



Ebola Frequently Asked Questions for Laboratorians

Q1. What do clinical laboratories need to know to prepare for Ebola testing of a Person Under Investigation (PUI)?

Key points that laboratories should consider include:

- Healthcare providers **MUST** report suspected cases to the OSDH Acute Disease Service Epi-on-Call at (405) 271-4060 (available 24/7/365) to initiate the patient assessment for specimen collection.
- Clinical laboratories can safely handle specimens from potential Ebola patients by taking all required laboratory bloodborne pathogen precautions and practices.
- Risk assessments should be conducted by each laboratory director, biosafety officer, or other responsible person to determine the potential for sprays, splashes, aerosols or other exposures potentially generated during laboratory procedures.
- Any person collecting specimens from a patient with suspected Ebola virus disease should comply with the institution's isolation protocols and/or risk assessment. See the *CDC's Guidance on Personal Protective Equipment To Be Used by Healthcare Workers During Management of Patients with Ebola Virus Disease in U.S. Hospitals* at <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/procedures-for-ppe.html>
- The use of a pneumatic tube system for transporting specimens from the PUI in a hospital to the laboratory should be avoided. See <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/safe-specimen-management.html> under the *Transportation* section for additional guidance.
- Guidance for spill clean-up can also be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/safe-specimen-management.html> in the *How spills of blood or body substances should be handled* section.
- You may need to ship your PUI's EVD specimen to a testing laboratory. In order to comply with federal regulations for the transportation of the category of infectious substance that applies to diagnostic specimens for Ebola testing, your laboratory will need to have someone who is certified to ship hazardous materials. Proper containers and documentation software is also required. The PHL will provide guidance to appropriate personnel.

Q2. Is it safe to run routine laboratory tests (CBC, chemistry profile, coagulation tests, etc.) on blood specimens from a suspect Ebola patient in a hospital lab?

Clinical laboratories can safely perform routine testing such as traditional chemistry, hematology, or other laboratory testing used to support and treat patients by following and strictly adhering to CDC's recommendations and proper use of PPE at <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/interim-guidance-specimen-collection-submission-patients-suspected-infection-ebola.html>

Q3. Some manufacturers of laboratory equipment are communicating that if clinical labs were to run ANY tests on specimens from persons suspected of having Ebola or confirmed Ebola patients through their machines, they will no longer WARRANTY or provide services for the equipment. What should we do about this and does OSDH provide these testing services for Ebola PUIs?

The OSDH Public Health Laboratory does not perform any routine laboratory tests, e.g., CBC, platelet count, liver enzymes, etc.; malaria testing may be provided upon request. This type of communication from equipment manufacturers or vendors is inconsistent with current CDC guidance. Your organization's attorneys may be able to help by looking closely at the individual warranties and service agreements. Perhaps there is a clause that would allow them to change the warranty to fit this situation.

Q4. Who can laboratorians contact for questions related to laboratory protocols and the published guidelines?

If you have any questions related to PHL laboratory protocols or CDC published guidelines, please contact the OSDH PHL at (405) 271-5070.