



TB Technical Assistance for Community Providers

Category: State Laboratory Services for TB

Topic: How to obtain TB sputum specimen containers and submit specimens for TB directly to the Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Public Health Laboratories (BPHL).

- To order specimen containers, contact the shipping department at the state lab: 904-791-1571. If you have the paper order form, complete the form (legibly) and fax to: 904-791-1637. Please allow seven to ten business days to process orders.

Cost of Services:

- These services are provided at no charge.

Lab Submittal Form instructions:

- Complete the patient and healthcare provider information sections of the requisition form if not submitting via ELO.
- In the “Mycobacteriology” section, circle the specimen type (s) (e.g., CSF, Sputum, Bronchial Wash, Tissue or other).
- Indicate if the specimen has been processed at a lab or is a raw specimen by marking “processed” or “not processed”, respectively.
- Mark 3100 - AFB Smear/Culture.
- Mark 3140 - Nucleic Acid Amplification for TB (Real-Time PCR) on the first specimen
 - CDC recommends that NAAT is performed on an initial respiratory specimen from each client with signs and symptoms of pulmonary TB for whom a diagnosis of TB is being considered but has not yet been established, and for whom the test result would alter initiation of MTBC therapy, treatment plan and TB control activities. **Note:** First-time AFB Smear Positive specimens will reflex to Real-time PCR if not ordered.
 - Laboratories should work with their infectious disease Physicians to determine whether a person is a first time TB suspect, and if NAAT is warranted.
 - Additional tests can be performed on subsequent specimens but must be pre-approved by a TB Physician’s Network MD or via a regionally assigned TB Nursing Consultant for Department of Health, Tuberculosis Control Section, by calling 1-800-4TB-INFO or 561-266-6632.

Special instructions concerning specimens:

- Ensure the specimen container is appropriately labeled with patient identifiers and date specimen was collected. Make sure the cap of the 50 mL collection tube is securely closed. **Note: Any specimen not labeled with patient name will be rejected.**
- The state lab needs at least 5 mL of sputum in the clear 50 mL specimen collection tube.
- If the specimen is induced, write “induced” on the submittal form and specimen tube.
- Place the 50 mL specimen tube on top of cotton balls or tissue inside of the silver canister to protect the specimen and absorb leakage and secure the lid tightly.
- Wrap the completed lab submission form/requisition around the silver canister and place it inside of the cardboard tube. Secure the lid tightly.
- Send specimens to the state lab as soon as possible after they have been collected. Please do not batch specimens. CDC recommends that AFB Specimens should be received at the testing lab within 1 day.

- If the specimen cannot be shipped the same day, refrigerate the specimen until it is ready to be shipped to the state lab (do not freeze).
- Specimens must be less than 7 days old at the time they are received by the state lab, in order to produce a valid/reliable result.

Shipping instructions:

- Request clinical packs for shipping from your preferred courier
 - Most providers ship via UPS or FedEx overnight or ground shipping, in clinical packaging provided by the courier. For Saturday arrival, use Priority Overnight, delivery guaranteed by 10:30 am, as the shipping area closes early on Saturday (before noon).
- Ship to:
 - Bureau of Public Health Laboratories, Attn: TB Lab
1217 North Pearl Street, Jacksonville, Florida 32202

TB Lab Contact Information and Hours of Operation

- The lab is open Monday through Saturday from 8am to 5pm.
- In extenuating circumstances, the lab is available outside of these hours.
- To inquire about a specimen that has been submitted, call 904-791-1630

*E-Lab Services (WebLIMS) is available to external DOH healthcare providers. Interested providers should visit the Florida Public Health Laboratory website at: www.floridapublichealthlab.com and complete the required forms.

**Blood specimens for AFB smear and culture cannot be processed by BPHL.

** Tissue Block specimens (biopsy specimens in paraffin) require approval prior to submission to the state lab. Please contact Maria Gomez at 561-266-6632 or email mariagomez@flhealth.gov.

Lab Requisition form:

The Clinical Lab Submission Form (lab requisition form) is available online at:

http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/public-health-laboratories/forms-publications/_documents/DH1847--rev-5-13.pdf