

Guidance for collection and shipping of specimens for Hepatitis C RNA testing at the Texas DSHS Laboratory

Specimen collection instructions:

1. Label collection tube and form with the patient's name and one other identifier (e.g., date of birth, patient ID, or another unique identifier), and the date and time of collection. Each patient tube and form must have two matching patient identifiers to be accepted for testing.
2. Clean the site well with alcohol; allow to dry
3. Collect the venous blood in serum tubes, silicon coated (red-top tubes), Serum Separator tubes with clot activator and gel for serum separation (red gray or "tiger" top tubes), or plasma tubes, EDTA-treated (purple-top tubes). The assay will require at least 4mLs of whole blood in a tube.
4. For collection in:

Serum tubes (red top tubes):



Allow blood to clot 60-minutes and separate by centrifugation.

Transfer serum to a plastic, screw-top transport tube with the patient's name and another identifier, and the date and time of collection.

Make sure that the seal is tight to prevent leakage.

Ship the serum cold on ice packs if within 5 days of the date of collection. Ship frozen on dry ice if greater than 5 days of the date of collection, not to exceed 60 days. If shipping frozen, the temperature level during the entire shipment should be no warmer than -20°C .

Serum Separator tubes with clot activator (red gray or "tiger" top tubes)



Gently invert tube 5 times to mix clot activator with blood. Allow blood to clot for a minimum of 30 minutes in a vertical position. Observe a dense clot.

Centrifuge at full speed (between 1100 and 1300g) for 10 minutes for swing-head unit or 15 minutes for fixed angle units. Barrier will form, separating serum specimen from clot.

If specimen will be received at DSHS within 5 days, ship the specimen cold on ice packs.

If specimen will be received at DSHS more than 5 days after collection, not to exceed 60 days:

- Transfer serum to a plastic, screw-top transport tube with the patient's name and another identifier, and the date and time of collection.
- Make sure that the seal is tight to prevent leakage.
- Ship the frozen serum on dry ice. The temperature level during the entire shipment should be no warmer than -20°C . Note: **DO NOT** freeze serum separator tubes.

Plasma tubes with EDTA (purple top tubes)



Gently invert tube 5 times to mix EDTA with blood and separate by centrifugation.

Transfer plasma to a plastic, screw-top transport tube with the patient's name and another identifier, and the date and time of collection.

Make sure that the seal is tight to prevent leakage.

Ship the plasma cold on ice packs if within 5 days of the date of collection. Ship frozen on dry ice if greater than 5 days of the date of collection, not to exceed 60 days. If shipping frozen temperature level during entire shipment should be no warmer than -20°C .

Complete the Texas DSHS Submission form:

The following information **must** be included on the Texas DSHS G-2A submission form:

- ✓ **Submitter/physician's full contact information**
- ✓ **Patient's name, date of birth, sex, address,**
- ✓ **Specimen collection date and time**
- ✓ **Test requested:** In Section 5,
 - a. Check the Hepatitis C RNA, Quantitative NAAT box **or**
 - b. Write in "Hepatitis C RNA NAAT"

Shipping instructions (Class 6.2, Category B, UN3373- Biological substance):

Submitters are responsible for shipping specimens in conformity with all safety and labeling regulations. Be aware that many commercial carriers no longer accept specimens. When using any carrier, including the bus service or the U.S. Postal Service, package specimens to avoid leakage or breakage. All specimen mailing containers supplied by the Laboratory meet current Department of Transportation (DOT) and United States Postal Service (USPS) requirements for the shipment of Biological Substance, Category B. Specimens must be packed in triple containment with sufficient absorbent material enclosed to absorb the entire volume of liquid. The container used *must* meet current DOT and USPS regulations.



Shipment of infectious agents requires specialized training and United Nations (UN)-approved packaging that the Laboratory does not provide.

Always utilize the maximum protection for the sake of those who handle the parcels and to avoid jeopardizing the system for shipping specimens.

The Laboratory policy is: ALL blood specimens in a container will be considered broken if one tube in that container is broken during shipment.

Ship specimen at the correct temperature (see above) via courier by overnight delivery. **Make sure that the package will arrive on a weekday and will not arrive on a weekend or holiday.**



Send to:

**Texas Department of State Health Services
Laboratory Services Section,
MC-1947
1100 W. 49th Street,
Austin, TX 78756**



For questions about shipping, call:

Specimen Acquisition Branch **512-776-7598 or 512-776-2385**

For all other questions, call:

Serological Analysis Group **512-776-2450 or 512-776-7657**