Click Here to Enter Jurisdiction Name **Public Health**

**All-Hazards Laboratory Specimen Transport Plan**

***Revised*** Click here to enter a date

The Click here to enter jurisdiction name Public Health Department can coordinate with local and state laboratories on a 24/7 basis. The department has a means of coordinating the transportation of routine laboratory and environmental specimens to the MT Laboratory Services Bureau (MTLSB), and a safe method for coordinating the transportation of suspected hazardous laboratory and environmental specimens to the MTLSB during a public health emergency.

**Purpose**

This policy outlines the information required to contact local and state laboratories, the handling of specimens, and the collaboration between local agencies within the framework of the MT Laboratory Services Bureau's policies.

**Contact Information**

* MT Laboratory Services Bureau 1-800-821-7284 (24-hour)
* MT DPHHS (Epidemiology Section) 1-406-444-0273
* MT DPHHS PHEP 1-406-444-0919
* MT DPHHS PHEP Duty Officer 1-406-444-3075
* Click here to enter jurisdiction name Public Health Click here to enter phone number (during business hours)
* Click here to enter phone number (Dispatch – after hours)
* Law Enforcement Agencies:
* Emergency Response Agencies
	+ Click here to enter regional HAZMAT name Regional HAZMAT TEAM
	+ Emergency Management Agencies

**Standard Lab Specimen Procedures**

This pertains to all patient specimens of public health concern collected from a patient in need of transport to the Montana Laboratory Services Bureau (**MTLSB**).

1. The Click here to enter jurisdiction name Health staff involved will call the appropriate State Epi/Lab Team member for specific instructions regarding the needs of the specimen in question to determine:
	* + 1. Appropriate collection of the specimen.
			2. Guidelines or recommendations for packaging and shipping the specimen safely.
			3. That the electronic lab requisition form is filled out correctly and a paper copy is included with the specimen.
			4. The earliest arrival date at the MTLSB for testing.
2. Routine specimens are labeled with **two patient identifiers**, bagged individually in a small biohazard specimen bag containing absorbent packing material, sealed, and sent through the Click here to choose transport method to the MTLSB.
3. Bagged specimens are placed in a Styrofoam cooler with frozen blue ice packs, secured with packing, and the appropriate completed requisition forms are placed inside. The cooler is sealed for shipment to the MTLSB. Affix the correct address label to the cooler and mail it through the United States Postal Service or send it via state courier. There is no need for a chain of custody for this type of transport.

\*\***DWES, CBAT, and RTS** **should not be sent through the mail and** ***always require a Chain of Custody form***.

1. If a lab specimen needs to be transported securely, refer to Environmental Health Specimen Procedures, Step 5.

**Influenza Specimen Collection & Transport Guidelines**

The following collection and transport guidelines apply to real-time PCR testing for Influenza

testing at the MTLSB. Sub-typing will be performed on all Influenza A positive specimens (H1, H3, H5), and genotyping will be performed on all Influenza B positive specimens. Any influenza-positive specimens identified as “untypeable” will be immediately referred to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for further characterization.

**Influenza Specimen Collection Guidelines**

Collection and Transport kits are available from the Montana Laboratory Services Bureau (MTLSB) by calling 800-821-7284. Collection kits are comprised of a tube of pink Universal Transport Media, along with two sterile flocked swab applicators.

Universal Transport Media is stored at room temperature until used. Check the expiration date to ensure an adequate in-date supply.

Respiratory specimens should be collected within the first 72 hours post-onset, since viral shedding is at a peak during this time, and recovery will be optimized.

**Specimen Transport**

1. Ensure that specimens are correctly labeled with **at least two patient identifiers** and that the request form is completed.
2. Place the labeled specimen in a small biohazard specimen bag containing absorbent packing material and seal it.
3. Place the smaller bag inside the larger bag and seal it. Place the lab request form in the pocket of the larger bag.
4. Place the bagged specimen(s) in a Styrofoam cooler with frozen blue ice packs. Seal the cooler for shipment to the MTLSB and affix the correct address label to the outside of the cooler.
5. Ship the specimen without delay. Specimens must be delivered to the laboratory within 48 hours of collection.
6. Each shipment of specimens must comply with shipping regulations for diagnostic specimens, detailed in IATA 1.5 and 49 CFR Part 173 (U.S. Department of Transportation).
7. Ship specimens to the following address:

**Montana Laboratory Services Bureau**

**1400 E Broadway**

**Lab Loading Dock, C113**

**Helena, MT 59601**

**Environmental Health Specimen Procedures**

Chemical/Biological Agent Transport (CBAT) Kits provide a consistent and safe method for collecting and transporting environmental samples to MTLSB.

**CBAT Kit is located at:**

Click here to enter location name/address

***KIT #***Click here to enter text

Specimens would be collected by personnel trained in the safety of working in a contaminated environment, as well as evidence collection, e.g., Law Enforcement, HAZMAT.

If an environmental specimen needs analysis, the following procedures will be followed:

* 1. The Click here to enter jurisdiction name Public Health provider/staff involved with the specimen will notify Law Enforcement and Click here to enter jurisdiction name Environmental Health, and will include the MTLSB in consultation, and to inform them if a sample will be coming.
	2. Law enforcement and other ***credible sources***, such as the FBI and DES, will work to assess the situation and determine if a sample poses a potential hazard that should be submitted for testing. This is to prevent anyone from requesting testing without proper authorization. Testing should be requested by a credible source for a sample that has been involved in a human exposure.
	3. Specimens to be submitted for testing should be screened for explosive, flammable, radiological, chemical, and biological hazards. HAZMAT and MT DES Civil Support Team (CST) can perform this prescreen.

\*Refer to Unknown Substance Sampling on the Laboratory Emergency Preparedness page of the MTLSB website for further information. [Laboratory Emergency Preparedness (mt.gov)](https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/LaboratoryServices/LaboratoryEmergencyPreparedness)

* 1. Before taking a specimen, the MTLSB needs to be contacted at 1-800-821-7284 to alert the lab that an event is occurring. The MTLSB will advise on the correct specimen(s) required to be obtained, assist with the proper obtaining of specimens, their handling and packaging, and transport..
		+ 1. Use the CBAT kit for environmental samples.
			2. All instructions, procedures, Chain of Custody forms, and supplies contained in the kit will be followed and used to collect and ship suspect items or samples from victims potentially exposed to chemical or bio-hazardous agents.
			3. All forms supplied by the MTLSB will remain inside the kits with the supplies.
	2. Once the specimen is assessed for hazards and if the specimen needs secure transportation, the following options will be available:
		1. Click here to enter jurisdiction name Sheriff’s Department or MT Highway Patrol: Click here to enter phone number
		2. The MTLSB courier is available on an emergency basis. Call 800-821-7284 to arrange a pick-up.
	3. Law Enforcement will initiate the Chain of Custody paperwork, which is located within the CBAT kit.
	4. The MTLSB will notify Click here to enter jurisdiction name Public Health with suspicious substance results.
		1. The Health Department Team member on call will notify other team members in accordance with the Disease Surveillance policies and procedures.
		2. State Health Dept. Epi or state lab personnel will be contacted within 2 hours by the local Epi person in charge for further guidance and notification of the ongoing situation.
		3. If/when determined, local law enforcement would be notified to triage all credible threats and maintain evidence that may need to be preserved.
	5. All specimens will be treated as evidence and will be returned, upon request, to law enforcement or the

 FBI after testing.

 \*MTLSB will discard evidence not requested within a reasonable timeframe.

* 1. MTLSB will notify the requestor of results from any samples.

Contact the Montana Laboratory Services Bureau at (800) 821-7284 to obtain replacement kits or supplies.

**Drinking Water Emergency Sampling (DWES) Kit**

The DWES kit is a ready-to-use method for ensuring the consistent collection and transport of public water samples to the MTLSB.

The DWES kit is to be used for collecting necessary samples from a drinking water facility during a suspected tampering or contamination event. These samples will help determine unknown contaminants that may be in the water supply. This is not for compliance and is only a preliminary attempt to assess the risk to public health. Necessary precautions or limitations of the water system should be practiced while the samples are being analyzed and until results are known.

In the event of a water tampering incident, water samples would be collected by a Registered Sanitarian or

Water Works Operator (or HAZMAT if the environment is dangerous). ***Before breaking the evidence seal*** and opening the DWES Kit, the collector ***must call the MTLSB at (800) 821-7284 AND the State DES Duty Officer at (406) 431-0411.***

The DWES Kit contains all the necessary personal protective equipment, sampling bottles, instructions, test request forms, and Chain of Custody forms to obtain and document the samples. Evidence tape is also provided to seal the exterior of the kit before transport.

Transportation to MTLSB will be provided by:

1. Click here to enter jurisdiction name Sheriff’s Department or MT Highway Patrol: Click here to enter phone number OR
2. The MTLSB courier is available in the event of an emergency. Call 800-821-7284 to arrange a pick-up.

Chain of Custody paperwork is included in each kit.

Click here to enter location name/address

***KIT #***Click here to enter text

**If you intend to use this kit, notify both of the following numbers for assistance:**

**MTLSB (800) 821-7284 AND**

**DES Duty Officer at (406) 431-0411**

Contact the Montana Laboratory Services Bureau at (800) 821-7284 to obtain replacement kits or supplies.

**Rapid Toxic Screen**

The Rapid Toxic Screen involves collecting clinical specimens (blood and urine) from patients suspected of having been exposed to a chemical threat agent. The (enter jurisdiction name) will coordinate with the (enter local hospital name) and the MT Laboratory Services Bureau (MTLSB) in response to the chemical agent exposure.

In the event of a large-scale chemical exposure, the transport of Rapid Toxic Screen specimens requires two white Styrofoam boxes. One box is intended for the transport of human blood (shipped cold), and the second box is meant to transport frozen urine (shipped on dry ice) to the MTLSB. MTLSB will forward the specimens to the CDC for the Rapid Toxic Screen testing. CDC must authorize the shipment; however, they can screen for over 150 chemical toxins.

The collecting facility will collect the following samples in the following order: a minimum of 12 mL EDTA (purple-top tubes) whole blood and one gray (or green-top) whole blood sample from each patient. The 3 or 4 EDTA tubes need to be labeled #1, #2, and #3 (and #4 if applicable) in the order that they are drawn. Store the blood samples at 1 °C to 10 °C. Each patient should have 40-60 ml of urine collected in a screw cap cup. Freeze the urine samples (optimally at -70 °C). Refer to the CDC Specimen-Collection Protocol for a Chemical-Exposure [Collecting and Labeling Specimens from People with Possible Exposure to Chemical Agents | The Laboratory Response Network Partners in Preparedness | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/laboratory-response-network/php/chemical/specimen-collection.html)

The integrity of Rapid Toxic Screen samples should always be maintained. The collector/receiver of the blood and urine samples will be the first to sign a Chain of Custody form. Each time the specimens are handed over (e.g., to shipping personnel), the Chain of Custody should be signed by the person releasing them **and** the person receiving the specimens. Facilities may use their Chain of Custody form or may contact the MTLSB at (800) 821-7284 for a Chain of Custody form.

Rapid Toxic Screen shipping boxes and collection supplies are located at (the collecting facility/local hospital.)

Click here to enter location name/address

The following is an overview of each agency’s current collection and transport policy for specimens of immediate concern:

**Example:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Agency** | Human Specimens | Environmental Samples |
| Local hospital Lab | Staff trained in collection, Courier on-call for delivery | Staff trained in collection, Courier on-call for delivery |
| County Sheriff | Call the State crime lab for collection guidance on the scene.  | Call the County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) or Tribal DES.  |
| Local Law Enforcement | Call Tribal DES or County OEM.Call the State crime lab for guidance on collecting on the scene. | Call Tribal DES or County OEM. |
| Montana Highway Patrol | Call the State crime lab for collection guidance on the scene.  | Call the County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) or Tribal DES.  |
| Local Fire Departments | Call law enforcement. | Call Law Enforcement or HAZMAT. |
| County OEM | If deemed a credible threat to Public Health, notify the County Health Department (CHD) and the MTLSB. Maintain chain of custody. | If deemed a credible threat to Public Health, notify HAZMAT, CHD, and MTLSB. Maintain chain of custody. |
| (Tribal) DES | If deemed a credible threat to Public Health, notify CHD and MTLSB. Maintain chain of custody. | If deemed a credible threat to Public Health, notify HAZMAT, CHD, and MTLSB. Maintain chain of custody. |

Each of the agencies listed above have protocols in place regarding collection and transport of specimens of ***non-immediate concern*.**

The hospitals have internal policies regarding transportation of specimens of ***immediate concern.***The primary responsibility of specimen collection, packaging, and delivery of hospital *specimens of immediate concern* lies with the individual agency as spelled out in their policies. Their policies include notification of CHD of any suspect or actual threats to the public’s health.