

Drug Enforcement Administration  
Diversion Control Division  
Guidance Document

**Title:** Transportation of Sealed Inner Liners by DEA-Registered Authorized Collectors or Common Courier Drivers

**Summary:** This guidance document addresses whether a sealed inner liner may be transported by employees of a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) registrant authorized as a collector, or after pick-up by a common courier driver, to a common carrier storefront or franchise prior to the common carrier transporting the sealed inner liner to a reverse distributor for destruction.

**Activity:** Transportation of Sealed Inner Liners by DEA Authorized Collectors or Common Courier Drivers.

**To Whom It Applies:** DEA registrants authorized as collectors.

**Question:** Do DEA regulations allow for transportation, whether by employees of a DEA-registered authorized collector, or after pick-up by a common or contract carrier, of a sealed inner liner to the common or contract carrier's storefront or franchise prior to the common or contract carrier transporting the sealed inner liner to a reverse distributor for destruction?

**Answer:** DEA's regulations on disposal do not specifically prohibit these scenarios. [21 CFR 1317.55\(c\)](#) requires a reverse distributor to acquire collected substances (sealed inner liner) from DEA registrants authorized as collectors in accordance with [21 CFR 1317.15\(b\)](#), which directs a reverse distributor to:

- (1) Pick-up controlled substances from a registrant at the registrant's registered location or authorized collection site; or
- (2) Receive controlled substances delivered by common or contract carrier or delivered directly by a non-practitioner registrant.
  - (i) Delivery to the reverse distributor by an authorized registrant directly or by common or contract carrier may only be made to the reverse distributor at the reverse distributor's registered location. Once en route, such deliveries may not be re-routed to any other location or person, regardless of registration status.
  - (ii) All controlled substance deliveries to a reverse distributor shall be personally received by an employee of the reverse distributor at the registered location.

If a non-practitioner registrant authorized as a collector *directly delivers* a sealed inner liner to a reverse distributor as mentioned above, [21 CFR 1317.95\(b\)](#) requires, in part, that "the [controlled] substances shall be constantly moving towards their final location and unnecessary or unrelated stops and stops of an extended duration shall not occur." [21 CFR 1317.95\(b\)\(1\)](#). Although not mandated by the regulation, DEA suggested in the Federal Register in the Final Rule, *Disposal of Controlled Substances* [79 FR 53519](#), that because transportation to destruction facilities may occur over long distances, the collected substances (sealed inner liner) should be constantly moving towards their final destruction destination, and unnecessary or unrelated stops, and stops of an extended duration should not occur (*see* [79 FR 53555](#)).

Outside of the above regulatory requirements, and the precatory language set forth in the Federal Register, DEA does not specify exactly *how* to transport a sealed inner liner from the DEA-registered authorized collector to a reverse distributor when utilizing a common courier for transport. DEA also explained in the above-referenced Final Rule that DEA's primary concern regarding common or contract carriers was whether there is adequate security to prevent diversion when controlled substances are being transported. *See* [79 FR 53527-53528](#). Additionally, all registrants must provide effective controls and procedures to guard against theft and diversion of controlled substances. *See* [21 CFR 1301.71\(a\)](#).

If a DEA-registered authorized collector or reverse distributor has specific questions or proposals regarding the physical security of the handling of controlled substances, including transportation plans involving a sealed inner liner, the collector or reverse distributor should forward and address such questions or proposals to the Special Agent in Charge in the region in which the proposal pertains, or to [DEA's Regulatory Section](#). *See* [21 CFR 1301.71\(d\)](#).

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law, regulations, or Department of Justice policies.

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