



# Getting Your Films to a Lab

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**Driving:** When films need to be kept wet, labs within driving distance should be consulted first. If there are no appropriate labs nearby, discuss with the lab of your choice the best means of transporting the film to them.

**Shipping: Use overnight express:** If films are not being transported by hand, they should be shipped by overnight express so that they spend as little time possible in transit, where they will be subject to high temperatures and drying.

**FedEx:** Submerged films may be shipped by FedEx if you take care to pack them so that no water can leak out of the package. Speak to your FedEx representative and follow their instructions.

FedEx will ask you to pack the submerged films about like this: First place the films in a container with a tight-fitting lid, such as a Tupperware container, filled with water to keep the films wet in transit. Place this container inside a plastic bag and seal the bag. Place the first bag inside a second bag and seal the second bag. Place the double-bagged container in a waterproof receptacle, such as an ice chest. Add packing materials such as plastic bags or Styrofoam to the ice chest so that the film is packed in tightly. Snug packing will help prevent the film reels from moving around excessively during shipping (remember, the wet films are fragile) and will decrease the chances of the plastic bags moving around and possibly springing a leak. Seal the ice chest with duct tape. If the ice chest locks securely, you can wrap some packing tape around it to secure it and FedEx can ship it as is. If the ice chest doesn't lock, put it inside a cardboard box that can be secured with packing tape.

**Keeping records of shipped films:** When you get ready to send your films to a lab, be sure to keep detailed records of the films you are sending. The most important thing is to link the information on the film containers with the films themselves. Otherwise it may be hard to identify the contents of the films later on. Here's how:

1. Give each film box, can or reel an identifying number with an indelible pen (and permanent adhesive tape if the pen doesn't write directly on the container). Or write the number on the film leader. If a film box falls apart

while underwater, the identification number will need to be transferred to the film reel or leader before shipping the film to a lab.

**2. Manually copy all of the information written on the film box or can to a paper list.** Include dates, names, places and all other information about the contents of the film. Write the same ID number you have written on the film box or reel by the information about that reel.

**3. Or, instead of copying by hand the writing on the film box or can, take a digital or traditional photo of the box or can.** Be sure that the photo includes the ID number you have written on the film container and any notes (dates, names, places, etc.) that could help identify the contents of the film.

**4. Most ballpoint or felt tip pens that would have been used in the past to write on film cans or boxes will only withstand water immersion for a short period of time.** Because of this, an organized identification system is essential.