



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Public Health

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Division of Public Health

**SCOTT M. SHONE, PhD, HCLD (ABB)** • Laboratory Director, State  
Laboratory of Public Health

# Memo

**To:** Customers of the NC State Laboratory of Public Health

**From:** Scott M. Shone, PhD, HCLD (ABB), Director, State Laboratory of Public Health

**Date:** January 19, 2021

**Re:** State Courier Service Interruption – January 19 to January 21

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This morning, the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health (NCSLPH) was notified that the State Courier will be closed for operation from Tuesday, January 19 through Wednesday, January 20, as part of the temporary closure of all government facilities in downtown Raleigh.

The State Courier will resume picking up specimens from facilities on Thursday, January 21.

**The NCSLPH will be operating normally during this time and testing specimens received.**

Alternate shipping methods (i.e., private couriers) may be used to transport specimens to NCSLPH for testing. Alternatively, sites should ensure that specimens and samples are stored using the proper conditions until the State Courier resumes normal business operations. For any questions, please contact NCSLPH Customer Service at 919-733-3937.

The following storage guidelines can be used for samples and specimens that have been collected and are awaiting transport:

## **Bacteriological Well Water Samples**

Bacteriological well water samples should be kept at room temperature and received by the laboratory within 30 hours of collection. If samples cannot be delivered within 30 hours of collection, please discard the sample and recollect.

## **Nitrate/Nitrite Well Water Samples**

Nitrate/Nitrite well water samples should be refrigerated (2° to 6°C) and received within 48 hours of collection.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH • STATE LABORATORY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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### Reference Microbiology Specimens

- *Neisseria gonorrhoea* (GC) cultures must remain incubated in CO<sub>2</sub> until pickup and require subculture every 48 hours. As a reminder, please do not send GC cultures on Fridays.
- *Streptococcus pneumoniae* should remain incubated in CO<sub>2</sub>; all other *Streptococcus* specimens can be stored at room temperature. All specimens should be transported as soon as possible.
- *Bordetella* cultures on transport medium (Reagan-Lowe) and *Bordetella* PCR swabs must remain refrigerated until pickup and shipped on ice packs. Specimens must be received within 5 days of collection.
- Stool preserved in Cary Blair/enteric transport media can be kept refrigerated until pickup. If refrigeration is not available, room temperature storage is acceptable. Specimens should be transported as soon as possible.
- Sputum samples for TB testing must be refrigerated until pickup, and transported as soon as possible.
- *Legionella* culture samples must remain refrigerated until pickup, shipped on ice packs, and transported as soon as possible.
- All other clinical submissions for microbiological testing can be stored at room temperature and should be transported as soon as possible.

### Virology/Serology Specimens

- COVID-19 specimens are to be stored at 2-8°C for up to 72 hours, and frozen at -70°C thereafter. If frozen, specimens must be shipped on dry ice following IATA regulations, instead of cold packs. Please note, the NCSLPH small collection kit boxes cannot be used for dry ice shipments.
- Serum specimens (HIV, HAV, HBV, HCV, Rubella, syphilis, Arbovirus, *Rickettsia*) that have been separated and aliquoted must be stored refrigerated (4-7°C) and shipped on ice packs. All specimens must be received within 2 days of collection.
- CTGC swabs and urine specimens should be stored at room temperature and received within 30 days of collection.
- Rabies specimens should be refrigerated (4-7°C) and received within 3 days of collection. Alternatively, rabies specimens can be frozen (<-20°C) if shipping will be delayed >3 days from collection.
- Viral Culture (swabs, urine, aspirates) specimens should be stored refrigerated (4-7°C) and received within 5 days of collection.

Note: swabs collected for HSV/VZV molecular testing will not be tested if received >7 days from collection. However, these specimens will be tested by culture methods.

### Blood Lead Specimens

Blood lead specimens should be kept refrigerated (4-7°C), until pickup. If refrigeration is not available, room temperature storage is acceptable. All specimens should be delivered within 28 days of collection.

*Please note, the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health reserves the right to request recollection of specimens if needed for testing.*

**If you have questions regarding specimen/sample storage, please contact the NCSLPH Customer Service Line at 919-733-3937 or the NCSLPH Emergency Duty Phone at 919-807-8600.**