



Florida Department of Health

Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)  
Laboratory Diagnosis

Focus Area: Collection, Packaging  
and Shipping of Laboratory  
Specimens

Guidance document number 2022-01

Ebola Virus Diagnostic Specimen Collection, Packaging and Shipping  
Guidance for Laboratories and County Health Departments

Version 6.0 November, 2022

Summary:

- **Authorization:** Contact your local County Health Department for authorization prior to collecting and shipping diagnostic specimens for Ebola Virus testing. Specimens will not be accepted without prior approval.
- **Specimen Collection:** Specimens should be collected following CDC’s Guidance for Collection, Transport, and Submission of Specimens for Ebola Virus Testing. Adhere to the OSHA Blood-borne Pathogens Standards and wear appropriate personal protective equipment. Collect two lavender top EDTA tubes.
- **Packaging-for Shipments by Commercial Carrier:** All suspect Ebola diagnostic specimens must be packaged according to IATA Packaging Instructions 620 for Category A agents which requires specimens be packed in a triple packaging system: a positively sealed, leakproof primary container wrapped with absorbent material, secondary leakproof, pressure tested container and a UN certified rigid outer shipping package. A Shipper’s Declaration is required. Please consult with your County Health Department regarding the need for same day shipping.
- **Packaging-for Transport by Local Courier:** As above, specimens must be packaged in a triple packaging system a positively sealed, leakproof primary container wrapped with absorbent material, secondary leakproof, pressure tested container and a rigid outer shipping package. Packages transported by local courier require a Shipper’s Declaration. The Materials of Trade exception does not apply to Category A Infectious Substances.
- **Packaging-for Transport by Regional Emergency Response Advisor (RERA):** As above, specimens must be packaged in a triple packaging system a positively sealed, leakproof primary container wrapped with absorbent material, secondary leakproof, pressure tested container and a rigid outer shipping package. Packages transported by RERA require a Shipper’s Declaration. (RERAs will be provided prefilled shipper’s declarations that will need only minor additions before use.)
- **Laboratory Requisition:** Complete and attach DOH Form 1847 and indicate “Ebola RT-PCR” in the “Comment/Additional Information” section in the lower right-hand corner of the form. Also complete the CDC Infectious Disease ([CDC Form 50.34](https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dhcpp/vspb/pdf/specimen-submission-508)) and Viral Special Pathogens Branch ([https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dhcpp/vspb/pdf/specimen-submission-508.](https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dhcpp/vspb/pdf/specimen-submission-508))



## Packaging Requirements and Shipping Requirements

Specimens collected for EVD testing should be packaged and shipped without attempting to open collection tubes or aliquot specimens.

### Shipping by Commercial Carrier

#### General Requirements

- The specimens must be packaged as as a Category A agent.
- Remember, to ship Category A substances you **MUST** have attended and been certified at a Category A training session within the last two years. Category A Infectious Substances require a Shipper's Declaration for Dangerous Goods.
- The Consignee section of the Shipper's Declaration for Dangerous Goods must include a name and phone number for the person responsible for the shipment.
- Proper shipping names must be indicated on the outside of the package; UN 2814 - Infectious Substance, Affecting Humans.
- Technical names are not to be marked on the outside of the package.
- On the Shipper's Declaration for Dangerous Goods write "Suspected Category A Infectious Substance" in parentheses following the proper shipping name.
- The Additional Handling Information box on the Shipper's Declaration for Dangerous Goods must include an emergency telephone number.
- Enclose an itemized list of contents between the secondary packaging and the outer packaging. If you add the number of "items" in the box to your requisition that satisfies the requirement (e.g., add "2 lavender-top tubes" to the notes section).
- Package on cold packs.
- If consultation regarding same day shipping is needed, please contact the Bureau of Public Health Laboratories (BPHL).

#### Inner Packaging Requirements

- Primary receptacle(s) must be leakproof and positively sealed (tape, parafilm, etc).
- Secondary receptacle must be leakproof and 95 kPa pressure tested.
- Absorbent material must be placed between the primary receptacle(s) and secondary receptacle and be of sufficient quantity to absorb the entire contents of the primary receptacle(s).
- An itemized list of the contents enclosed between the secondary receptacle and the outer packaging. Do not place paperwork within the secondary container.

#### Outer Packaging Requirements

- Package must be rigid.
- Package must be at least four inches in the smallest overall external dimension.
- Package must be properly labeled.
- Package must pass required testing and be marked with UN specification marking for CLASS 6.2.

## **Packaging Requirements-Transport by Local Courier**

Package specimens in combination packaging according to 49 CFR 173.6(a)(4).

### General Packaging Requirements

- Packaging must coincide with 29 CFR 1910.1030 and specimens should be packed in a triple packaging system: a positively sealed, leakproof primary container(s) wrapped with absorbent material, a secondary leakproof, pressure tested container and a UN certified rigid outer shipping package.
- Enclose an itemized list of contents between the secondary packaging and the outer packaging.
- Package on cold packs.

### Inner Packaging Requirements

- Primary receptacle(s) must be leakproof and positively sealed. Place cushioning between multiple primaries to reduce risk of breakage. (The absorbent may be used for this purpose.)
- Secondary receptacle must be leakproof and pass a 95 kPa pressure test.
- Absorbent material must be placed between the primary receptacle(s) and secondary receptacle and be of sufficient quantity to absorb the entire contents of the primary receptacle(s).

### Outer Packaging Requirements

- Package must be rigid. A UN specification package must be used, marked and labeled per Category A regulations.

## **Transport by Florida Department of Health Regional Emergency Response Advisor (RERA):**

Packaging requirements are the same as above for transport by local courier.

- After authorization for specimen testing has been obtained, the Bureau of Public Health Laboratories in collaboration with the hospital, the County Health Department, and/or the Bureau of Preparedness and Response (BPR) may determine to have the Department's RERAs transport the specimen to ensure rapid and safe delivery of samples to the laboratory. In this case, Bureau of Public Health Laboratory staff will contact the RERA in the region of the specimen origin using the following contact information.

**Shayne Stewart**

**Region 1**

Mobile: 850-699-4228

**Howell Batts**

**Region 2**

Mobile: 850-251-0750

**Freda Vaughn**

**Region 3**

Mobile: 954-702-0691

**Kaila Yeager**

**Region 4**

Mobile: 813-363-0074

**David Crowe**

**Region 5**

Mobile: 321-689-9464

**Levi Connelly**

**Region 6**

Mobile: 239-671-1207

**Bill Senyshyn**

**Region 7**

Mobile: 954-702-0691

- The RERA verifies that the Ebola Virus Diagnostic Specimen Submission Check List has been completed by hospital before transporting sample. The RERA will not transport sample unless the Ebola Virus Diagnostic Submission Check List has been completed and signed by Infection Control Practitioner.
- The hospital representative relinquishing the sample to the RERA will sign a RERA Transportation and Tracking form indicating they are relinquishing the sample to the RERA.
- The hospital must sign a Shipper's Declaration before RERA transport. The RERAs will be provided prefilled Shipper's Declarations that can be used with minor additions to assist with this requirement. The Shipper's Declaration must be signed by a person trained and certified to ship Category A material. Copies must be kept for one year.
- The originating RERA will pick up the sample and notify the destination laboratory. The originating RERA will transport to the next RERA. Each preceding RERA is responsible for coordinating with the next RERA if multiple RERAs will be used to transport the sample to its final destination. If multiple RERAs are used, each RERA will sign off that they are now in possession of the package and will contact the destination laboratory to indicate status of package.

- The destination laboratory will sign the RERA's Transportation and Tracking form indicating that package has been delivered.

## **Laboratory Requisition**

- Complete DOH Form 1847 for each specimen and indicate "Ebola RT-PCR" in the "Comment/Additional Information" section in the lower right-hand corner of the form. This form can be found at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/public-health-laboratories/forms-publications/documents/DH1847.pdf>.
- Also complete the CDC Infectious Disease Form ([CDC Form 50.34](https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dhcpp/vspb/pdf/specimen-submission-508.pdf)) and the 2-page form (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dhcpp/vspb/pdf/specimen-submission-508.pdf>) for the Viral Special Pathogens Branch (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dhcpp/vspb/pdf/specimen-submission-508.pdf>).
- All three forms should be included in the packaging between the secondary and outer package.
- **Checklist:** Complete an EVD Checklist prior to shipment and include a copy in the packaging between the secondary and outer package along with the 3 forms listed above.

**Ship Specimens To: the appropriate location of the** Bureau of Public Health Laboratories, addresses are located on page 2.

**Notification:** On shipment of a specimen for a suspect EVD patient for EVD testing at BPHL, please notify Justin Hubsmith or Lisa Tate with the Tampa BPHL (see below for contact information) or Phil Lee, George Churchwell or Maria Pedrosa with the Jacksonville BPHL (see below for contact information).

Provide the shipping tracking number if being shipped commercially.

### **For Additional Information:**

**On Submitting Specimens for Ebola Testing:** Contact your local County Health Department.

### **Contacts for Laboratory Questions:**

#### ***Tampa***

Justin Hubsmith, Bureau of Public Health Laboratories at 813-233-2237 or 813-455-9105

Lisa Tate, Bureau of Public Health Laboratories at 813-233-2323 or 813-956-8853

#### ***Jacksonville***

Phil Lee, Bureau of Public Health Laboratories at 904-791-1712 or 904-945-4415

George Churchwell, Bureau of Public Health Laboratories at 904-791-1781 or 904-637-9260

Maria Pedrosa, Bureau of Public Health Laboratories at 904-791-1756 or 904-718-8744

#### ***Biosafety***

Leah Kloss, Biosafety Officer, Bureau of Public Health Laboratories at 813-233-2278 or 813-407-7173

**For more information on DOT Shipping regulations:**

<https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/sites/phmsa.dot.gov/files/2022-06/Transporting-Infectious-Substances-Safely.pdf>

**Infectious Substances Packaging & Shipping Training info:**

BPHL sponsored classes: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/public-health-laboratories/educational-opportunities/packaging-and-shipping-training.html>

CDC online training: <https://www.cdc.gov/labtraining/training-courses/packing-shipping-division-6.2-materials.html>

**Specimen collection and handling:** see the CDC guidance at

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/interim-guidance-specimen-collection-submission-patients-suspected-infection-ebola.html>

**Updates and other CDC guidance is available at**

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/>