

BIOTERRORISM RESPONSE ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLE HAZARD SCREEN GUIDELINES

The West Virginia Office of Laboratory Services (OLS) is considered the Reference Level Laboratory for confirmatory identification of *Bacillus anthracis*, *Yersinia pestis*, *Francisella tularensis*, *Brucella* spp., and other agents of Bioterrorism. If you have any questions about collecting or submitting an environmental sample that may contain 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 a suspected agent of Bioterrorism and need to submit an environmental sample to OLS for confirmatory testing, please follow the procedure guidelines provided on Environmental Specimen Submission Guidelines information sheet. CURRENTLY, A HAZARD CATEGORIZATION SCREEN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIMENS PRIOR TO SUBMISSION TO OLS IS ONLY A RECOMMENDATION AND NOT A REQUIREMENT.

Screening of Specimens Prior to Submission

In an effort to enhance laboratory security, OLS requests that environmental samples should be screened by the submitter prior to submission for explosives/explosive devices, radiation, and/or chemical risks. Each screen performed must be documented. We request that each agency develop specimen screening/hazard categorization protocols and obtain the appropriate field instruments to perform such screening or contact other appropriate agencies to perform the screening. The environmental sample should be assessed by individuals specifically trained or certified to perform the assays utilized. The assays should be performed utilizing acceptably calibrated/certified instruments or other acceptable means. Consultation with the FBI Hazardous Materials Response Unit and/or USAMRIID and/or the CDC WMD Response Team may be necessary for any environmental sample that has been found to contain radioactivity, volatile organic chemicals, chemical nerve agents, and/or incendiary, aerosol, pressurized gas vessels, or other potential dissemination devices. Due to safety concerns, these specimens will NOT be accepted by the OLS Threat-Preparedness & Bioterrorism Response Laboratory.

Guidelines for Hazard Categorization Screen Protocol Development

- Determine the appropriate personal protective equipment to collect and screen the environmental specimen.
- Determine the appropriate assay/methodology to be performed for each type of hazard screen.
- Determine the appropriate instruments to perform screening assays and/or methods.
- Determine appropriate agency to perform the Hazard Categorization Screen. Preferably FBI, HAZMAT Teams, Regional Response Teams, and/or National Guard Civil Support Teams.
- Develop agreements with the appropriate agencies to perform the Hazard Categorization screen.
- Develop appropriate documentation forms.
- Develop a reporting policy for screen results and determine the appropriate agency to handle the specimen.

Receipt of Specimens at OLS

The OLS Environmental Sample Test Request Submission Form must accompany the sample from the scene to the laboratory. If the environmental sample has been screened before submission to OLS, documentation of screening must also accompany the sample submission form. Documentation should include the following information: name and signature of person conducting the assessment, date of assessment, assessment performed, instrument utilized, and results of assessment. A Hazard Categorization Screen is currently recommended, but not required for submission of environmental samples.