

Acceptable/Unacceptable Preparedness Samples

Preparedness Specimens WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED for laboratory testing without authorization by the Laboratory Director or Deputy Director.

ALL SPECIMENS MUST BE PROPERLY COLLECTED, PACKAGED, SHIPPED, AND DECONTAMINATED BEFORE TRANSPORT TO AND ACCEPTED BY DPHL.

GENERAL PREPAREDNESS SPECIMEN CRITERIA

1. Follow DPHL Specimen Collection, Identification, Packaging, Shipping, and Documentation guidance.
2. Utilize DPH Office of Drinking Water (ODW) drinking water kits for drinking water specimens. Utilize DPHL Environmental Sample Collection guidance for non-clinical, non- drinking water samples.
3. All preparedness specimens and drinking water specimens require the use of a Chain of Custody and Request for testing paperwork. Contact DPHL for additional collection guidance prior to specimen collection. All forms and guidance documents can be found on DPH Lab webpage <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dph/lab/labs.html>

ACCEPTABLE BIOLOGICAL PREPAREDNESS SPECIMENS

1. For environmental samples for Real-Time PCR testing, collect two (if possible) dry, non-cotton (e.g. Dacron) swabs and place in two separate, sterile tubes. Decontaminate outside of tubes with a quaternary ammonium compound disinfectant. Put tubes in secondary container and decontaminate outside of that container. Place in outer container and decontaminate again. Submit to laboratory.
2. For clinical samples for Real-Time PCR testing, refer to the Specimen Collection Charts for collection instructions. Put tubes in a plastic bag and decontaminate outside of that bag. Place in another bag and decontaminate again. Submit to laboratory.
3. For viral testing, collect vesicular swabs, dry or immersed in transport medium depending on viral test ordered. Scabs from crusted lesions are also acceptable. Check with laboratory for specific questions for collection. Package sample as in #2 and submit to laboratory.
4. For environmental samples for culture, collect using a culturette or lightly moisten a swab and place it in sterile tube. Refrigerate at 2-8°C if specimen will not arrive at the lab the same day. Package sample as in #1.
5. Powder contained in its original package or envelope is an acceptable sample. If there is a large amount of powder, it may be put into a sterile container and tightly sealed. .
6. Drinking water samples must include a temperature control. Specimens should be stored and transported at 4°C on ice or cold packs.

UNACCEPTABLE SPECIMENS FOR PREPAREDNESS TESTING

1. Unopened packages, letters, or environmental samples that have not been field screened for explosives, biologicals, chemicals, or radiation.
2. Samples that are too large to fit under the biological safety cabinet or glovebox. Packages must be smaller than 8 inches in height and less than 12 X 24 inches in width or length.
3. To test large packages, specimens must be taken in the field using two sterile non-cotton swabs or material put in a small sterile container (conical tube, urine cup, etc.)
4. Clinical Chemical Preparedness samples that have been improperly stored. Samples must be transported within 30 minutes of packaging or transported frozen on dry ice (urine) and on ice packs between 2-8 °C (blood).
5. Inadequate volume of sample submitted.
6. Samples leaking or improperly packaged and/or shipping incorrectly.