



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Public Health

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Division of Public Health

SCOTT M. SHONE, PhD, HCLD (ABB) • Laboratory Director, State
Laboratory of Public Health

Memo

To: Customers of the NC State Laboratory of Public Health

From: Scott M. Shone, PhD, HCLD(ABB), Director, State Laboratory of Public Health

Date: November 3, 2020

Re: Courier Schedule and Sample/Specimen Storage Guidelines – Veterans' Day

Please be advised that the State Courier **will be closed** for operation on Wednesday, November 11, 2020 in observance of Veterans' Day. The State Courier will not pick up specimens November 11th, but will deliver specimens picked up on Tuesday, November 10th to the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health (NCSLPH) on Wednesday, November 11th. The State Courier will resume normal operating hours on Thursday, November 12, 2020.

Please note, the State Courier **cannot** transport COVID-19 specimens.

Both UPS and FedEx are operating according to their normal working schedules on November 11, 2020.

The NCSLPH will operate normally on Wednesday, November 11th and testing specimens received. Alternate shipping methods (i.e., private couriers) may be used to transport specimens to NCSLPH for testing. Alternatively, sites should ensure that specimens and samples are stored using the proper conditions until the State Courier resumes normal business operations.

The following storage guidelines can be used for samples and specimens that have been collected and awaiting transport:

Bacteriological Well Water Samples

Bacteriological well water samples should be kept at room temperature and received by the laboratory within 30 hours of collection. If samples cannot be delivered within 30 hours of collection, please discard the sample and recollect.

Nitrate/Nitrite Well Water Samples

Nitrate/Nitrite well water samples should be refrigerated (2° to 8°C) and received within 48 hours of collection.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH • STATE LABORATORY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

LOCATION: 4312 District Drive, Raleigh, NC 27607

MAILING ADDRESS: 1918 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1918

www.ncdhhs.gov • <http://publichealth.nc.gov> • slph.ncpublichealth.com • TEL: 919-733-7834 • FAX: 919-733-8695

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Reference Microbiology Specimens

- *Neisseria gonorrhoea* (GC) cultures must remain incubated in CO₂ until pickup and require subculture every 48 hours. As a reminder, please do not send GC cultures on Fridays.
- *Streptococcus pneumoniae* should remain incubated in CO₂; all other *Streptococcus* specimens can be stored at room temperature. All specimens should be transported as soon as possible.
- *Bordetella* cultures on transport medium (Reagan-Lowe) and *Bordetella* PCR swabs must remain refrigerated until pickup and shipped on ice packs. Specimens must be received within 5 days of collection.
- Stool preserved in Cary Blair/enteric transport media can be kept refrigerated until pickup. If refrigeration is not available, room temperature storage is acceptable. Specimens should be transported as soon as possible.
- Sputum samples for TB testing must be refrigerated until pickup, and transported as soon as possible.
- *Legionella* culture samples must remain refrigerated until pickup, shipped on ice packs, and transported as soon as possible.
- All other clinical submissions for microbiological testing can be stored at room temperature and should be transported as soon as possible.

Virology/Serology Specimens

- COVID-19 specimens are to be stored at 2-8°C for up to 72 hours, and frozen at -70°C thereafter. If frozen, specimens must be shipped on dry ice following IATA regulations, instead of cold packs. Please note, the NCSLPH small collection kit boxes cannot be used for dry ice shipments.
- Serum specimens (HIV, HAV, HBV, HCV, Rubella, syphilis, Arbovirus, *Rickettsia*) that have been separated and aliquoted must be stored refrigerated (4-7°C) and shipped on ice packs. All specimens must be received within 2 days of collection.
- CTGC swabs and urine specimens should be stored at room temperature and received within 30 days of collection.
- Rabies specimens should be refrigerated (4-7°C) and received within 3 days of collection. Alternatively, rabies specimens can be frozen (<-20°C) if shipping will be delayed >3 days from collection.
- Viral Culture (swabs, urine, aspirates) specimens should be stored refrigerated (4-7°C) and received within 5 days of collection.

Note: swabs collected for HSV/VZV molecular testing will not be tested if received >7 days from collection. However, these specimens will be tested by culture methods.

Blood Lead Specimens

Blood lead specimens should be kept refrigerated (4-7°C), until pickup. If refrigeration is not available, room temperature storage is acceptable. All specimens should be delivered within 28 days of collection.

Please note, the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health reserves the right to request recollection of specimens if needed for testing.

If you have **questions regarding specimen/sample storage, please contact the NCSLPH Customer Service Line at 919-733-3937 or the NCSLPH Emergency Duty Phone at 919-807-8600.**

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