

Division of Paleontology



Protocol for Shipments of Fossil Specimens Entering the Division from the Field

Because of the workload involved in handling incoming shipments, it is important that the leader of the field party provides the Director of Collections with the following information soon as possible after returning from the field:

- The number and size of crates in the shipment
- An inventory of crate contents
- The likely delivery date
- The person coordinating the delivery

The leader of the field party should also provide proposed interim and final storage locations for the specimens collected. These will be reviewed by the Curator-in-Charge, subject to the approval of the Chairman of the Division (in consultation with the Director of Collections and Archives).

If the size of shipment requires that the AMNH movers be used to bring the crates to the Division, this needs to be raised with the Director of Collections and Archives and the head of the moving gang (mover1@amnh.org) as early as possible. For very large shipments, the delivery date must be coordinated with the shipper to ensure that the moving gang is available.

Incoming shipments should **not** be moved into the collections until they have been thoroughly inspected. They should first be brought to the fossil preparation lab on the 8th floor of 3A. At this time, the crates should be visually inspected for signs of wood boring beetles and other pests.

If there is to be a delay between delivery and inspection, the crates should be covered in heavy grade plastic sheeting, which should be sealed to the floor with duct tape.

If signs of wood boring beetle are observed, the following protocol should be observed.

- Inform Director of Collections and Archives

- Director of Collections and Archives informs Divisional Chair, and (if necessary) Director of Custodial Services, Conservator for Natural Science Collections, and/or Associate Dean of Science for Collections
- Re-seal crates in plastic sheeting. Only remove when arrangements for breakdown of crates are in place.
- Make arrangements with Director of Custodial Services for incineration or chipping of all solid wood packing materials.
- Contact Chairman of Division of Vertebrate Zoology regarding availability of VZ freezer for storing contaminated waste wood prior to disposal.
- If freezer is not available, contact Director of Custodial Services regarding alternate storage facilities.
- When disposal arrangements are in place, begin breakdown of crates.
- Open crates one at a time.
- Vacuum out any packing material and remove to heavy grade plastic garbage sacks, double bagged.
- Remove specimens and vacuum clean. Check off against crate inventory and transport specimens to collection storage areas.
- Break down crates into smallest possible components. Remove to heavy grade plastic garbage sacks, double bagged.
- Seal all sacks with duct tape and remove to VZ freezer or other storage location.
- Any insects discovered should be placed in a screw top vial and retained for identification.
- Re-seal plastic over crates at the end of each working day.
- Once all crates have been broken down, inform Director of Custodial Services that waste can be incinerated or chipped.

If no signs of wood-boring beetles are observed, crates may be removed to collection storage areas.

If there is to be a delay in opening the crates, they should be re-covered in heavy grade plastic sheeting, which should be sealed to the floor with duct tape.

When crates are to be opened, the following protocol should be observed:

- Open crates one at a time.
- Vacuum out any packing material and remove to heavy grade plastic garbage sacks, double bagged.
- Remove specimens and vacuum clean. Check off against crate inventory and remove to collection storage cabinet.
- Break down crates into smallest possible components. Remove to heavy grade plastic garbage sacks, double bagged.
- Dispose of waste in dumpsters in “employees’ yard”.
- Re-seal plastic over crates at the end of each working day, or when work is complete.

If any insects are discovered in the packing material, they should be placed in a screw-top vial and passed to the Director of Collections and Archives for identification.