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: June 26, 2020
Re: Courier Holiday Schedule and Sample/Specimen Storage Guidelines

Please be advised that UPS and FedEx will be closed for operation on Saturday, July 4, 2020. Please do not ship any specimens on Friday, July 3rd using these couriers, as they will not be delivered to the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health (NCSLPH) until Monday, July 6th and will be rejected for testing.

In addition, the State Courier will be closed on July 3rd and July 4th. The State Courier will not pick up specimens on these dates, but will deliver specimens picked up on Thursday, July 2nd to the NCSLPH on Friday, July 3rd. Please note, the State Courier cannot transport COVID-19 specimens.

The NCSLPH will be operating normally July 3rd through July 5th and testing specimens received throughout the holiday weekend. Alternate shipping methods (i.e., private couriers) may be used to transport specimens to NCSLPH for testing on July 4th and July 5th. Alternatively, sites should ensure that specimens and samples are stored using the proper conditions until UPS, FedEx, and the State Courier resume normal business operations on Monday July 6th.

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°C to 8°C) and received within 48 hours of collection.
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 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 in 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.