

## FAQ for KPD living donor kidney transportation from recovery hospital to recipient hospital

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### *How is it decided if a living donor kidney will be transported in a KPD exchange versus the donor traveling?*

- The donor and donor's hospital agree to ship the donor kidney rather than ask the donor to travel to the matched candidate transplant hospital.
- The candidate and candidate's hospital agree to receive a shipped kidney.

### *How is transportation of a living donor kidney to a recipient transplant hospital arranged in KPD?*

- UNOS organizes conference calls to discuss transportation arrangements with transplant hospitals and their designated courier (after crossmatch completed). Many hospitals use Sterling Courier, so they are invited to all calls but hospitals are not required to use Sterling.
- The recipient hospital chooses the mode of transportation for their recipient's kidney.

## FAQ for KPD living donor kidney transportation from recovery hospital to recipient hospital

### Who is responsible for transporting living donor kidneys in KPD?

- The recovery hospital is responsible for packaging, labeling, and transporting living donor kidneys.
  - Hospitals can choose a courier or arrange courier services through their OPO.
- The organ recipient’s transplant hospital is responsible for transportation costs for living donor kidneys and associated tissue typing material according to CMS regulations.

### Who pays for transportation?

- The recipient hospital is responsible for the cost of shipping the donor’s kidney from the recovery hospital to the matched recipient’s hospital.
- The recipient hospital is responsible to contract with a courier (or work with their OPO) to pay for transportation. UNOS does not contract with couriers.
- Transportation costs may be covered by recipient insurance.

### What are the transportation options and change of custody for each option?

Options	Change of Custody				
Driving	Kidney remains with driver from donor hospital to recipient hospital			Driver takes kidney to recipient hospital where hospital staff receiving kidney sign delivery confirmation	
Commercial airline, as cargo, in baggage compartment	Driver picks kidney up at recovery hospital and takes to designated airport	Kidney taken to special cargo area <sup>1</sup> and handed to airline personnel who takes kidney to plane	Kidney handed to airline personnel (baggage handlers), scanned, placed in hold (baggage compartment) <sup>2</sup>		Driver picks kidney up at the special cargo area <sup>3</sup>
Commercial airlines, with on board courier	Driver hands kidney to on board courier who takes kidney through TSA and boards flight <sup>4</sup>	With the assistance of the crew, on board courier secures the kidney in an upright position for the flight <sup>5</sup>	The on board courier deplanes and hands kidney to a driver		
Charter flight (Prop or Jet)	Driver hands kidney directly to the pilot or crew member of the chartered aircraft	After landing, pilot/crew member of the chartered aircraft hand kidney to driver			

<sup>1</sup> Most airlines require that kidney is tendered to designated flight a minimum of 1 hour prior to flight departure. TSA regulations mandate that a shipment can only be tendered to a commercial airline by a Certified Indirect Air Courier

<sup>2</sup> Courier confirms kidney is on designated flight

<sup>3</sup> It can take up to 1 hour after flight arrival for the kidney to be offloaded and handed off to the driver

<sup>4</sup> Kidney is put through scanner. The on board courier is provided an form letter that explains the content of the box to present to TSA if questioned

<sup>5</sup> This location may vary based on the type of aircraft and space available

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### *When and how are transplant hospitals informed of kidney's location during transportation?*

Sterling Courier sends email notifications to transplant hospitals about kidney location at various transit points. If other courier is utilized, they are asked to communicate the same information.

Driver arrives at donor recovery hospital and is waiting for the kidney	Driver receives the kidney from the donor recovery hospital and is in route to first destination (final destination when driving)	(Flying) Driver has tendered the kidney to the designated flight or handed to pilot/crew for charters	(Flying) Kidney confirmed on board flight and flight airborne	(Flying) Driver receives kidney from the airline personal/on board courier and is in route to the recipient transplant hospital	Driver has delivered the kidney to recipient hospital staff, email includes the time of delivery and the name of the person who signed for the kidney
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### *What are the risks involved in transporting living donor kidneys?*

Risks include delay, loss, or damage of the kidney as a result of a disaster or incident. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Natural disasters: flood, earthquake, fire, or hurricane
- Unnatural disasters: terror attack, random incidents of violence
- Transportation incidents:
  - The car or plane transporting the kidney may be in an accident
  - The kidney may be lost or temporarily misplaced in transport such as:
    - Sent to the wrong place at the airport
    - Placed on the wrong plane
    - Failure to be placed on the plane prior to departure
    - Failure to remove from the plane upon arrival
  - The kidney container may be damaged or opened accidentally during transport
  - TSA may refuse kidney on board plane (on board courier)
  - Kidneys may be left in extreme heat, cold or rain while handlers transport and load them into airplanes from the tarmac (cargo)
  - After loading, kidneys may sit in undesirable conditions until the airplane takes off and the climate control kicks in (cargo)
  - Once in air, an unexpected change or malfunction in the temperature and pressure may subject the kidney to harsh conditions (cargo)
  - Kidney may be delayed in transport due to:
    - A delay in the driver receiving the kidney from donor recovery hospital
    - Flight delay or cancelation
    - Traffic
    - Driver getting lost

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### *How will transplant hospitals be notified if a transportation issue occurs?*

The ability to identify a transportation issue is dependent on the method of transportation and the “visibility” of the shipment while in transit. Real-time notifications will be provided to transplant hospitals as transportation issues are identified. Notifications may be from the courier or UNOS and may be via email or phone call, depending on the situation and severity of the issue.

### *How often are there issues with kidney transportation?*

The UNOS Organ Center maintains a database of failures and near misses for deceased donor organ transportations. This data indicates **about 1.5% of shipments experience a failure** – do not make it to the intended destination; and **nearly 4% of shipments experience an unanticipated delay of two or more hours**. More than 90% of the shipments experiencing a failure or near miss involved commercial airlines.

The UNOS Organ Center also maintains a database of failures and near misses for KPD living donor organ transportations, but data is limited as of September 2016.

### *What is done to minimize transportation risks?*

- All commercial flights transporting living donor kidneys receive a special, “Lifeguard” call sign to indicate medical urgency and the need for expeditious handling. Air Traffic Control gives these flights priority for takeoff and landing.
- The courier provides frequent communication about the location of the kidney.
- On-board courier provides a letter, describing contents of package, to present to TSA.

### *Are GPS systems used when transporting kidneys?*

- GPS devices are not currently supplied by UNOS or major courier companies utilized frequently in the transportation of living donor kidneys.
- The Federal Aviation Administration restricts how GPS devices are used on aircraft – they must shut off shortly after takeoff and turn on when the aircraft lands. Transplant hospitals who wish to use GPS devices are responsible for buying/renting an FAA-compliant GPS device and providing it to the donor recovery hospital to package with the kidney.

### *What UNOS policies pertain to living donor and KPD kidney packaging and transportation?*

- Policy 13.4.C.13 Informed Consent for KPD candidates
- Policy 13.11 Transportation of Kidneys
- Policy 14.8 Packaging, Labeling, and Transporting of Living Donor Organs, Vessels, and Tissue Typing Materials
- Policy 16 Organ and Vessel Packaging, Labeling, Shipping, and Storage