked up and delivered within the same work week. Wherever possible, avoid having LTL shipments held over a weekend or holiday at a carrier's terminal. If possible, avoid any layovers at unsecured highway truck stops or rest areas for full truckloads.

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(5) Full Truckload (TL) shipments of X-ray film, while already quite secure, are still required to be further secured with a serialized bolt seal (see (6) below). The driver for the carrier must call the SDC for a delivery appointment. If the carrier anticipates or has a delivery delay, they must notify the SDC Traffic Manager, John Burke, john.burke@va.gov, at (708) 786-7758 or Scott Bitner, scott.bitner@va.gov at (708) 786-7729.

(6) Serial numbered bolt seals for full TLs will be provided by the SDC. The SDC will provide seals via FedEx to the VA shipper. Since SDC already receives a copy of all VCBLs for X-ray film shipments, staff at the SDC will be aware of the TL shipments in sufficient time to send seals to the VA shipper prior to shipment pick up. **Do not release a full truckload shipment without the serialized bolt seal.**

(7) The VATLC office will annotate the VCBL for LTL shipments by YRC, Inc. with "Sealed Divider Service Requested," and VCBLs for other LTL carriers will be highlighted with similar terminology. VCBLs for TL carriers will indicate "Use a Security Seal and/or Padlock on EACH Trailer Door." VA warehousemen must be alert for these designations and must ensure all appropriate steps listed below are followed:

(a) VA Form 134a lists the number of boxes or containers, weight of each box or container, and the total weight for each loaded pallet or container, excluding pallet weight.

(b) **DO NOT** ship medical records, empty paper file jackets, plastic envelopes, folders, or any other non-film items. Paper records must be disposed of locally.

(c) It is not required to segregate types of film prior to shipping.

(d) Gaylord containers are the preferred method of shipment and must be banded to a suitable and standard pallet with the lid included in the banding. Suitable Gaylord containers may be obtained commercially that meet the requirements of 42" X 40" X 24" with a minimum of 275 lb test.

(e) Boxes, if used, must be filled to capacity, uniform in size, sealed with tape to allow stacking, and should not exceed 60 pounds in weight. A suitable box for scrap film is available through the ARVCO Container Corporation, Kalamazoo, MI, at 1-800-968-9128, Government Contracting - Cost Ref. File #37425. ARVCO will recognize the box through the old GSA national stock number 8115-00-290-3386. If boxes are utilized, they must be individually weighed and labeled with the weight before palletizing.

(f) All palletized film in boxes must be banded to the pallet from all directions and stacked no higher than 36" high excluding the height of the pallet.

Special Note: The proper handling of the scrap X-ray film has become a highly visible data security issue, and the extensive requirements in preparation for shipment reflect this. When the SDC receives unsealed boxes or shipments prepared in such a way as to allow easy access to the film, appropriate action will be taken to notify the facility director and Information Security Officer to prevent a recurrence.

b. PASSIVE SILVER RECOVERY UNITS

(1) All shipments of passive silver recovery units formerly shipped to the AMS will now be sent to the SDC. As all VA medical centers were instructed to convert to a passive collection process, SDC will no longer support electrolytic silver recovery processing.

(2) Act-1 and Tandem 200 change-out times are determined by fixer volume passing through the units.

(a) The Act-1 single cell passive recovery unit (stock number F08001) can process up to 200 gallons of fixer before the cell has to be changed.

(b) A Tandem 200 dual cell passive recovery unit (stock number F08002) can process as much as 200 gallons of fixer before the primary (first) cell is ready to change. After another 200 gallons have passed through the unit, both the primary cell and the secondary cell should be changed. The procedure starts over again after installing new replacement primary and secondary cells.

(c) At times, the amount of fixer volume that has passed through the unit is undetermined. A simple test to determine if the cell is ready to change out is to press a thin bladed screwdriver into the cell. If the screwdriver goes in easily, it is time to change the cell.

Special Note: Passive silver recovery cells should never be left in place for more than 1 year.

(3) When it is time to change out the passive cell, you may obtain a replacement by placing an order through FPOrders. The stock number for an Act 1 filter is F08001, and the stock number for the Tandem 200 filter is F08002. If you have concerns or problems with ordering through FPOrders, call the SDC Operations Division at (708) 786-7758 or (708) 786-7763 to request assistance.

(4) The replacement cell will be sent to the requestor in a container, which will include a heavy duty plastic bag. The full (silver laden) passive unit cell(s) MUST BE AIR DRIED, placed in the heavy-duty plastic bag, and shipped to the address shown in number c. 9. below. Return of the expended cells is mandatory since they have significant silver content. Follow-up will take place with the VA medical centers who fail, within a reasonable period of time, to return a used cartridge after ordering a new one.

(5) Replacement of nonexpendable equipment components, parts, etc., will be made at no charge to the VA facility. Call the SDC Operations Division to coordinate replacement actions.

c. **SCRAP DENTAL AND PRECIOUS METALS**

(1) All scrap dental and precious metal material, excluding platinum catheter tips, will be sent via Federal Express to the SDC. All shipments will be funded by the SDC. Prior to the shipment of precious metals, VA Form 134a, Combination Requisition and Shipping Ticket, requesting shipment of scrap dental and/or precious metals from the medical facility to the SDC will be sent via fax to (708) 786-5226 or electronically as an attachment to an e-mail message addressed to John Burke or Scott Bitner of the SDC Operations Division. Upon receipt, a Bill of Lading or other appropriate shipping document will be prepared and returned to the requesting medical center.

(2) All shipments must include VA Form 134a which describes the contents of the package(s) to include item description, item count, and an accurate weight of each item. Any precious metals received without VA Form 134a will remain unopened until the form is received from the shipping facility.

(3) All shipments will be made via Federal Express declaring the estimated market value. The value can be estimated by using the weight in troy ounces times the commodity exchange metal price per troy ounce on the day of the shipment.

(4) Packages will be sealed and in a manner that any tampering would be detectable. No markings should appear on the package to indicate its contents.

(5) When categorizing precious metals for shipment to the SDC Operations Division, facilities should use the following terminology consistently for identifying each commodity on the VA Form 134a or in other communications: scrap dental metals, scrap silver, scrap amalgam, miscellaneous, i.e., sterling silver, trachea tubes.

(6) All weights must be in troy ounces, penny weights, and grains. The precious metals must be segregated by type into separate containers. More than one type of scrap metal, properly segregated, can be shipped in one package. Packages will be of a suitable size to securely hold the contents without excessive packaging material and without jeopardizing the integrity of the package during transport.

(7) To expedite handling and storage of scrap amalgam the material must be thoroughly dried prior to shipment.

Special Note: Lead markers from intra oral dental film, liquid mercury, and mercury batteries are not to be sent to the SDC Operations Division and must be properly disposed of locally. Platinum Catheter Tips are also not accepted by the SDC and should be recycled/disposed of locally.

(8) Personal effects, such as gold and silver jewelry, etc., must NOT be sent to the SDC Operations Division as "scrap." All unclaimed personal effects will be disposed of locally in accordance with established VA guidelines.

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(9) When precious metal packages are opened and the weight, number of items, and physical count are verified, the shipping facility will receive a stamped and validated copy of the VA Form 134a for their files. In the event a deficiency is noted with the weight, number of items, or piece count, the facility's Accountable Officer will be requested to investigate the discrepancy and report the findings, in writing, to: Director (901) SDC, PO Box 27, Hines, IL, 60141. Ship to Address:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Service and Distribution Center, Operations Division
Bldg 37, Door 14
1st Avenue 1 block North of 22nd Street
Hines, IL 60141

(10) Receiving hours are from 7:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. For further information, please contact Mr. John Burke, Traffic Manager at john.burke@va.gov (708) 786-7758 or Scott Bitner, scott.bitner@va.gov at (708) 786-7729.

(11) Any written questions or inquiries concerning the shipment of scrap dental, precious metal material, scrap X-ray film, or passive silver recovery cells can be directed in writing to the Service and Distribution Center, Operations Division at PO Box 37, Hines, IL, 60141 or by phone at (708) 786-7758 or (708) 786-7729.

(12) IL 07-07 is hereby rescinded.

(13) Reference: VA Handbook 7345, Sale, Abandonment, or Destruction of Personal Property.

/S/

Charles E. Roberson
Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Finance, Logistics, and Business Services