



Specimen Submission Policy

Oregon State Public Health Laboratory

I. PURPOSE:

It is the purpose of this policy is to clarify the specimen submission requirements for communicable disease specimens referred to the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) for testing. This policy will also detail general specimen rejection criteria and the disposition of specimens rejected for testing.

II. DEFINITIONS:

Specimen Submission Form: Test request form used to provide the OSPHL with a written test request from an approved provider and required patient identification and insurance information. Can be electronically transmitted if a facility has an interface established with the OSPHL.

III. POLICY:

A. Standard OSPHL Specimen Submission Requirements:

1. Complete the OSPHL specimen submission form that is appropriate for the test you are ordering. Please refer to the OSPHL test menu for instructions that are specific for the test you intend to order.
 - a. www.healthoregon.org/labtests
 - b. Be advised, we cannot test your specimen without a completed specimen submission form from your location requesting the test.
2. Be sure to provide all of the information required on the form. Commonly missed fields include:
 - a. The name of the licensed provider requesting the test, required by ORS 438.430(1).
 - b. The gender of the patient.
 - c. The test ordered.
 - d. Submitting facility information (name, address, phone number)
 - e. The county of residence for the patient.
 - f. The patient's insurance information.
3. Each specimen container must be labeled with at least two unique identifiers that match the patient information provided on the specimen submission form. Acceptable unique identifiers include:
 - a. The patient's full name.
 - b. The patient's medical record number.
 - c. The date of birth.
 - d. The test request form bar code, when available.

4. Specimen labels with incorrect, incomplete, or inaccurate patient identifiers will not be corrected by the OSPHL. It is the responsibility of the submitting facility or laboratory to ensure that this information is correct *prior* to submitting the specimen for testing.
5. Specimens may also be unacceptable for testing if they are too old, have an inadequate volume, or are the incorrect specimen type / collection device for the test ordered.
6. Be sure to follow current approved packaging and shipping protocols for diagnostic specimens or infectious substances.
 - a. Appropriate temperatures for the specimen type must be maintained during transportation.
 - b. Leaking, damaged, contaminated or otherwise deteriorated specimens may not be accepted for testing.
7. Be sure to send a manifest with your specimen shipment so that we can verify that we received the specimens you intended to send us.

B. Submitting Specimens for Testing by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

1. Prior approval from the State Acute and Communicable Disease Prevention section and/or your local health department may be required.
2. Follow the instructions provided by the OSPHL and/or the CDC for specimen collection, storage, handling, and transport appropriate for the test being ordered.
3. Complete the OSPHL's CDC Specimen Submission Form and the appropriate OSPHL Test Request Form. The CDC Specimen Submission Form is available at: <http://bit.ly/OR-CDC-Testing>.
4. In addition, the Standard OSPHL Specimen Submission Requirements (above) should be followed.

C. Specimens Received with a non-OSPHL Test Request Form

1. Specimens received by OSPHL with a test request form for laboratory testing performed at another laboratory will not be accepted for testing by the OSPHL.
2. OSPHL staff will call the submitting facility to clarify their intentions for the testing of the specimen.
 - a. If the submitting facility intended for the OSPHL to perform the requested test, a completed specimen submission form will need to be faxed to the OSPHL in accordance with the Standard OSPHL Submission Requirements (above).
 - b. If the submitting facility did not intend for the specimen to be sent to the OSPHL, the specimen will be logged as "misrouted" and returned to the submitting facility at their charge, if requested.

- c. If the submitting facility cannot be reached or does not request that the specimen be returned, the specimen will be retained for 1 week and then destroyed.

D. Disposition of Unsatisfactory Specimens:

- 1. Specimens that are not acceptable for testing will be retained by the OSPHL for the established retention time for that specimen type.
- 2. After the specimen retention time has been met, the specimen will be destroyed following OSPHL procedures.

E. Specimen Collection Feedback

- 1. Result reports for unsatisfactory specimens will include the reason the specimen was not acceptable for testing.
- 2. For more information, please refer to the OSPHL test menu for instructions that are specific for the test you ordered or contact the OSPHL at 503-693-4100.
 - a. www.healthoregon.org/labtests

IV. REFERENCES:

OSPHL Specimen Submission Criteria: <http://bit.ly/SpecimenCriteria>

CAP General Checklist GEN.40125 “Referral Laboratory Specimen Handling”

CAP General Checklist GEN.40491 “Primary Specimen Container Labeling”

CAP General Checklist GEN.40492 “Specimen Label Correction”

CAP General Checklist GEN.40505 “Specimen Collection Feedback”

