

SHIPPING FISH TO A SHOW

1. You will need plastic bags from a pet shop, not from the grocery store. Two are required for each betta going to a show, and 2 for each betta to be shipped back to you. You will also need the following items:
 - An IBC entry form. You can get this from FLARE!, from the CBS show page, or you can draw up a reasonable facsimile from the example on the show page. The entry form on the show page is an Excel file.
 - A Styrofoam box inside a cardboard box used for shipping fish. This can be obtained at local pet stores.
 - A waterproof marker or permanent label for marking each bag.
 - The Judging Standards or class list (page 2 of the entry form) for classifying your bettas; and
 - An extra bag to hold your entry fees, forms, return postage, or other items you do not want to get wet.
2. Double bag each betta and use enough water to adequately cover the fish. Remember that water adds weight and increases the postage and the air held in the bag is almost more important to the betta. Knot the first bag, leaving 2/3 air. Then put that bag, with the knot end down, into the second bag. This helps to guard against leaking.
3. Find the classification sheet or class list and classify each fish with the appropriate number. Record the classes on the fish bag and also on the entry form. Also record the entry form item number on the bag. If you are in doubt as to how to classify a particular fish, mark the entry (both places) with “class help”. The judges are on your side and understand that some fish can pose a classification problem for the novice and experienced hobbyist alike.
4. Decide which bettas you might like to auction. Auction proceeds can help pay the expenses of showing. Remember that you have no way of knowing though, whether the fish may take a ribbon and you may be auctioning off a winner. Mark your entry sheet and the corresponding bag to make sure that the right fish is being auctioned.
5. Put the bags in the Styrofoam box along with any additional cushioning material. You might also put each bagged fish into a brown lunch bag to keep them isolated and insulated.
6. Weigh the box. Call the Post Office and find out the return postage for Priority Mail and Express Mail.
7. Put your entry form, entry fees, and return postage in a dry fish bag. Seal the box with strapping tape. **NOTE: Do NOT label the box “Live Fish” on the outside – this can cause issues with certain shipping companies.**
8. Mail your bettas Priority Mail (usually 2-3 days) or Express Mail (usually overnight). It keeps the box from sitting in cold rooms for long periods of time.
9. Mail on Wednesday morning (Express Mail) or Tuesday morning (Priority Mail) prior to the show to insure timely arrival.
10. Cross your fingers and wait for the results!

Note: If you cannot find some of the items needed to ship your fish, IBC sells plastic bags, heat packs (for shipping in the fall or spring), shipping labels, and styro boxes. Check the latest issue of FLARE! or the IBC web site for prices and purchase information.

Re-compiled in Word, with additions, from the International Betta Congress BetterBettas site.