

NCSLPH Clinical Specimen Storage and Shipping

Clinical specimens for testing at the NCSLPH should be shipped within 24 hours of collection.

When shipping must be delayed (e.g., inclement weather, courier closures), guidelines are given below on proper storage and shipping of common specimen types. Please see our [SCOPE](#) for detailed guidance.

| | If shipping immediately | If shipping is delayed |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| COVID-19 + Flu PCR | ≤ 72 hours | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| Legionella Clinical** | ≤ 3 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| CHIKV, EEE, LACV, SLE, WEE, WNV | ≤ 2 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| Dengue (DENV) | ≤ 5 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| Hepatitis A (HAV) | ≤ 5 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| Hepatitis B (HBV) | ≤ 4 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| Hepatitis C (HCV) | ≤ 5 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| HIV | ≤ 5 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| HIV/HCV | ≤ 5 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| Measles/Mumps PCR* | ≤ 3 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| Measles Serology* | ≤ 3 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| Rickettsia + Ehrlichia | ≤ 3 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| Rubella IgG | ≤ 5 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| Syphilis RPR | ≤ 5 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| Syphilis TP | ≤ 5 days | DRY ICE REQUIRED |
| Bordetella Culture** | ≤ 3 days | |
| Bordetella PCR** | ≤ 7 days | |
| HSV/VZV NAAT | ≤ 5 days | |
| Hemoglobinopathy Whole Blood | ≤ 6 days | |
| Legionella Culture** | Ship as soon as possible | |
| Micro Reference Cultures | Ship ambient as soon as possible | |
| NBS Dried Blood Spots (DBS) | ≤ 14 days, avoid excessive heat and/or humidity | |
| Hemoglobinopathy Screening DBS | ≤ 14 days | |
| Neisseria Culture | Must be shipped ambient as soon as possible, see SCOPE for N. gonorrhoeae subculture details | |
| Blood Lead | ≤ 7 days for capillary specimens, ≤ 14 days for venous specimens. May be shipped ambient (15-38 °C), refrigerated (2-8°C) or frozen (-15 to -25°C). | |
| BTEP* and CTAT* | Call 919-807-8600 (BTEP) or 919-602-2481 (CTAT) prior to any submission for guidance on collection, labeling, packaging, and shipment | |
| Chlamydia/Gonorrhea TMA | May be received cold or ambient, ≤ 28 days | |
| Enteric Bacteriology | Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details | |
| Mycobacteriology (TB) | Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details | |
| Mycology | Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details | |
| Parasitology | Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details | |
| Rabies | Ship cold ASAP, freezing not recommended | |
| Viral Culture | Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details | |

LHDs follow NCSLPH DOA Medical Courier Packaging & Shipping Guidance.

Refrigerate specimens 2-8°C post collection. Specimens must be received cold (2-8°C) on frozen ice packs within the number of hours/days as indicated in the chart from time of collection.

Freeze specimens at ≤ -70°C post collection. Ship overnight via commercial courier on dry ice.

Freeze specimens at ≤ -20°C post collection. Ship overnight via commercial courier on dry ice.

** Specimens must be received cold (1-8°C) on frozen ice packs.

* Submission requires prior approval.

Store and ship at ambient temperature. Specimens must be received within the number of hours/days as indicated in the chart from time of collection.

Unique requirements, refer to SCOPE.



NC Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health North
Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health

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