

## **Legionella Reference Center**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: What if my clinical specimen or environmental sample arrives at the *Legionella* Reference Center (LRC) outside of the posted time requirement?**

**A:** Samples and specimens received outside of the posted time requirement will still be tested, however there will be a disclaimer on the report that the sample was received outside of the acceptable limits.

**Q: Can clinical laboratories enroll as submitters with the LRC?**

**A:** No, only public health laboratories (PHLs) can enroll as submitters.

**Q: If my PHL already has the capability to test for *Legionella*, can we still enroll?**

**A:** Yes; the LRC can provide surge support for PHLs that already have testing capability. If your PHL has existing *Legionella* testing capability, please continue to maintain that capacity. LRC services are intended to supplement, not replace, *Legionella* testing at PHLs.

**Q: If I enroll as an environmental submitter but later want to send clinical specimens, is that OK?**

**A:** Yes, the 'submitter type' question on the enrollment form is just to give us a sense of your current needs. However, if you are enrolled, you can submit both clinical and environmental samples and isolates.

**Q: Is there a cost associated with using the LRC?**

**A:** Testing is provided free of charge to public health laboratories, however the submitter is responsible for shipping costs.

**Q: Does the LRC offer urine antigen testing (UAT)?**

**A:** No.

**Q: How are test results reported?**

**A:** The submitting PHL can access the result reports online from the Iowa State Hygienic Laboratory's OpenELIS web portal. Instructions for accessing the web portal are provided upon enrollment.

**Q: Will the LRC accept environmental samples related to a single clinical case?**

**A:** The LRC may accept environmental samples for investigations linked to one or more cases. Pre-approval is required prior to collecting and shipping any environmental samples. Preapproval ensures the LRC has resources for testing and that the test request is appropriate. Once approved, both the Environmental Sample Test Request form and Environmental Log form are prepared specifically for each environmental test request and will be emailed to requestor.

**Q: What if a local health department would like testing assistance for an outbreak?**

**A:** The local health department should work with their local or state PHL to coordinate testing assistance. The local or state PHL can enroll as an LRC submitter and can forward samples collected by the local health department to the LRC.

**Q: Will CDC continue to provide testing services?**

**A:** CDC will maintain its current testing services as described on the [CDC test directory](#). Please reach out to [legionellalab@cdc.gov](mailto:legionellalab@cdc.gov) with any questions about CDC's *Legionella* testing services.

**Q: What if I have recovered a *Legionella* isolate and am interested in additional characterization?**

**A:** Please contact [legionellalab@cdc.gov](mailto:legionellalab@cdc.gov) to inquire about additional characterization of *Legionella* isolates.

**Q: Which MALDI-TOF system is the LRC using for *Legionella* identification?**

**A:** As of January 2024, the LRC is using the Bruker MALDI MicroFlex, however they are in the final stages of validating the Bruker MALDI Sirius. Please reach out to [SHL-LRC@iowa.uiowa.edu](mailto:SHL-LRC@iowa.uiowa.edu) if you have specific questions about current test methodology.

**Q: When sending environmental samples, do they have to be sent from the PHL or can the facility under investigation send them?**

**A:** The facility under investigation must work directly with public health staff to collect samples. Public health staff must notify their Public Health Laboratory (PHL) of the investigation and environmental sample collection. This ensures that the PHL is aware of the shipment and pending results. However, the samples do not need to be physically processed through the public health laboratory; they can be shipped by the public health staff from the nearest shipping provider.

**Q: Should sodium thiosulfate be added to bulk water samples?**

**A:** If the water supply is chlorinated, a chlorine neutralizer (sodium thiosulfate) should be added to the containers maintaining the following ratio: 5 mL of 2% sodium thiosulfate solution for a 1 L sample.