# OSPHL COURIER SYSTEM HANDBOOK

**Oregon State Public Health Laboratory**

**JUNE 2026**

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# Introduction

This guidance ensures that facilities using Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) courier services are appropriately prepared to transport specimens to the OSPHL in compliance with Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) regulations. This document covers information related to preparation of specimens, completing Test Request forms and transport manifests, and preparing the transport container.

This guidance applies to specimens classified as Category B. For more information about Category A specimen transport, please see the Additional Transport Requirements section of this Handbook.

For additional specimen packaging training, please refer to our training video found here: www.bitly.com/phl-courier

NOTE: For locations sending orders using an electronic interface or remote data entry, steps marked with an asterisk (*) may be different. Please refer to your location's internal procedures or OSPHL data entry instructions for more information.

# Transporting Category B specimens using OSPHL courier services

## Prepare specimens

1. Review the specimen collection, handling, transport, and test ordering guidance on the OSPHL Lab Test Menu: www.healthoregon.org/labtests. Familiarize yourself with the OSPHL Specimen Submission Policy (pdf).
2. Collect and label your specimens. When possible, use opaque labels. Each specimen must be clearly labeled with **two** unique, patient-specific identifiers. Examples of acceptable identifiers include:
   a. Patient first and last name,
   b. Patient ID/MRN/chart number, or
   c. Date of birth.
3. **Leave a window** so the expiration date and contents can be seen. If the sample container has a fill line, leave it uncovered.
   See Attachment 2 – Specimen Labeling.




**Specimen Transport Tube**




**Agar Plate**

4. *Complete the appropriate Test Request Form, filling in all required fields marked with an asterisk.
   a. If you do not have the patient address, include at least the patient zip code.
   b. Test Request Forms are posted on the OSPHL website, including fillable and printable PDF versions: www.bitly.com/phl-forms.
5. Store specimens at the appropriate temperature for the specimen type until the specimen is packaged for transport. Information about proper storage for each test is available on the OSPHL Lab Test Menu: www.healthoregon.org/labtests.

## Prepare the transport manifest

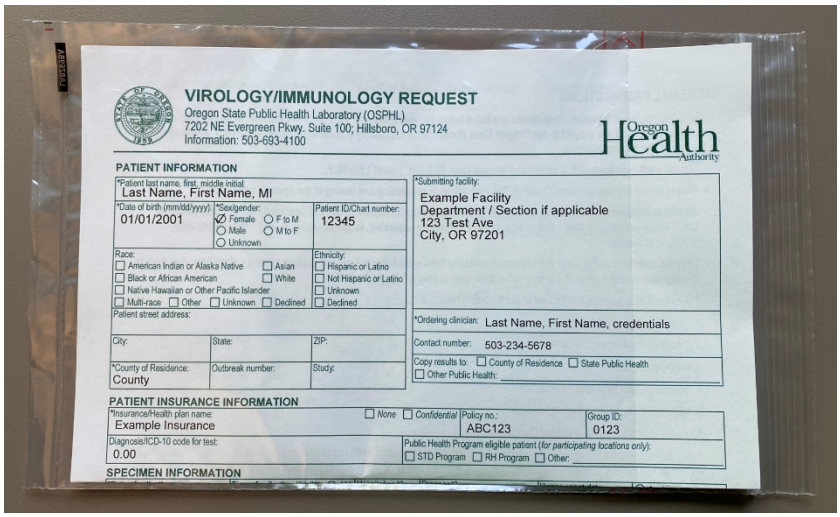
Including a manifest helps the laboratory staff ensure that they received all the specimens you intended to send. You may use your own format or OSPHL's template.

You can find OSPHL's manifest template at www.bitly.com/phl-forms. See Attachment 3 for an example.

1. Create one manifest for each transport container. If you need more than one manifest sheet for the container, number each page and staple them together.
   a. If you are packing specimens from multiple facilities, a manifest is needed for each facility.
2. Write the transport date.
3. Select your test order method, paper forms or electronic orders.
4. Make sure your Facility Name is listed on the manifest. If your organization has multiple locations, include your location.
5. Write the name and phone number of a contact person the lab can contact with questions about the contents of the container.
6. In the boxes titled "Patient Specific Identifier, place one patient label from your electronic health record onto the manifest or hand-write each patient identifier per specimen or list the number of specimens for the patient if more than one specimen is sent.

# Prepare specimens for transport

1. Place the primary leak-proof specimen container(s) associated with a single Test Request Form* in a leak-proof specimen transport bag. Include the absorbent material provided with the collection kit.
   a. Note: A culture plate is not a leak-proof, primary container. You will need to use an additional layer to qualify as the primary container (for example, an extra leak-proof, sealed bag).
2. Fold the Test Request Form for the specimen(s) in half and place it in the *outer* pocket of the specimen transport bag with the submitting facility name facing out.


VIROLOGY/IMMUNOLOGY REQUEST
Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL)
7202 NE Evergreen Pkwy. Suite 100; Hillsboro, OR 97124
Information: 503-693-4100
Oregon Health Authority
PATIENT INFORMATION
*Patient last name, first, middle initial: Last Name, First Name, MI
*Date of birth (mm/dd/yyyy): 01/01/2001
*Sex/gender: Female, F to M, Male, M to F, Unknown
Patient ID/Chart number: 12345
Race: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, White, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Multi-race, Other, Unknown, Declined
Ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino, Not Hispanic or Latino, Unknown, Declined
Patient street address:
City:
State:
ZIP:
*County of Residence: County
Outbreak number:
Study:
*Submitting facility: Example Facility, Department / Section if applicable, 123 Test Ave, City, OR 97201
*Ordering clinician: Last Name, First Name, credentials
Contact number: 503-234-5678
Copy results to: County of Residence, State Public Health, Other Public Health:
PATIENT INSURANCE INFORMATION
*Insurance/Health plan name: Example Insurance
None, Confidential
Policy no.: ABC123
Group ID: 0123
Diagnosis/ICD-10 code for test: 0.00
Public Health Program eligible patient (for participating locations only): STD Program, RH Program, Other:
SPECIMEN INFORMATION

Example Test Request Form, Virology/Immunology, in the outer pocket of a specimen bag

# Options for Transport to OSPHL

### Scheduled Courier Services

OSPHL contracts with DASH Delivery for all courier services. If a facility has signed up for routinely scheduled services, a courier driver should arrive at the facility within a specified time window.

Facilities can request this service from the OSPHL courier team via email at osphl.courier@odhsoha.orgon.gov.

## On-Call/As-Needed Courier Services

To place on-call order requests when your facility has specimens to be picked up, use our online form, available at: https://bit.ly/OSPHL-courier.

Most services will be scheduled for pick up the business day following the request. OSPHL staff will respond to the request within 1 working day. Certain requests that require more urgent action will automatically notify OSPHL staff that more timely scheduling is needed.

Using the online order form provides OSPHL staff with all the information needed to place the order and reduces communication delays and transcription errors that can occur when orders are placed via phone.

## Client arranged delivery to OSPHL

OSPHL accepts specimens from clients during our receiving hours of Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, and Saturday 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. These hours may be subject to change. If you or your contracted carrier are unable to deliver during these times, please contact OSPHL to determine if alternative arrangements are available.

OSPHL address is:

Oregon State Public Health Laboratory
7202 NE Evergreen Parkway
Suite 100
Hillsboro, OR 97124

# Prepare a Category B transport container



**Single insulated cooler**



**Double insulated cooler**

OSPHL provides two different styles of transport coolers:

1. Smaller, single insulated coolers can be used for one temperature range.
2. Large double-sided cooler where each side can be used for different temperature requirements. This allows you to transport specimens with different temperature requirements inside one container.
    a. For example: blood tubes or Cary Blair which require 2-8°C (35.6-46.4° F) in one insulated area and isolates on solid media that require room temperature 20-25°C (68-77°F) in the other insulated area.

Check the handling instructions for each specimen, including the required transport temperatures and transport timelines on the OSPHL Lab Test Menu at www.healthoregon.org/labtests. Include the necessary supplies to ensure your specimens are transported at the proper temperature until delivery at the OSPHL (for example, frozen gel packs).

**For room or ambient temperature specimens:**

Place the room temperature specimens in the inner, insulated compartment. No more packaging material is required.

**For refrigerated specimens:**

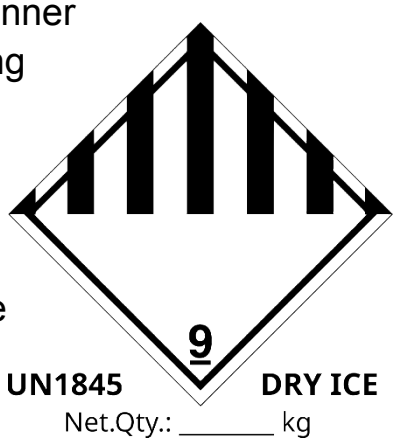
1. Add 2-3 fully frozen large gel packs (minimum size 5x6 inches) to the inner, insulated compartment.

a. During summer months when outdoor temperatures are warmer, more gel packs may be needed.
b. Small ice packs, such as Koolit® Liquid Refrigerant PCM are not recommended because they only remain frozen for a short time.

2. Place 4-6 paper towels or other barrier on top of the gel packs.
   a. This prevents specimens from contact freezing against the frozen gel packs.
3. Place the refrigerated specimens on top of the paper towels or other barrier.

**For frozen specimens:**

1. Place the completely frozen specimens in the inner compartment. Cover specimens with cushioning material.
2. Add enough dry ice for your transport time. (10-15 lbs or 4.6-6.8 kg per 24 hours is normally enough.)
3. Attach a self-adhesive pocket to the side of the cooler.
   a. Write in the amount of dry ice inside the container in kilograms on a UN 1845 label and place the label into the adhesive pocket.
   b. Contact the OSPHL if you need labels or purchase from a qualified vendor.

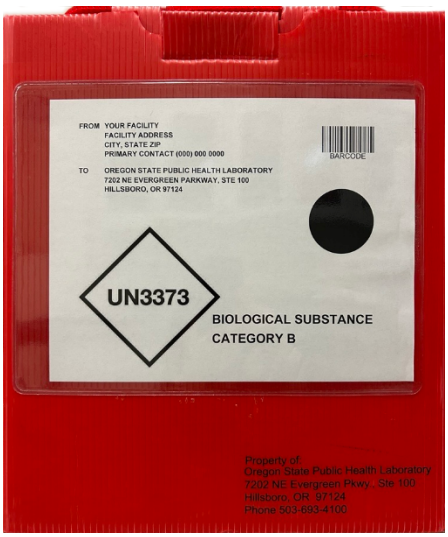



Class 9 Label with UN 1845 Marking for Dry Ice including Weight in kg

## Package the specimens for Category B transport

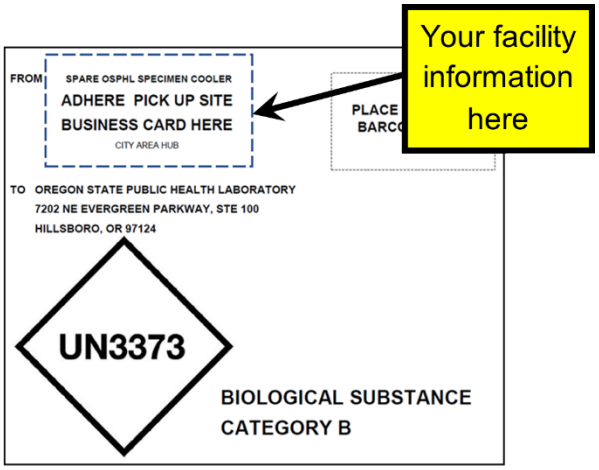
1. When all specimens have been prepared as detailed above, place the lid on the insulated inner container.
2. Place the transport manifest on top of the insulated lid. Close the outer container flaps over top of the transport manifest.

3. Close the red external transport container. The Velcro will keep it closed during transport.
4. The large, laminated address card inside the vinyl pocket has two sides. The blue side states “EMPTY COOLER”. To send specimens to the OSPHL, flip the card over to the white side with Category B, UN3373, labeling (see right).
   a. Attachment 4 and Attachment 5 provide examples of both sides of the address card insert.




Category B Compliant "Packed" Red State Cooler

5. When an OSPHL red cooler isn’t available, your driver will bring a spare OSPHL cooler to pick up. The spare cooler will have no facility information on the address card. Please tape a business card or note to the “From” area on the laminated address card or over that area on the vinyl holder to include your:
   a. Facility name
   b. Address
   c. Contact person’s name and phone number.
   d. If a spare OSPHL specimen cooler is not available, OSPHL staff will guide your facility’s staff through purchasing or creating a Department of Transportation (DOT)-compliant Category B container.




Spare OSPHL Cooler Address Card

# Additional transport requirements

## Category A specimens

Before transport, notify the OSPHL when submitting samples classified as Category A at 503-693-4100. AFB (*M. tuberculosis*) and Shiga-toxin producing *E. coli* specimens do not require notification.

To package specimens classified as Category A for transport with the OSPHL courier, you **must** have current Department of Transportation Hazardous Materials shipping training certification (Division 6.2 infectious substances).

A list of organisms indicative of Category A substances are found on the DOT website (https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/transporting-infectious-substances/transporting-infectious-substances-safely) in the Transporting Infectious Substances Safely Brochure.

**This list is not all-inclusive; the individual classifying the specimens is responsible for ensuring specimens are properly classified.**



- See section “Examples of Category A: UN2814, Infectious Substances Affecting Humans” and “Examples of Category A: UN2900, Infectious Substances Affecting Animals”
  Please check regularly as the list is subject to change.



**EXAMPLES OF CATEGORY A: UN2814, INFECTIOUS SUBSTANCES AFFECTING HUMANS**

**MICRO-ORGANISM**

Bacillus anthracis (cultures only)

Brucella abortus (cultures only)

Brucella melitensis (cultures only)

Brucella suis (cultures only)

Burkholderia mallei—Pseudomonas mallei—Glanders (cultures only)

Burkholderia pseudomallei—Pseudomonas pseudomallei (cultures only)

OSPHL red transport containers marked for Category B (UN 3733) shipping **cannot** be used to transport specimens classified for Category A shipment. Use an UN-certified Category A shipping container and include all proper documentation.

Examples of appropriate package labeling for specimens classified as Category A can be found on the OSPHL website: www.bitly.com/phl-shipping. Please contact the OSPHL for more information at 503-693-4100.

Category A packages picked up by an OSPHL-contracted courier will be barcoded for tracking at the time of pick up.

## Suspected select agents

After notifying the state epidemiologist on call at 971-673-1111, notify OSPHL at 503-693-4100 during business hours, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, alert the laboratory of the incoming specimen and schedule transport if needed.

**The OSPHL cannot accept known select agents.** The list of select agents can be found here: http://www.selectagents.gov/SelectAgentsandToxinsList.html

If you need after-hours assistance, coordinate your request through the ACDP On-Call Epidemiologist 24/7 at 971-673-1111. If needed, they may connect you with the OSPHL Manager On-Call.

## QFT specimens

Please notify OSPHL about a QFT specimen as soon as possible after collection to ensure timely transport. This also helps ensure the receiving team opens your transport container first for specimen processing.

1. On-call facilities:
    a. Request a specific QFT pick-up using the OSPHL Courier Order Request Form at https://bit.ly/OSPHL-courier.
2. Facilities with scheduled pick-ups:
    a. If you are including the QFT specimen in your regularly scheduled pick up, email the OSPHL Courier Support Team at osphl.courier@odhsoha.oregon.gov.
    b. If you need an extra pick up, request a specific QFT pick-up using the OSPHL Courier Order Request Form at https://bit.ly/OSPHL-courier.

Two options are available for QFT specimen collection, storage, and transport requirements, please see the OSPHL Test Menu at www.healthoregon.org/labtests and the OSPHL QuantiFERON® Specimen Collection Fact Sheet (pdf) for details.

# Laboratory holidays and closures

OSPHL is closed on the State of Oregon holiday schedule posted on the DAS Building Closure Notices webpage: https://www.oregon.gov/das/pages/buildingclosure.aspx.

For planned State of Oregon holiday closures:

- Each submitting facility will be contacted via fax and/or email prior to pre-scheduled closures.
- Some specimens may not be accepted the working day before a holiday closure. Specimen acceptance considerations will be included on closure notices.
- Routinely scheduled communicable disease services pick-ups will be cancelled on the holiday.
- If needed, request an extra pick up using the OSPHL Courier Order Request Form at https://bit.ly/OSPHL-courier.

If OSPHL closes due to unforeseen circumstances, a notice will be posted on the main OSPHL website at www.healthoregon.org/phl. Courier considerations will also be included, including delays or closures based on the circumstance. OSPHL will also notify clients via email when possible.

When OSPHL remains open, but a contracted courier is unable to provide services for a particular site or region due to unforeseen circumstances, the affected facilities will be specifically notified.

# Client cancellations and closures

When your facility will be closed on a routine courier service day, notify OSPHL to cancel pick up using the OSPHL Courier Order Request form at: https://bit.ly/OSPHL-courier.

For urgent closures (for example, during inclement weather), please email OSPHL at osphl.courier@odhsoha.orgon.gov or the OSPHL Courier Order

Request form at: https://bit.ly/OSPHL-courier. This ensures that OSPHL and the couriers are coordinating to keep the drivers safe and provide optimum service.

# Frequently asked questions

Q: **How do I collect, store, or transport a specimen for testing?**
A: Check our website at http://www.healthoregon.org/labtests. If you have more questions, please contact the lab at 503-693-4100.

Q: **There are a lot of different links and contact details throughout this document, is there an easy place where I can find all of them?**
A: Yes, please see Attachment 6: Contacts and Links.

Q: **I have specimens that need to be picked up. How do I arrange this?**
A: Please see section “Options for Transport to OSPHL” on page 5 for instructions on submitting specimens to OSPHL.

Q: **Can I use the same Virology/Immunology Test Request Form to order multiple tests for the same patient?**
A: If there is enough blood in a single specimen tube for OSPHL to perform the tests requested, multiple tests can be ordered on one form. Only one Chlamydia/gonorrhea specimen can be ordered per request form. Please use a different request form for each Chlamydia/gonorrhea specimen.

Q: **Our courier hasn’t come yet, and we are closing soon.**
A: Please contact our team at OSPHL.courier@odhsoha.oregon.gov or by calling 503-693-4100. We will coordinate with the courier and provide an estimated time that the driver will arrive.

Q: **How can I change the days of our regular pickups?**
A: Please contact our team at OSPHL.courier@odhsoha.oregon.gov and we can work with your site to find a better schedule.

Q: **What are your receiving hours?**
A: OSPHL accepts specimens during our receiving hours:
Monday-Friday – 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Saturday – 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
These hours may be subject to change.

The OSPHL address is:
Oregon State Public Health Laboratory
7202 NE Evergreen Parkway
Suite 100
Hillsboro, OR 97124

Q: **I don't have any transport container at my site, and I have specimens to send.**

A: Do not send specimens without a transport container.
If you have a routinely scheduled pick-up upcoming, please email OSPHL at osphl.courier@odhsoha.oregon.gov to request delivery of empty transport containers.
If you need to place an on-call/as-needed pick-up, use the OSPHL Courier Order Request form: https://bit.ly/OSPHL-courier. The form asks whether you have a transport box for the pickup; choose "no."

Q: **How can I send specimens that require different temperature ranges?**

A: You can send two insulated containers with the courier. If you only have one container and need another:

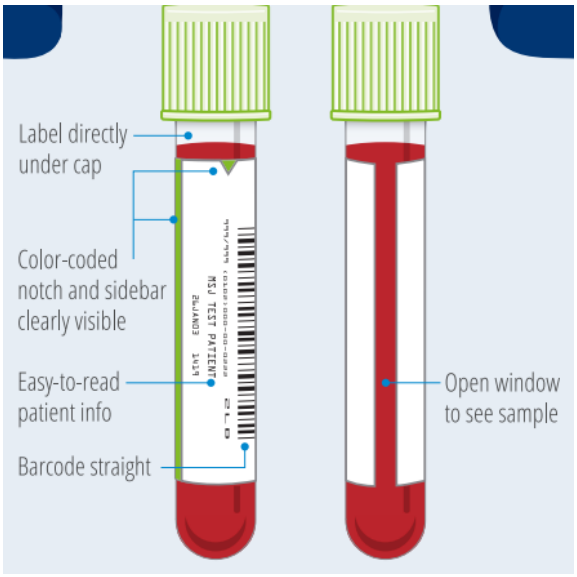
- For a routinely scheduled pick-up, please contact our team at OSPHL.courier@odhsoha.oregon.gov.
  For an on-call/as-needed pick-up, use the OSPHL Courier Order Request form: https://bit.ly/OSPHL-courier. Indicate your need on the form.
  We will coordinate with the courier on your behalf. If your site often sends specimens that require different temperatures, we can set your site up with a large transport container that contains two insulated coolers. Each side can be used for a different temperature range.

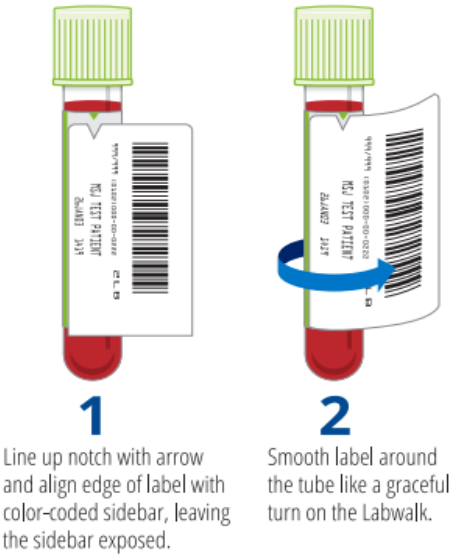
Q: **How do I get trained to properly package and transport specimens?**

A: Free, online training is available from the CDC at www.cdc.gov/labtraining. OSPHL also provides ongoing, regional, in-person training courses. To request training, please contact the OSPHL LRN Coordinator at 503-693-4123.

# Attachment 1 – Specimen Labeling Examples

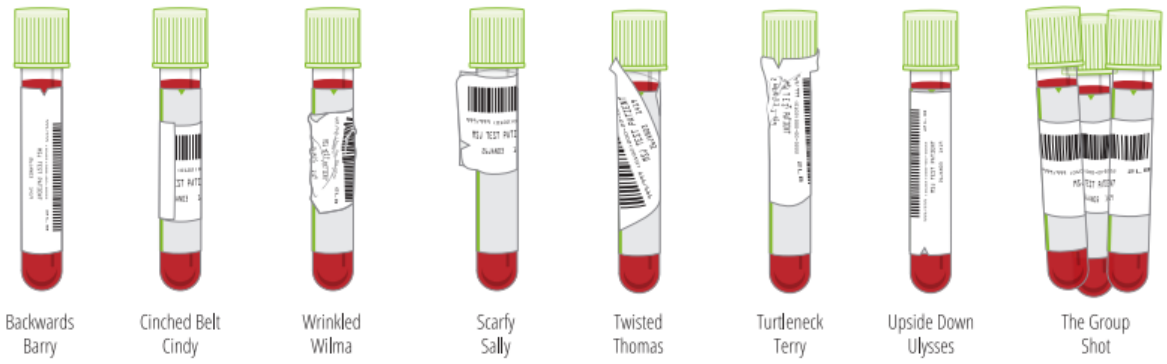
Examples of **correctly labeled** specimen tubes:



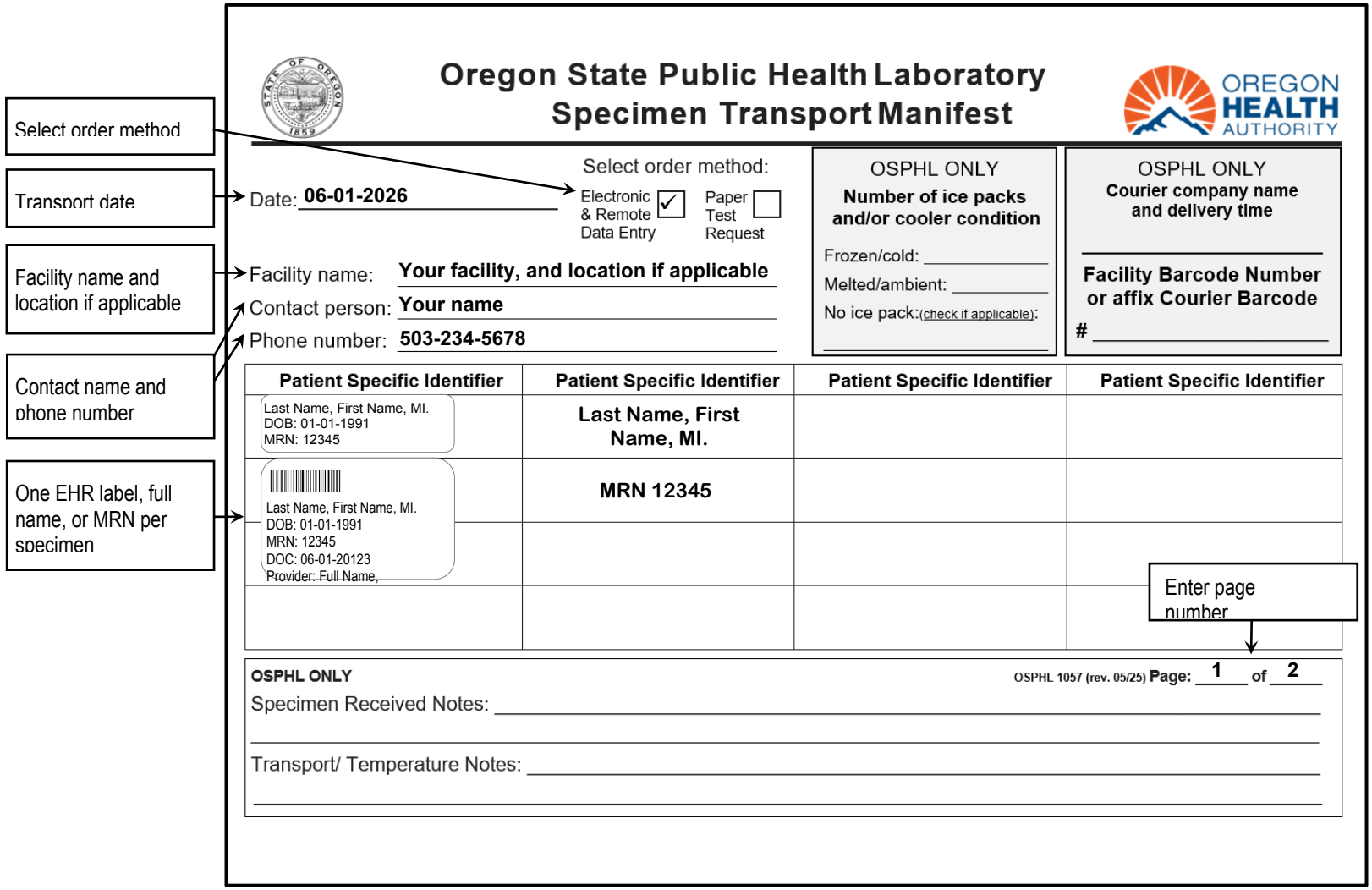

Each collection tube must have at least 2 patient-specific identifiers that match the information on the test order. Examples are: Full patient name, Date of Birth, Medical Record Number, or Employee ID.

The following labels are **not** on the tubes correctly.




OSPHL 127 Quality Specimen labeling instruction v1.0 (Effective 11/3/20; Due for review 10/10/2026)

# Attachment 2 – Sample Transport Manifest



# Attachment 3 – Example Address Card: Cooler Containing Specimens

**FROM**

**FACILITY NAME**

**FACILITY ADDRESS**

**FACILITY CONTACT AND PHONE NUMBER**

124000101

**TO**

**OREGON STATE PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY**

**7202 NE EVERGREEN PARKWAY, STE 100**

**HILLSBORO, OR 97124**




**BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE**

**CATEGORY B**

# Attachment 4 – Example Address Card: Empty Cooler

**FROM**

**OREGON STATE PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY**

**7202 NE EVERGREEN PARKWAY, STE 100**

**HILLSBORO, OR 97124**

124000101

**TO**

**FACILITY NAME**

**FACILITY ADDRESS**

**FACILITY CONTACT AND PHONE NUMBER**

**EMPTY COOLER**



To schedule a pick-up visit: https://bit.ly/OSPHL-courier
Questions? Email osphl.courier@odhsoha.oregon.gov
or call us at 503-693-4100

# Attachment 5 – Contacts and Links

## Specimen Collection, Labeling, and Packaging

Lab Test Menu: www.healthoregon.org/labtests

Courier Pick Up Order Form/Communicable Disease Pick Up Cancellation Form: https://bit.ly/OSPHL-courier

Specimen Packaging Training Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wns2-IrBTk4

Specimen Shipping and Transport Webpage (Non-Courier): www.bitly.com/phl-shipping

## Test Request Forms and Collection Kits

Test Request Forms: www.bitly.com/phl-forms

Specimen Collection Kits: Collection Supplies Request Form (pdf)

## OSPHL Holidays and Contact Information

State of Oregon Holiday Schedule: https://www.oregon.gov/das/pages/buildingclosure.aspx

Courier Support Email (preferred contact method): osphl.courier@odhsoha.oregon.gov

Courier Phone Number (OSPHL Front Desk): 503-693-4100