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MT-LABORATORY SERVICES BUREAU



Updates from the
MT Laboratory
Services Bureau
800-821-7284

www.lab.hhs.mt.gov

Shipping Soon! CAP LPX Survey Set B



The CAP LPX survey Set B will be shipped to participating laboratories on Monday, September 9th. The instructions included have been altered slightly to account for the changes to ASM Sentinel Laboratory guidelines, so please take a few moments to review them, along with the new guidelines, which can be accessed [here](#).

This survey is used as an exercise to assess your laboratory staff's ability to perform sentinel laboratory responsibilities, and has three parts.

1. Using the ASM sentinel laboratory guidance, determine whether the organism can or cannot be ruled out as a select agent.
2. Prompt notification of the Montana Public Health Laboratory (MTPHL), and any internal notifications that may be part of your protocol, of those isolates that cannot be ruled out.
3. Proper packing and shipping of the suspect isolates to the Montana Public Health Laboratory.

Here are a few reminders for you as you anticipate the survey's arrival.

1. Before performing biochemical testing, serially subculture the growth. Failure to do so can yield erroneous results. We realize this will add days to the notification, unlike what would happen with a clinical isolate.
2. Perform the gram stain from the culture, not directly from the reconstituted specimen.
3. Remember your trigger points:
 - a. Tiny, slow-growing colonies, especially from a sterile source, should raise a red flag. There is no harm in setting up the gram stain under the BSC.
 - b. If the colony is a gram negative rod (especially if it does not grow on MacConkey agar), you have protected yourself and your coworkers from potential exposure to a lab-acquired infection.
4. Do not use automated systems due to the risk of aerosolization of pathogens.
 - a. The libraries of some of the automated systems are not extensive enough to include the identification of select agents.
 - b. Systems operate at temperatures not conducive to growth of certain organisms. *Yersinia pestis*, for example, grows and reacts optimally at room temperature.
5. Notify the MTPHL by calling 800-821-7284.
 - a. Speak to someone in either the microbiology laboratory or the Biopreparedness section prior to referral of any rule-out specimen.
 - (i.) Notification, as well as any rule-out information written on the requisition form, is important to protect the safety of our scientists.
6. Package and ship the isolate to the MTPHL using proper packaging and shipping procedures
 - a. Check the [MT Laboratory Services Manual](#) and, to a greater extent, the [ASM Sentinel Guidelines](#).
 - b. Ship to 1400 Broadway, Helena, MT or via the MTPHL courier, if available.
 - c. Please make sure that cultures are parafilmed and placed in a biohazard bag with absorbent material, then placed into a rigid outer container with UN3373 labeling. Markings on the box are intended to communicate the box's contents, so markings that do not apply should be covered.
 - d. More than one isolate can be placed in one box, as long as each is in its own biohazard bag with its own requisition.
 - e. Since these shipments are evaluated only for proper packaging and shipping, they are not opened as received. In addition to address and UN designation, please mark the box to identify its contents as LPX survey samples and **DO NOT include patient cultures or other specimens in the box!**

If you have other questions regarding this exercise, please contact Crystal Poppler, cpoppler@mt.gov, or Eric Bruder, ebruder@mt.gov, or call (800) 821-7284.