

Ebola Virus Testing at the Washington State Public Health Laboratories (WAPHL) August 23, 2019

The WAPHL performs Ebola virus testing by PCR **only after approval** from local and state public health. Testing is performed using real-time reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR) assays developed by Centers for Disease Control (CDC). If Ebola virus disease (EVD) is suspected: isolate the patient in a private room, implement standard, contact, and droplet precautions, and notify facility infection control. Immediately report suspected case to your local public health jurisdiction, see

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions>.

After approval from your local health jurisdiction and Department of Health, WAPHL will perform Ebola testing on specimens from persons with:

A combination of symptoms suggestive of EVD **and** a possible exposure to EVD within 21 days before the onset of symptoms. To determine whether an exposure has occurred:

1. See details about risks for transmission of EVD at <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>.
2. See The World Health Organization Ebola situation reports for the 2018-2019 Ebola outbreak in Central Africa for current status of transmission risk areas: <https://www.who.int/ebola/situation-reports/drc-2018/en/>.
3. See EVD signs and symptoms at <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/symptoms/index.html>.

Specimen Collection, Shipping, and Testing

See “Ebola” on the WAPHL Microbiology Lab Test Menu for information about specimen collection, packaging, and shipping at:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/ForPublicHealthandHealthcareProviders/PublicHealthLaboratories/MicrobiologyLabTestMenu>

Use proper personal protective equipment when drawing blood for EVD testing. CDC recommendations are available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/healthcare-us/ppe/index.html>.

Ensure safe handling of specimens for persons under investigation for EVD. See CDC recommendations about safe laboratory handling of specimens at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/safe-specimen-management.html>

WAPHL can receive Ebola specimens 24/7. Prior arrangements must be made with the laboratory to properly receive these specimens. Currently, there are two options for submitting suspect Ebola specimens to the WAPHL.

1. Medex Courier
 - Specimens sent to the WAPHL are **suspected** to contain Ebola and therefore will be accepted by Medex if packaged and labeled properly.
 - When completing the Shipper’s Declaration for Dangerous Goods form, the “Proper Shipping Name” field should read as follows, “suspected Category A infectious substance”. The Authorization code is A140.
2. Transport by federal, state or local government employee(s) for noncommercial purposes is permissible. These employees include, but are not limited to, local health jurisdiction and state department of health staff, Washington State Patrol, local police or Sheriff’s office. **All category A shipping regulations still apply.**

WAPHL testing procedures

Test results turnaround time: Preliminary results for Ebola testing will be telephoned within six to eight hours of testing initiation at WAPHL. Any positive results must be confirmed by CDC and positive confirmation may take up to five days.