

Specimen Transport Bags and Manifests for MTPHL

Frequently asked questions:

My facility uses its own container to transport samples to the Public Health Laboratory. Can we still use our system, or do we have to use the bag?

Yes, the point of the specimen transport bags is to combine all samples that are coming to MTPHL to avoid any being misplaced during transport. If you have an existing method of doing that, you can continue to use it. If your transport container fits in the bag and you would like to consolidate it with the large newborn screening sample envelope, you can do that as well.

Do I put all specimens into the specimen transport bag or in individual biohazard bags?

Specimens will still go into their individual biohazard bags, and the individual bags will go into the specimen transport bag.

Do we put all specimens and newborn screening samples on one manifest?

No, please continue combining newborn screening samples in the transport envelopes we provide, along with a separate manifest. You can use the manifest we provided for newborn screening samples if you do not currently have one. You can put the envelope into the specimen transport bag to keep it with other specimens from your facility.

Do we need a separate manifest for ambient and refrigerated specimens?

No, one manifest is sufficient for both bags, as long as all specimens are accounted for. Please consider marking the bag containing refrigerated samples with something indicating they are meant to be cold (for example, with an "R" or "2-8°).

Will you be providing a manifest with the shipment of specimen transport bags?

Yes, there is a hard copy included in the package and a copy was emailed with the Sentinel Newsletter on Friday, May 24, 2019. There is also a copy on our website in the "What's New" section.

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/LaboratoryServices>

How will smaller facilities who drop off at our site for courier pickup receive this information?

MTPHL did email the newsletter and manifest to our list of clients, but we cannot be sure everyone with a need to know received the information. These facilities are responsible for providing their own manifest, and all specimens will be consolidated into one bag at the courier pick-up site. Please direct them to the information on our website or have them call us with questions.

Do I have to fill out the manifest or can I use specimen labels?

You can use labels generated at your facility, as long as it has the information that we can compare to the specimens we receive.

My laboratory information system can generate a manifest. Can I use our manifest or do I have to use yours?

We supplied a manifest as a courtesy for those labs who do not have a system of their own. You are welcome to use system-generated manifests, as long as it has the information that we can compare to the specimens we receive.

Some people drop food or water samples by our laboratory to be picked up by the courier. Am I responsible for putting those in the specimen transport bag or creating a manifest?

No, typically those samples are in a cooler or special packaging already. If they are not too large, and you would like to consolidate them in the specimen transport bag, you can do so; however, the true intent for the manifests and specimen transport bags are at the very least a method to consolidate patient specimens. As mentioned, each facility is responsible for providing their own manifest. All specimens will be consolidated into one bag at the courier pick-up site. Please direct other facilities to the information on our website or have them call us with questions.