

Legionella Reference Center

Frequently Asked Questions

General

Q: Is there a cost associated with using the Legionella Reference Center (LRC)?

A: Testing is provided free of charge to enrolled public health laboratories (PHLs); however the submitter is responsible for shipping costs.

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 *Legionella* testing services?

A: CDC will maintain its current testing services as described on the [CDC test directory](#). Please reach out to 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 to inquire about additional characterization of *Legionella* isolates.

Q: What if my clinical specimen or environmental sample arrives at the 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: 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: Which MALDI-TOF system is the LRC using for *Legionella* identification?

A: As of April 2025, SHL has validated the Bruker MALDI Sirius for isolate identification and is now testing on the Bruker MALDI Sirius instead of the Bruker MALDI MicroFlex. Please reach out to SHL-LRC@iowa.uiowa.edu if you have specific questions about current test methodology.

Enrollment

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: Can clinical laboratories enroll as submitters with the LRC?

A: No; only US state, local and territorial public health and environmental laboratories are eligible for enrollment in the LRC.

Clinical Testing

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

A: No.

Q: Can a hospital send clinical specimens directly to the LRC?

A: When possible, clinical specimens should be routed through the enrolled PHL. However, to expedite the receipt of a clinical specimen at the LRC, it is possible for a hospital to send the specimen directly to the LRC with preapproval and involvement of the enrolled PHL. The enrolled PHL will fill out the clinical specimen test request form and send it to the hospital to include with the specimen shipment. The PHL should ensure that the hospital follows the LRC shipping and labeling requirements. Results will be made available only to the enrolled PHL. The PHL can then communicate the results to the hospital.

Environmental Testing

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 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: 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 submitter does not have collection supplies for environmental samples?

A: The LRC can recommend environmental sample collection supplies for the submitter to purchase, or the submitter can purchase collection supplies directly from the LRC for the specific outbreak. Kits purchased from the LRC can only be used for a current investigation and are not meant to be stocked for future investigations. Information about collection kit purchasing is provided in the onboarding documents for enrollees. If you have additional questions, you can reach out to shl-lrc@uiowa.edu.

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.