

# THE OREGON STATE PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY



## COURIER SYSTEM HANDBOOK

Updated June 2021

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## INTRODUCTION

This guidance is to support clients' compliance with packaging and shipping regulations and ensure that laboratory specimens shipped using the OSPHL courier service are appropriately prepared and transported from your facility to the OSPHL. Included you will find information about preparation of specimens, requisitions, a transport manifest, and the transport container.

This guidance applies to specimens classified as Category B. For more information about Category A specimen transport, please see the Additional Transport Requirements section of this Handbook.

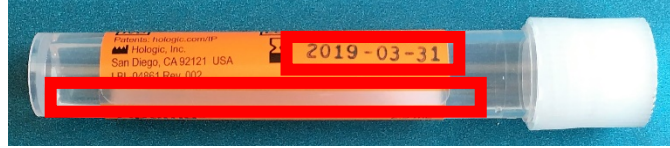
*NOTE:* For locations sending orders using an electronic interface, steps marked with an asterisk (\*) may be different for you. Please refer to your location's internal procedures for additional information.

## TRANSPORTING MOST SPECIMENS USING THE OSPHL COURIER SERVICE

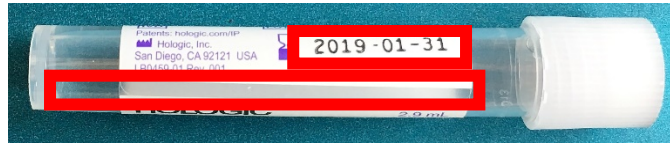
### PREPARATION OF SPECIMEN

1. Review the specimen collection, handling, transport, and test ordering guidance on the OSPHL Lab Test Menu: [www.healthoregon.org/labtests](http://www.healthoregon.org/labtests).
2. Collect and label your specimens. When possible, please use opaque labels. Each specimen must be clearly labeled with **two** unique, patient-specific identifiers. Acceptable identifiers are:
  - a. Full patient name,
  - b. Patient ID/MRN/chart number,
  - c. Date of birth

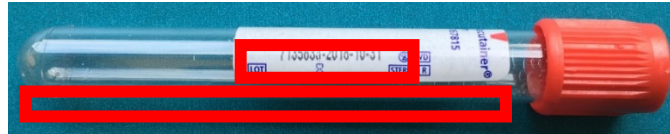
3. **Leave a window** so that the expiration date and contents can be seen. When using Multitest CT/GC, Unisex CT/GC, or blood transport tubes, the areas outlined on the tube should remain uncovered.



**Multitest Specimen Transport Media Tube**

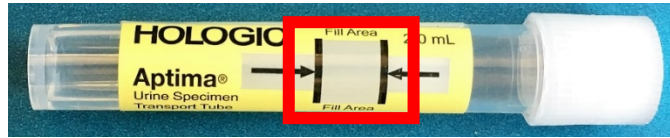


**Unisex Specimen Transport Media Tube**



**Blood Transport Tube**

When using the urine CT/GC transport tube, the black fill lines must be left visible.



**Urine Specimen Transport Media Tube**

4. Complete the appropriate Test Request Form, filling in all required fields marked with an asterisk.
5. Test request forms are posted on the OSPHL website, including fillable printable PDF versions. Access the forms at: [www.bitly.com/phl-forms](http://www.bitly.com/phl-forms).
6. Store specimens at the appropriate temperature for the specimen type until the specimen will be packaged and transported. Information about proper storage for each test is available at the OSPHL Lab Test Menu at: [www.healthoregon.org/labtests](http://www.healthoregon.org/labtests).

## PREPARE THE TRANSPORT MANIFEST

Including a manifest helps the laboratory staff ensure that they received all of the specimens you intended to send. You can find OSPHL’s manifest template at [www.bitly.com/phl-forms](http://www.bitly.com/phl-forms).

An example manifest is included as an attachment at the end of this handbook. You may use an alternative format if it is easier for you to do so.

1. Create one manifest for each transport container for each day of shipping. If you need more than one manifest sheet for each transport container per day, number each page in the space provided at the bottom of the manifest and staple together.
2. Write the shipping date.
3. Select your order method, Electronic (order from your EHR) or Paper Test Request Forms.
4. If your transport manifest does not include your Facility Name, write your facility name in this field. If your organization has multiple locations, specify your location.
5. Write the name and phone number of a contact person should the OSPHL have any questions about the shipment.
6. Place one patient label from your electronic health record or handwrite each patient identifier on the lines provided in the “Patient Specific Identifier” column.

## PREPARE SPECIMENS FOR SHIPPING

- Place the primary leak-proof specimen container(s) associated with a single Test Request Form\* in the provided leak-proof specimen transport bag. Include the absorbent material provided.  
(Note: A culture plate is not a sealed, primary container. You will need to use an additional layer of leak proof material as the primary container.)
- Fold the Test Request Form for the specimen(s) in half and place it in the outer pocket of the specimen transport bag with the submitting facility name facing out.\*

VIROLOGY/IMMUNOLOGY REQUEST		Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) 7202 NE Evergreen Pkwy, Suite 100, Hillsboro, OR 97124 Information: 503-693-4100		Oregon Health Authority	
<b>PATIENT INFORMATION</b>			<b>Submitting facility:</b>		
*Patient last name, first, middle initial: Last, First MI			Example clinic		
*Date of birth (mm/dd/yyyy): 01/01/1991		*Sex/gender: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	Patient ID/Chart number: 12345		
*Race: <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-race <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Declined		*Ethnicity: <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Declined			123 Test St Portland, OR 97201
Patient street address: 123 N Example Ln			*Ordering clinician: Last, First, credential		
City: Portland	State: OR	ZIP: 97201	Contact number: 503-234-5678		
*County of Residence: Multnomah	Outbreak number: Study		Copy results to: <input type="checkbox"/> County of Residence <input type="checkbox"/> State Public Health <input type="checkbox"/> Other Public Health:		
<b>PATIENT INSURANCE INFORMATION</b>					
*Insurance/Health plan name: Example Insurance			<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential	Policy no.:	Group ID:
Diagnosis/ICD-10 code for test: 0.00			Public Health Program eligible patient (for participating locations only): <input type="checkbox"/> STD Program <input type="checkbox"/> RH Program <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		
<b>SPECIMEN INFORMATION</b>					
*Date of collection:		Time of collection (##:##):	Hospitalized?	Pregnant?	Illness onset date: <input type="radio"/> Acute

## PREPARATION OF TRANSPORT CONTAINER



**Single insulated cooler**



**Double insulated cooler**

There are two different styles of transport coolers. The pre-printed labels on the red exterior of the box help your organization comply with sending specimens classified as Category B only to the OSPHL.

- Smaller, single insulated coolers can be used for one temperature range.
- Each side of the large, double insulated coolers can be used for different temperature ranges. The large box allows you to transport specimens with different transport temperatures within one box
  - o For example: blood tubes which require 2-8°C (35.6-46.4° F) in one insulated area and QuantiFERON® TB Gold Plus (QFT) tubes that require room temperature 17-27°C (63-81°F) in the other insulated area.

Check the handling instructions for each specimen, especially the required transport temperature and how quickly the specimen needs to be received by the laboratory. Information is available at the OSPHL Test Menu at [www.healthoregon.org/labtests](http://www.healthoregon.org/labtests). Include the necessary supplies to ensure your specimens ship at the proper temperature (e.g., ice packs).

*For room or ambient temperature specimens:*

Place the room temperature specimens in the inner compartment. No special packaging is required.



*For refrigerated specimens:*

1. Add 2-3 fully frozen large gel packs (minimum size 5x6 inches) to the inner compartment. During summer months when outdoor temperatures are warmer, additional gel packs may be necessary.

Small ice packs, such as Koolit® Liquid Refrigerant PCM, remain frozen for a short time, and their use is not recommended.

2. Place 4-6 paper towels on top of the gel packs.
3. Place the refrigerated specimens on top of the paper towels.



*For frozen specimens:*

1. Place the completely frozen specimens in the inner compartment. Cover specimens with cushioning material.
2. Add enough dry ice for your transport time (5 lbs or 2.27 kg per 24 hours is normally sufficient).
3. Label the front of the container as shown to the right. Write in the amount of included dry ice in kg. Please contact the OSPHL if you need labels.

**PACKAGE THE SPECIMENS**

1. When all the specimens have been prepared as detailed above, place the lid on the insulated inner container.
2. Place the transport manifest on top of the insulated inner container lid. Close the cardboard flaps on top of the manifest.



3. Close the red external transport container. The Velcro will keep it closed during transport.
4. Ensure the blue tape has been removed from the exterior closure of the box before handing the box to the driver. Removing this tape tells courier staff that the box contains specimens.
5. Keep the address card in place. The window for the address card is sealed to ensure the boxes stay assigned to your location.

## ADDITIONAL TRANSPORT REQUIREMENTS

### *CATEGORY A SPECIMENS*

Please notify the OSPHL before shipping when submitting suspected or known Category A specimens.

To ship specimens classified as Category A with the OSPHL courier, you **must** have current Division 6.2 infectious substance shipping training in accordance with DOT and IATA regulations and requirements. A list of organisms indicative of Category A substances can be found on table 3.6.D here:

<http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/cargo/dgr/Documents/infectious-substance-classification-DGR56-en.pdf>. This list is subject to change.

Use an appropriately labeled and UN certified Category A shipping container and include all proper documentation. Your site's normal red transport boxes marked for Category B (UN 3733) shipping cannot be used to transport known or suspected Category A specimens.

Examples of appropriate package labeling for specimens classified as Category A can be found on the OSPHL website: [www.bitly.com/phl-shipping](http://www.bitly.com/phl-shipping). Please contact the OSPHL for more information at 503-693-4100.

### *KNOWN AND SUSPECTED SELECT AGENTS*

Please notify OSPHL at 503-693-4100 during business hours, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm to schedule transport when submitting suspected or known Select Agents.

If you require after hours assistance, coordinate your request through the ACDP On Call Epidemiologist at 971-673-1111. If needed, they will connect you with the OSPHL Manager On Call.

The OSPHL cannot accept *some known* select agents. The list of select agents can be found here:

<http://www.selectagents.gov/SelectAgentsandToxinsList.html>

### *QFT SPECIMENS*

**Please notify the OSPHL before shipping if you have a scheduled pickup.** This ensures we open your box first. If you need an additional pickup to comply with the required time frame for transport, please contact Senvoy at 503-234-7722, ideally at least 1 day before collecting the specimen.

### *COVID-19 SPECIMENS*

**Please notify the OSPHL before shipping batches of specimens if you have a scheduled pickup.** If your facility has an existing courier or shipping mechanism, it should be used to transport specimens to OSPHL. If OSPHL's courier is needed, contact OSPHL at 503-693-4100.

## LABORATORY CLOSURES

OSPHL is closed on the State of Oregon holidays schedule posted on the DAS Building Closure Notices webpage:

<https://www.oregon.gov/das/pages/buildingclosure.aspx>.

Each submitting facility will be contacted via fax prior to planned OSPHL closures. Some specimens may not be accepted the day before a holiday closure. Specimen considerations will be included on closure notices.

Routine pickups on days that the OSPHL is closed will be cancelled and not automatically rescheduled. If you need an additional pickup, contact our courier at 503-234-7722. If you have any questions, please contact us at 503-693-4100.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q:** How do I collect, store, or transport a specimen for \_\_\_\_\_ testing?

**A:** Check our website at <http://www.healthoregon.org/labtests>. If you are still unsure, please contact us at 503-693-4100.

**Q:** I have specimens that need to be picked up. How do I arrange this?

**A:** Please contact our courier at 503-234-7722 between 7:00am and 6:00pm to arrange for service. If you require same day pick up, please call before 12:00pm. A staff person will ask you a few questions to facilitate your pick-up. *For known and suspected select agents, please review Additional Transport Requirements on page 9.*

1. Your site name
2. A contact person at your site
3. Your phone number
4. What type of test(s) do you want performed on the specimen?
5. Are the specimens ready now? When will they be ready?
6. Do you have a red shipping cooler? Do you need a replacement shipping cooler?
7. What are your site hours?
8. Do you have special instructions for the driver?

**Q:** Can I use the same Virology Test Request Form to order multiple tests for the same patient?

**A:** If there is sufficient blood in a single specimen tube for all tests to be conducted, multiple blood tests can be ordered on one virology requisition. Only one type of Chlamydia/gonorrhea specimen source can be ordered per request form. Please use a different request form for each Chlamydia/gonorrhea specimen source.

**Q:** I don't have any transport boxes at my site and I have specimens to send.

**A:** Please contact our courier at 503-234-7722 and they will have the driver bring you a box. Do not send specimens without a transport box.

**Q:** How can I send specimens which require different temperature ranges?

**A:** You can send two insulated boxes with the courier. If you only have one box or if you will be sending two boxes unexpectedly, please contact our courier at 503-234-7722. If your site often sends specimens that require different temperatures, we can set your site up with a large transport box that contains two insulated coolers. Each side can be used for a different temperature range.

**Q: Our courier hasn't come yet and we are closing soon.**

**A:** Please contact our courier at 503-234-7722 and they can provide an estimated time that the driver will arrive.

**Q: How can I change the days of our regular pickups?**

**A:** Please contact the laboratory at 503-693-4100 and we can work with your site to find a better schedule.

**Q: How do I get trained to properly package and ship specimens?**

**A:** Free, online training is available from the CDC at [www.cdc.gov/labtraining](http://www.cdc.gov/labtraining). In addition, the OSPHL provides ongoing, regional, in-person training courses. To inquire, please contact the OSPHL LRN Coordinator at (503) 693-4123.

