



Department of Public Health LRN Laboratory

Health Advisory Update

03/03/2020

MAYOR

Dee Margo

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) DPH LRN Laboratory Specimen Submission

Guidelines for El Paso County Healthcare Facilities

DPH LRN Laboratory will now be performing COVID-19 PCR testing. Below are the guidelines for specimen submission.

CITY COUNCIL

District 1

Peter Svarzbein

District 2

Alexsandra Anello

District 3

Cassandra Hernandez

District 4

Dr. Sam Morgan

District 5

Isabel Salcido

District 6

Claudia L. Rodriguez

District 7

Henry Rivera

District 8

Cissy Lizarraga

CITY MANAGER

Tommy Gonzalez

1. Health care providers must contact **El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH)** immediately if the facility has a patient under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19. The contact information is at the end of this document.
2. DPH Epidemiology (EPI) will coordinate the investigation and determine whether COVID-19 testing is approved. If it is approved, the EPI will fill out the “Interim 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) patient under investigation (PUI) form” and notify DPH Laboratory of COVID-19 testing approval
3. **Three specimens** types must be collected for each patient: 2 upper respiratory (*e.g.*, nasopharyngeal swab and oropharyngeal swab collected on swabs with a synthetic tip and an aluminum or plastic shaft in viral or universal transport media), 1 lower respiratory (*e.g.*, sputum, bronchoalveolar lavage [2-3 mL], tracheal aspirate[2-3 mL]) Each **specimen** must have:
 - a. DPH Laboratory Submission Form
 - b. CDC Form 50.34
4. Maintain proper infection control when collecting specimens. Review CDC Biosafety Practice Guidelines for more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/lab-biosafety-guidelines.html>.
5. Store specimens at 2-4°C promptly after collection. Samples can be sent to the DPH Laboratory at 2-4°C if they will be received **within** 72 hours. Samples that will be received **after** 72 hours must be frozen at -70°C. Notify DPH Laboratory before delivering samples. Samples can be received M-F 8-5 PM. **For weekends and holidays, please call DPH Epidemiology.** Delivery windows for weekends and holidays will be coordinated with DPH EPI and Laboratory between 10:30 am – 11:30 am. Please follow proper shipping protocols for Category B specimens. The laboratory delivery address is listed at the end of this document.

Robert Resendes – Public Health Director

Department of Public Health | 5115 El Paso Dr. | El Paso, TX 79905
O: (915) 212-0200 | Email: ResendesR@elpasotexas.gov





Department of Public Health LRN Laboratory

Health Advisory Update

03/03/2020

MAYOR

Dee Margo

CITY COUNCIL

District 1

Peter Svarzbein

District 2

Alexsandra Anello

District 3

Cassandra Hernandez

District 4

Dr. Sam Morgan

District 5

Isabel Salcido

District 6

Claudia L. Rodriguez

District 7

Henry Rivera

District 8

Cissy Lizarraga

CITY MANAGER

Tommy Gonzalez

6. Specimen rejection criteria include:

- a. Incomplete specimen submission form or specimen label
- b. Inappropriate specimen type
- c. Insufficient specimen volume
- d. NP and OP swabs collected with calcium alginate or cotton tips with wooden shafts
- e. Specimens not received at the proper temperature (i.e., refrigerated between 2-4°C or frozen on dry ice at -70°C)

7. Testing results will be sent to EPI and the submitting facility. Any presumptive positive samples will be sent to the CDC for confirmatory testing.

For more information please visit:

www.EPHealth.com

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html

Contact Information

Epidemiology Program

Disease Reporting Hours:

24 hours a day / 7 days a week

915-212-6520

DPH Laboratory

Specimen Delivery and Shipment

ATTN: DPH LRN Laboratory

4505 Alberta Ave. 2nd Floor

El Paso, TX 79905

Phone: 915-212-0438

Fax: 915-212-0439

Categories of urgency levels

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action

Robert Resendes – Public Health Director

Department of Public Health | 5115 El Paso Dr. | El Paso, TX 79905

O: (915) 212-0200 | Email: ResendesR@elpasotexas.gov

