

Submitting MERS-CoV Specimens to the DSHS Laboratory

Submitters must first receive approval from a DSHS Emerging and Acute Infectious Disease Unit (EAIDU) epidemiologist and local/regional health department(s).

Specimen Type

Lower Respiratory Tract (preferred):

- Sputum, bronchioalveolar lavage, or tracheal aspirate
- **Minimum Volume:** 1 mL

Upper Respiratory Tract (acceptable):

- Nasopharyngeal swab (NP) and oropharyngeal swabs (OP)
- **Minimum Volume:** 1 mL
- **Use:** Sterile nylon- or polyester-tipped **swabs** in Viral Transport Medium (VTM) or Universal Transport Medium (UTM)
- **Swabs with cotton tips or wooden shafts are not acceptable.**

Please ensure specimen collection kits are not expired.

For more detailed specimen collection guidance, see [Laboratory Testing for MERS | MERS | CDC](#).

Specimen Storage and Shipping

Store swabs, lavages, aspirates, and fluids cold or frozen and ship in insulated containers OVERNIGHT.

- If specimen will arrive **within 72 hours** of collection, refrigerate at **2°C–8°C**.
- If specimen will arrive **more than 72 hours** after collection, freeze at **-70°C or below**.

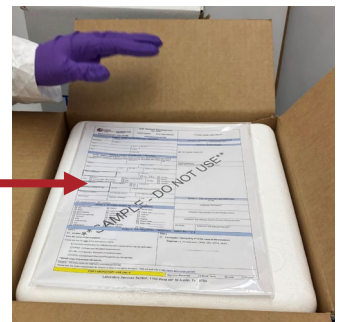
Shipping Specimens to the Laboratory

Ensure all containers are securely closed to **prevent leaks**.

- **Wrap** specimen lids in paraffin film (e.g., Parafilm).
- **Pack enough absorbent material** in secondary container to soak up the contents of the primary container(s).
- **Write "MERS"** on exterior of **secondary container** to notify Lab specimen check-in staff of its contents.
- **Do not write "MERS" on exterior of shipping box!**
- **Place** submission form(s) neatly inside the outer mailer.
- **Ship** cold specimens with **multiple** frozen cold packs; ship frozen specimens with dry ice.
- **Call** 512-776-2452 or **email** viral.isolation@dshs.texas.gov to notify the Lab of your specimen submission.
 - Provide the shipment tracking number when available.



WRITE "MERS" ON INSIDE OF SHIPPING BOX.



DO NOT PLACE FORM(S) IN WITH SPECIMENS.



Shipping Cold or Frozen MERS-CoV Specimens In Extreme Heat

**Correct Specimen Packing Keeps Cold and Frozen Specimens
at the Correct Temperatures During Shipping**

Provide at least 24 hours notice to Laboratory of specimen submissions.

Refrigerated and Frozen MERS-CoV Specimens Must Arrive Cold or Frozen

- **Refrigerated** specimens must be received cold between 2°C to 8°C.
- **Frozen swabs, lavages, aspirates, and fluids** must be received frozen at -70°C.
- Generally, courier and shipping service vehicles that transport specimens to the Laboratory are not refrigerated.
- Even on a moderately hot summer day (35°C/ 95°F), the internal temperature of a vehicle can reach 54°C/130°F within 30 minutes.

Specimens received out of temperature range will be rejected.

Keeping MERS-CoV Specimens Cold or Frozen

Use an insulated shipping container to transport specimens.

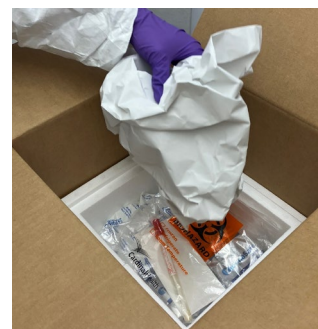
- **Pack** cold specimens with enough frozen cold packs to keep specimens cold during shipping.
 - **One frozen cold pack is not enough!**
- **Pack** frozen specimens with enough dry ice to keep them frozen during shipping.
 - **Dry ice sublimates at the rate of 5 lbs. to 10 lbs. each 24 hrs., depending on the insulation value of the shipping container and the external temperature.**

Maximize insulation of specimens by packing **all** remaining empty space in the shipping container with absorbent material such as paper or cotton wadding.

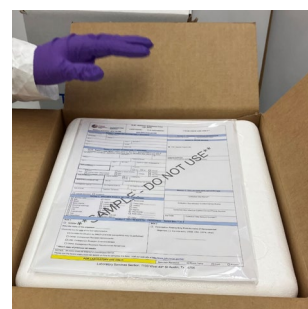
- **Packing empty space with absorbent material** also **cushions** specimens and reduces breakage while in transit.

NOTE: If a single specimen in a secondary container containing multiple swabs breaks or spills, EVERY specimen in the secondary container will be rejected.

Visit DSHS' online [Specimen Shipping and Mailing Guidance](#) for more guidance on shipping Category B substances cold or frozen to the Laboratory.



Minimize empty space inside insulated container to improve insulation.



Place submission form(s) outside insulated container and inside outer mailer.



Completing G-2V Submission Forms to Submit MERS-CoV Specimens to the DSHS Laboratory

IMPORTANT: Every Specimen MUST Have Its Own Submission Form

Label Specimen With Unique Identifiers

Every specimen must have the required unique patient identifiers on its label.

Three patient identifiers provided on this label.

IMPORTANT: Provide the specimen source on the label of each MERS specimen if submitting multiple specimens!

Provide Patient Identifiers in Sections 2 and 3 of G-2V Submission Form

Patient identifiers on specimen label and submission form must match exactly.

- Provide patient's full address, including zip code.
- Provide date and time of collection.

SECTION 2. PATIENT			
NOTE: Patient name on specimen MUST match name on this form exactly. Name mismatches will be rejected. e.g., Partial name on specimen label. Specimen container must have two (2) unique identifiers that match the			
** REQUIRED	Last Name **	First Name **	
	Snow	John	
	Address **		
	39 Broad Street		
	City **	State **	Zip Code **
	Austin	TX	78756
DOB (mm/dd/yyyy) **	Sex **	Ethnic	
02/19/1993	M		
Race: ☐ White ☐ American Indian / Native Alaskan ☐ Black or African American ☐ Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander ☐			

SECTION 3. SPECIMEN	
NOTE: If the 'Date of Collection' field is not completed, the specimen will be rejected	
Date of Collection (mm/dd/yyyy) **	Time of Collection **
12/21/2025	08:29 a.m. ☐ AM ☐ PM
Unique Identification Number ** e.g., MCH, Alien # / Accession ID	Comments or Addition e.g., QPC ID, Previous DSH
06161858	

Identify Source in Section 3

- Check only one specimen source.
- Do not leave blank.

Select Test in Section 4

Check "Other".

- Write in "MERS" or "MERS-CoV".

☐ COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) PCR
Vaccine Received: ☐ Yes ☐ No
Date Vaccine Received: _____
Travel History (if known): _____

☒ Other: MERS-CoV

Select Payor Source in Section 6

Check "IDEAS" as the payor source.

** REQUIRED	☐ Medicaid (2) Medicaid/Medicare #:
	☐ Submitter (3)
	☐ BIDS (1720)
	☒ IDEAS/EAIDU (1610)
	☐ Immunizations (1609)

Questions About . . .

MERS-CoV-2 Testing:

512-776-7594, 512-776-2452 or viral.isolation@dshs.texas.gov

DSHS Emerging and Acute Infectious Disease Unit: IRID@dshs.Texas.gov

Submitter Accounts/Submission Forms: 512-776-7578 or LabInfo@dshs.texas.gov

Overnight Shipping Address:

Walter Douglass, Texas Dept. of State Health Services, Public Health Laboratory Division, 1100 W. 49th Street, Austin, TX 78756-3199



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

dshs.texas.gov

Shipping MERS-CoV Specimens for Saturday Delivery to the DSHS Laboratory via FedEx

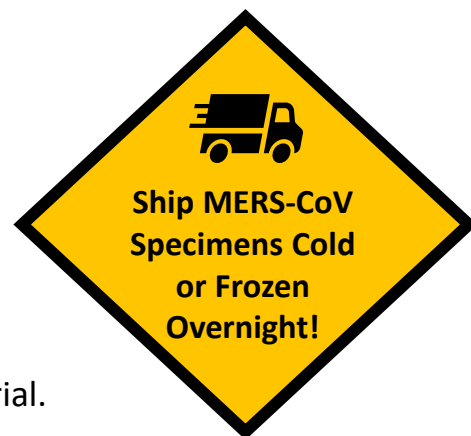
MERS-CoV specimens that arrive out of temperature range are rejected.

Notify the Laboratory of Your Saturday Specimen Delivery

- **Email the Clinical Virology Laboratory** at viral.isolation@dshs.texas.gov to notify Laboratory staff you are shipping for a Saturday delivery.
 - **Provide** at least **24** hours notice.
 - **Provide the FedEx tracking number** of the shipment.
- **Please remember to notify** DSHS infectious disease epidemiologists of your Saturday delivery by emailing IRID@dshs.Texas.gov.

Pack Specimens to Optimize Insulation

- **Pack** specimens with enough ice packs or dry ice to keep cold/frozen for up to 48 hrs.
- **Use multiple frozen ice packs** for cold specimens.
- **Use dry ice** if specimen must be shipped frozen.
- **Maximize insulation** by packing any empty space around specimens in insulated shipper with absorbent packing material.



Shipping via FedEx

Ensure the shipping label is completed correctly.

1. **Select FedEx Priority Overnight.**
 - Measles specimens must be shipped overnight.
2. **Select SATURDAY Delivery.**
3. **Select Dry Ice** and provide mass of dry ice (in kgs) when using it to keep frozen specimens frozen.

1

Express Package Service *To most

NOTE: Service order has changed. Please select care

Next Business Day

☒ **FedEx First Overnight**
Earliest next business morning delivery to select locations. Friday shipments will be delivered on Monday unless SATURDAY Delivery is selected.

☐ **FedEx Priority Overnight**
Next business morning.* Friday shipments will be delivered on Monday unless SATURDAY Delivery is selected.

☐ **FedEx Standard Overnight**
Next business afternoon.*
Saturday Delivery NOT available.

2

6 Special Handling and Delivery Signature Options

☒ **SATURDAY Delivery**
NOT available for FedEx Standard Overnight, FedEx 2Day A.M., or FedEx Express Saver.

☐ **No Signature Required**
Package may be left without obtaining a signature for delivery.

☐ **Direct Signature**
Someone at recipient's address may sign for delivery. Fee applies.

☐ **Indirect Signature**
If no one is available at recipient's address, someone at a neighboring address may sign for delivery. For residential deliveries only. Fee applies.

Does this shipment contain dangerous goods?
One box must be checked.

☐ **No** ☐ **Yes** As per attached Shipper's Declaration. ☐ **Yes** Shipper's Declaration not required.

☐ **Dry Ice**
Dry ice, 9, UN 1845 _____ x _____ kg

☐ **Cargo Aircraft Only**

Dangerous goods (including dry ice) cannot be shipped in FedEx packaging or placed in a FedEx Express Drop Box.

3

Check box if using dry ice.
Provide mass in kgs.

