Testing Approval Is Required for Ebola/Marburg Testing (click virus name for CDC website)

1. If your facility has a suspected Ebola/Marburg case, always call your local or state health department first. The contact information for the Health Departments in the region is on the last page of this document. If you are not sure which health department to call, you can contact Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Health Service Region (HSR) 6/5 South at 713-767-3000.

2. Your local (or state) health department epidemiologist (EPI) will conduct an initial investigation and consult CDC (770-488-7100) to determine whether Ebola/Marburg testing is warranted. No specimens will be tested by HHD laboratory unless approved by CDC.

3. The health department EPI should inform HHD LRN laboratory Testing Contact Ricardo Quijano at 832-393-3926 if Ebola/Marburg testing is approved.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Infection Control and Prevention

1. Staff who collect specimens from Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) should wear appropriate PPE and should refer to Guidance on Personal Protective Equipment To Be Used by Healthcare Workers During Management of Patients with Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers (VHFs) in U.S. Hospitals, including procedures for Putting on (Donning) and Removing (Doffing) PPE.

2. For guidance on infection control, see CDC infection control guidance.

Specimen Collection

1. If it is determined that testing for Ebola/Marburg virus is indicated, collect two tubes of whole blood using plastic collection tubes (EDTA purple top collection tubes preferred) for testing.

2. Do NOT use glass containers or heparinized tubes.

3. Label each tube with patient’s name, date of birth, test requested, and date of collection.

4. For each tube, collect at least 4 mL whole blood for an adult and at least 1 mL whole blood for a child.

5. Do not separate and remove serum or plasma from the primary collection container.

6. Store both specimens at 2-8°C before shipping.

7. For the specimen to be sent to HHD Laboratory, fill out HHD Laboratory “Special Pathogen Testing” test request form.

8. For the specimen to be sent to CDC, fill out and include both the CDC Form 50.34 [PDF – 1 page] and Viral Special Pathogens Branch Specimen Submission Information [PDF – 2 pages] per CDC’s instructions.

9. If the patient’s symptoms have been present for <3 days, a second set of samples collected 72 hours after onset of symptoms is required to definitively rule out Ebola.
Packaging and Shipping of Suspected Ebola/Marburg Specimens to HHD Laboratory and CDC

1. One specimen will be shipped to HHD Laboratory and the other specimen will be shipped to CDC for confirmation testing.

2. Each specimen should be packaged and shipped (or transported) as Category A infectious substances in accordance with the DOT’s Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR) 49 CFR 171-180 by submitting entity personnel who is trained and certified in compliance with Department Of Transportation (DOT) or the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

3. Each specimen should be packaged following the basic triple packaging system, which consists of (1) a primary container (a sealable specimen container) wrapped with absorbent material, (2) a secondary container (watertight, leak-proof), and (3) an outer shipping package.

4. Do NOT package suspected Ebola specimens as Category B infectious substances as you would for regular diagnostic specimens. It is not safe.

5. One specimen should be shipped to HHD Laboratory cold (2 - 8°C):
   a. Ensure the specimen is packed to maintain temperature of 2 - 8°C
   b. Within the outer ice chest (e.g., styrofoam), place sufficient ice packs to surround the sealed secondary packaging on all sides and provide further insulation to maintain temperature of 2 - 8°C during transit.
   c. Ship to:
      
      ATTN: Ricardo Quijano (Phone: 832-393-3926)
      Ebola/Marburg Testing
      Houston Health Department Laboratory
      2250 Holcombe Blvd; Houston TX 77030

6. The other specimen should be shipped to CDC frozen (< -20°C) on Dry Ice:
   a. Follow CDC’s instructions on packing and shipping suspected Ebola/Marburg specimens for confirmation at CDC.
   b. Ensure the specimen is packed to maintain temperature of <-20°C
   c. Within the outer ice chest (e.g., styrofoam), place sufficient dry ice to surround the sealed secondary packaging on all sides and provide further insulation to maintain temperature of <-20°C during transit.

7. More detailed information regarding testing arrangements will be discussed during consultation calls among the submitting entity, local and/or state health departments and CDC.

Testing Turnaround Time

Turnaround time for a result is 6 to 8 hours after receipt at HHD Laboratory unless repeat testing is required.
## Houston Area Health Department Contact Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Department</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>After Hrs.</th>
<th>Fax</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas Department of State Health Services</td>
<td>(713) 767-3000</td>
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<td>(713) 767-3006</td>
<td><a href="https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/region6-5/default.shtm">https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/region6-5/default.shtm</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Service Region 6/5 South</td>
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<tr>
<td>Houston Health Department</td>
<td>(832) 393-5080 (24 hrs. #)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(832) 393-5232</td>
<td><a href="http://www.houstontx.gov/health/index.html">www.houstontx.gov/health/index.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Galveston County Health District</td>
<td>(409) 938-2322</td>
<td></td>
<td>(409) 938-2399</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gchd.org">www.gchd.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brazoria County Health Department</td>
<td>(979) 864-1166</td>
<td></td>
<td>(979) 864-3694</td>
<td><a href="https://www.brazoriacountytx.gov/departments/health-department">https://www.brazoriacountytx.gov/departments/health-department</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaumont Public Health Department</td>
<td>(409) 654-3603</td>
<td></td>
<td>(409) 832-4270</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sherry.ulmer@beaumonttexas.gov">sherry.ulmer@beaumonttexas.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Arthur Public Health Department</td>
<td>(409) 983-8832</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Judith.smith@portarthurtx.gov">Judith.smith@portarthurtx.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris County Public Health</td>
<td>(713) 439-6000</td>
<td></td>
<td>(713) 439-6306</td>
<td><a href="http://publichealth.harriscountytx.gov">http://publichealth.harriscountytx.gov</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Montgomery County Public Health Department</td>
<td>(936) 523-5026</td>
<td></td>
<td>(936) 539-9272</td>
<td><a href="http://mcphd-tx.org">https://mcphd-tx.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chambers County Health Department</td>
<td>(409) 267-2731</td>
<td></td>
<td>(409) 267-4276</td>
<td><a href="https://www.co.chambers.tx.us/page/health.department">https://www.co.chambers.tx.us/page/health.department</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hardin County Health Department/Orange County</td>
<td>(409) 209-5363</td>
<td></td>
<td>(409) 246-4373 or</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Christina.richard@co.hardin.tx.us">Christina.richard@co.hardin.tx.us</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(409) 659-7759</td>
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<td>(409) 246-5263</td>
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