

BIOTERRORISM RESPONSE CLINICAL SPECIMEN SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All clinical and commercial laboratories in West Virginia performing microbiology testing have the potential to be considered Sentinel Level (Formerly Level A) Laboratories in the CDC Laboratory Response Network. The West Virginia Office of Laboratory Services (OLS) will be considered the Reference Level (Formerly Level B and Level C) Laboratory for confirmatory identification of *Bacillus anthracis*, *Yersinia pestis*, *Francisella tularensis*, *Brucella* spp., and other potential agents of Bioterrorism.

If you have any questions about isolating, identifying, or submitting an organism that may be an agent of Bioterrorism, call the OLS Threat-Preparedness & Bioterrorism Response Laboratory at **304- 558-3530 extension 2301** during regular work hours 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

If you have other general questions pertaining to Bioterrorism, it is recommended that you call your Local Health Department first. Specifics regarding prophylaxis and treatment should be directed to the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 304-558-5358 or (in WV) 800-423-1271.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Sentinel Level Laboratories perform only minimal identification, e.g., “rule-out” testing for potential agents. Sentinel Level testing protocols and guidelines are available via the American Society for Microbiology (ASM) Biological Weapons Resource Center website under Sentinel (Level A) Laboratory Guidelines at: <https://www.asm.org/index.php/guidelines/sentinel-guidelines>.

For detailed descriptions of packaging and shipping information, microbiological practices, and safety procedures, please refer to Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories, United States Department of Health and Human Services, 5th edition, edited by J.Y. Richmond and R.W. McKinney, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999. The BMBL is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/biosafety/publications/bmbl5/index.htm>.

Sentinel Level Laboratories must be compliant with current federal and/or International Air Transport Association (IATA) packaging and shipping guidelines. Only laboratory personnel specially trained and certified in Category A packaging and shipping are permitted to package and ship specimens to the next level laboratory.

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

Chain of custody is highly recommended for non-human specimens or items that are followed and examined for evidentiary purposes. Sentinel Level Laboratories should not accept or analyze any non-human specimens. Clinical specimens submitted to OLS from hospitals meet chain of custody requirements through normal hospital practices. Sentinel Level Laboratories should, therefore, maintain a suspicious isolate or specimen until an event is deemed as credible. In the event that a clinical specimen is determined positive for the presence of a Bioterrorism agent, please forward this specimen to the Threat-Preparedness & Bioterrorism Response Laboratory of the OLS.

If you have a suspected agent of Bioterrorism and need to submit a clinical specimen to the OLS for confirmatory testing, please follow the procedure guidelines provided on this information sheet. These guidelines are subject to change in order to improve the LRN system. Any changes or updates will be forwarded to recognized Sentinel Laboratories upon approval.

WHOM TO CONTACT

To submit a clinical specimen that cannot be ruled out for the presence of a potential Bioterrorism agent, you must first contact the Office of Laboratory Services Threat Preparedness & Bioterrorism Response Laboratory (not the OLS Microbiology Section) for approval of specimen.

For additional response and patient management information, contact your local health department or the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology.

FOR ALL OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES: Contact the Bureau for Public Health at 304-558-2971.

REQUIRED FORMS

Please submit a "Suspected Bioterrorism Agent Clinical Specimen Submission Form" with each clinical specimen.

PACKAGING AND TRANSPORT

Please follow the packaging requirements in accordance with the IATA dangerous goods regulations for transport of biological agents of human disease or materials that are known or suspected of containing them, which consists of triple packaging of the specimen (primary receptacle, water tight secondary packaging, and durable outer packaging). The packaging materials used must be certified to meet rigorous performance tests as outlined in the DOT, USPS, PHS, and IATA regulations. You must include "**ATTN: THREAT-PREPAREDNESS & BIOTERRORISM RESPONSE LABORATORY**" in the address section on the outside of the package.

FedEx is the only carrier that will accept Category A specimens for transit. It is highly recommended to use Priority Overnight shipping. To obtain the rules and regulations for shipping infectious substances via FedEx, please see the FedEx Dangerous Goods Service Information website at <http://www.fedex.com/us/hazardous-materials/>.