



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 7.0 May, 2026

Authorization

Consult with your local county health department or the state health department epidemiology office at 850-245-4401 (24/7 access) to obtain approval for Ebola virus disease testing. Refer to the DOH Decision Algorithm to Assist with Identifying Patients with Suspected Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and the Ebola Virus Diagnostic Specimen Submission Check List prior to collecting any specimens from suspect Ebola cases. Specimens will not be accepted or tested without prior authorization and a completed Ebola Virus Diagnostic Specimen Submission Check List. The “Ebola Virus Diagnostic Specimen Submission Check List” is found here: [Ebolavirus - Florida Department of Health](#) or [Testing Services Menu - Florida Department of Health](#) under “Specimen Submission Forms”.

Specimen Collection

Specimens should be collected following CDC’s Guidance for Collection, Transport, Testing, and Submission of Specimens for Ebola Virus Testing, found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/ebola/hcp/communication-resources/guidance-for-collection-transport-and-submission-of-specimens-for-ebola-virus-testing-in-the-u-s.html>

[Ebolavirus - Florida Department of Health](#)

Adhere to the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standards and wear appropriate personal protective equipment. At a minimum, standard, contact, and droplet precautions should be utilized while collecting and processing the sample. All sample processing should be completed in a Class 2 Biological Safety Cabinet (BSC) or better. **Collect 2 specimens per patient**, as preliminary positives will be forwarded to CDC for confirmation. Specimens should be whole blood collected into plastic, lavender top EDTA tubes. Collect at least 1 mL of blood per tube.

Do not collect samples in glass tubes or tubes containing heparin, sodium polyanethol sulfonate, citrate, or with a clot activator. **Do not** attempt to open collection tubes or aliquot specimens before shipping. If necessary, short-term storage of specimens before shipping should be at 4°C or frozen.

Specimens collected less than 72 hours after symptom onset might yield false negative results; therefore, an additional specimen should be collected at least 72 hours after symptom onset for repeat testing. Consultation with CDC regarding negative results is also recommended. CDC’s Emergency Operations Center can be reached 24/7 at 770-488-7100.

Packaging Requirements and Shipping Requirements

Specimens should be shipped according to CDC's VHF Clinical Specimen Packaging and Shipping guidance, found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/viral-hemorrhagic-fevers/php/laboratories/specimen-packing.html>

If shipping by commercial carrier: All suspect Ebola diagnostic specimens must be packaged by a trained, certified shipper according to IATA Packaging Instruction 620 for Category A agents. Specimens are required to be packed in a triple packaging system with positively sealed, leakproof primary containers (2 per test) wrapped with absorbent material, 95 kPa pressure tested, a leakproof secondary container, and a UN certified rigid outer shipping package marked and labeled per PI 620. A software-generated, IATA compliant shipper's declaration is required. Three signed, color copies must accompany a single box shipment. Retain another copy in your records for two years. Specimens should be shipped overnight, refrigerated, using frozen ice packs at **2-8°C**. Shippers must select "Saturday delivery" on packages shipped on Friday.

If shipping by ground courier (including private courier, CHD staff, or RRC): As above, specimens must be packaged by a trained, certified shipper in a triple packaging system which consists of positively sealed, leakproof primary containers (2 per test) wrapped with absorbent material, 95 kPa pressure tested, a leakproof secondary container, and a UN certified rigid outer shipping package marked and labeled per 49 CFR. Packages transported by local courier also require a shipper's declaration and a certified transporter. There are **NO** exceptions for transporting this type of material; **all packages must be in full compliance with hazardous materials regulations**. BPHL can provide assistance with ground transport shipper's declarations if needed. Contact Leah Kloss at leah.kloss@flhealth.gov or 813-392-9918 for assistance.

Laboratory Requisition & Forms

Complete DOH Form 1847 and indicate "Ebola RT PCR" in the "Comment/Additional Information" section at the bottom of page 1 of the form. DOH Form 1847 is found here: [Testing Services Menu - Florida Department of Health](#) under "Specimen Submission Forms"

The final package should include both DOH Form 1847 and a completed copy of the Ebola Virus Diagnostic Specimen Submission Check List. These forms should be placed between the secondary and the outer packaging.

Ship To for testing at the Jacksonville BPHL

Bureau of Public Health Laboratories - Jacksonville
1217 N. Pearl Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202
ATTN: BT Lab

24/7 Contact for Jacksonville BT Coordinator: 904-637-9260

Additional Guidance

General Packaging Requirements

Include an itemized list of contents between the secondary packaging and the outer packaging. Do not ship EVD specimens in the same package as any other specimens for other types of testing. Samples must be **2-8°C** when they reach the final laboratory for testing. Receiving laboratorians will check the temperature of all samples on arrival before accepting delivery or performing any testing.

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

Outer Packaging Requirements: Package must be rigid and display markings consistent with Category A regulations.

Transport by Florida Department of Health Staff

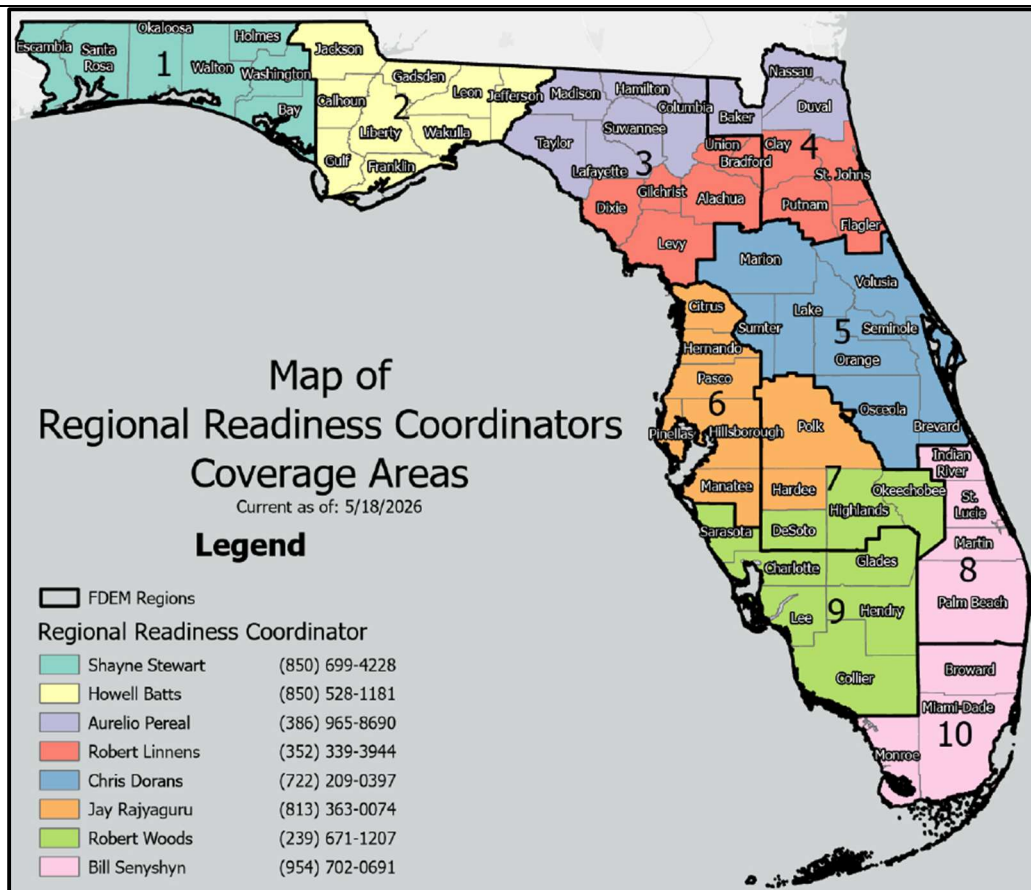
Follow the requirements for ground couriers.

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 that transport by DOH Staff, most often a Regional Readiness Coordinator (RRC), is necessary to ensure rapid and safe delivery of samples to the laboratory. In this case, Bureau of Public Health Laboratory staff will contact the CHD and/or RRC in the region of the specimen origin.

The transporter must verify that the Ebola Virus Diagnostic Specimen Submission Check List has been completed by the clinical facility before transporting any sample. The transporter will not transport any sample unless the Ebola Virus Diagnostic Submission Check List has been completed and signed by an Infection Control Practitioner. The clinical facility must sign a Shipper's Declaration before a DOH transporter can transport any sample. The transporters will be provided with 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 transporter will pick up the sample and notify the destination laboratory. The originating transporter may either transport the sample directly to the laboratory or may coordinate transport to a DOH transporter in a neighboring region to continue transport. Each preceding transporter is responsible for coordinating with the next transporter if multiple transporters will be used to transport the sample to its final destination. If multiple transporters are used, each transporter will sign off that they are now in possession of the package and will contact the destination laboratory to indicate the status of the package.

See the map below for contact information and regional coverage of DOH RRCs:



Notifications

Prior to shipment of a specimen for EVD testing at BPHL, notify the BT Coordinator at the receiving lab using the 24/7 contact information found on page 1. If the specimen is being shipped commercially, provide tracking information for the package. If the sample is being couriered, provide contact information for the originating RRC, CHD designated transporter, or private courier.

Additional Resources

Department of Transportation Shipping Regulations:

<https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/sites/phmsa.dot.gov/files/2024-04/Transporting-Infectious-Substances-Safely-PHH50-0186-0622.pdf>

Infectious Substances Packaging & Shipping Training (BPHL Sponsored):

https://www.floridahealth.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/ps_guide.pdf

Infectious Substances Packaging & Shipping Training (CDC Sponsored):

<https://reach.cdc.gov/course/packing-and-shipping-dangerous-goods-what-laboratory-staff-must-know>

CDC Guidance & Updates:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ebola/about/index.html>