

General Requirements

It is vital to ensure the quality of samples is not compromised, etiological agents remain viable, and the samples do not endanger the safety of those delivering or receiving them. The laboratories are required to reject any sample that is leaking or otherwise unsafe.

The laboratory will be able to complete testing of samples without delay, if submitter:

- Provides all the information requested on the submission form. For clinical testing use the Communicable Diseases Laboratory Test Requisition, (IL482-1039) (Appendix B) unless otherwise noted. Include the patient's full name or unique identifying code on every specimen or sample container.
- Sends pure cultures on fresh media in screw-cap tubes.
- Avoids sending cultures on inhibitory media.
- Packages sample containers in a leak-proof inner container; ensures that caps are tight to prevent leakage; uses custody seals for environmental samples.
- Follows proper chain of custody procedures when submitting forensic samples or samples submitted for regulatory enforcement.
- Observes any special temperature requirements.
- Ensures that the outside of the mailing container indicates which laboratory section is to receive the samples (e.g., Enteric, Bacteriology, Parasitology, Environmental Chemistry, etc.).
- Avoids shipping over the weekend, except in an emergency.
- Conforms to current U.S. Postal Service regulations when shipping by U.S. mail. Contact your local post office for more information on these regulations. Conforms to current U.S. Department of Transportation regulations when shipping by courier or other means.