



Updated October 19, 2023

Criteria for requesting COVID-19 testing at OSPHL

The Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) provides testing for COVID-19 to support public health priorities established by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). **Specimens submitted for COVID-19 testing must meet the criteria outlined below and must be approved for testing by the OHA epidemiologist supporting the outbreak.** OSPHL may consult with local or state public health officials to verify acceptance.

For specimens not meeting these criteria, COVID-19 testing is widely available and clinicians should order COVID-19 testing at their discretion through commercial laboratories. Specimens submitted to OSPHL for COVID-19 testing during the respiratory season will be co-tested for influenza.

Testing at the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory

1. OSPHL will support testing for high-risk congregate residential setting outbreaks with unusual characteristics of public health significance (e.g., unusual morbidity or mortality, new or uncommon constellation of symptoms). COVID-19 is an extremely common pathogen and OSPHL is not able to support testing for the majority of outbreaks in such settings. In general, these facilities should access testing through their health care partner(s).
2. The following groups are also prioritized for testing at OSPHL:
 - a. Patients seen at tribal health centers, NARA Indian Health Clinic, and Chemawa Indian Health Center who have symptoms compatible with COVID-19
 - b. Facilities requesting testing support within OSPHL capacity and operated by the Oregon Department of Human Services (e.g., Stability and Crisis Units) or Oregon Health Authority (e.g., Oregon State Hospital)
 - c. Postmortem specimens from suspect, presumptive or confirmed COVID-19 cases

3. Approvals

- a. If submitting specimens for outbreak investigation or response, please have your outbreak number assigned by state or local public health available when contacting OSPHL.
- b. Submission of postmortem swabs does not require approval. To submit autopsy tissues for testing at CDC, contact the Acute and Communicable Disease Prevention Epidemiologist On-call for approval at 971-673-1111.

4. Collecting specimens

- a. **Follow all instructions for specimen collection, handling, and storage available at www.healthoregon.org/labtests.**
- b. Specimens should be collected under appropriate infection prevention precautions. For information on recommended infection prevention measures for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, see [COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations: Clinical Care, and Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control](#).

5. Sending specimens and forms

- a. Submit each specimen with a completed Test Request Form. **Incorrectly completed or incomplete test request forms will delay testing.**
 - i. The Virology/Immunology Test Request Form is to be used for individual testing, is available at www.bitly.com/phl-forms.
 - ii. A COVID-19 and Influenza Test Request Form for outbreaks and group collections will be provided for each testing event.
- b. Send specimens so that they will be received at OSPHL during receiving hours:
 - i. Monday–Friday, between 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM.
 - ii. Saturday and Sunday, between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM.

6. Resources and Questions

- a. Oregon State Public Health Laboratory:
<http://www.healthoregon.org/phl> – 503-693-4100
- b. Local Public Health Authority Contact Information:
www.healthoregon.org/lhddirectory
- c. Acute and Communicable Disease Prevention Epidemiologist
On-call: 971-673-1111

Document accessibility: For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide information in alternate formats such as translations, large print, or braille. Contact the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory at 503-693-4100, 711 TTY or sarah.m.king@oha.oregon.gov.