NCSLPH Clinical Specimen Storage and Shipping

Clinical specimens for testing at the NCSLPH should be shipped within 24 hours of collection.
When shipping must be delayed (e.g., inclement weather, courier closures), guidelines are given below on proper storage and shipping of common specimen types. Please see our SCOPE for detailed guidance.

	If shipping immediately	*If shipping is delayed*
COVID-19 + Flu PCR	≤ 72 hours	DRY ICE REQUIRED
Legionella Clinical**	≤ 3 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
CHIKV, EEE, LACV, SLE, WEE, WNV	≤ 2 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
Dengue (DENV)	≤ 5 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
Hepatitis A (HAV)	≤ 5 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
Hepatitis B (HBV)	≤ 4 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
Hepatitis C (HCV)	≤ 5 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
HIV	≤ 5 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
HIV/HCV	≤ 5 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
Measles/Mumps PCR*	≤ 3 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
Measles Serology*	≤ 3 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
Rickettsia + *Ehrlichia*	≤ 3 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
Rubella IgG	≤ 5 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
Syphilis RPR	≤ 5 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
Syphilis TP	≤ 5 days	DRY ICE REQUIRED
Bordetella Culture**	≤ 3 days	
Bordetella PCR**	≤ 7 days	
HSV/VZV NAAT	≤ 5 days	
Hemoglobinopathy Whole Blood	≤ 6 days	
Legionella Culture**	Ship as soon as possible	
Micro Reference Cultures	Ship ambient as soon as possible	
NBS Dried Blood Spots (DBS)	≤ 14 days, avoid excessive heat and/or humidity	
Hemoglobinopathy Screening DBS	≤ 14 days	
Neisseria Culture	Must be shipped ambient as soon as possible, see SCOPE for N. gonorrhoeae subculture details	
Blood Lead	≤ 28 days for capillary and venous specimens at ambient (15-38 °C) temperature. See SCOPE for details on submitting cold or frozen specimen.	
BTEP* and CTAT*	Call 919-807-8600 (BTEP) or 919-602-2481 (CTAT) prior to any submission for guidance on collection, labeling, packaging, and shipment	
Chlamydia/Gonorrhea TMA	May be received cold or ambient, ≤ 28 days	
Enteric Bacteriology	Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details	
Mycobacteriology (TB)	Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details	
Mycology	Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details	
Parasitology	Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details	
Rabies	Ship cold ASAP, freezing not recommended	
Viral Culture	Varies by specimen type, see SCOPE for details	

NCSLPH DOA Medical Courier Packing and Shipping Guidance

LHDs follow NCSLPH DOA Medical Courier Packaging & Shipping Guidance.

Refrigerate specimens 2-8°C post collection. Specimens must be received cold (2-8°C) on frozen ice packs within the number of hours/days as indicated in the chart from time of collection.

Freeze specimens at ≤ -70°C post collection. Ship overnight via commercial courier on dry ice.

Freeze specimens at ≤ -20°C post collection. Ship overnight via commercial courier on dry ice.

** Specimens must be received cold (1-8°C) on frozen ice packs.
* Submission requires prior approval.

Store and ship at ambient temperature. Specimens must be received within the number of hours/days as indicated in the chart from time of collection.

Unique requirements, refer to SCOPE.

NC Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health
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