



FRAMEWORK CHECKLIST FOR PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY OUTREACH TO FIRST RESPONDER COMMUNITIES

Strong relationships between public health laboratory and first responders improve communication, the quality of samples submitted and overall response to a public health event. The process of building a first responder outreach program should involve collaboration between Laboratory Response Network (LRN) preparedness coordinators for both biological (LRN-B) and chemical (LRN-C) threats. While priorities and needs may differ, coordinators should be invested in their community's response to potential biological and chemical threats. Becoming part of that response requires active advocating and outreach to first responder partners.

Developed in 2017 by a subcommittee of the the APHL Public Health Preparedness and Response Committee, the checklist offers LRN-B and LRN-C coordinators a resource to identify key stakeholders within the first responder community, effective modes of communication, appropriate methods of sample collection and transport, and needed training programs and exercises. The checklist may also be distributed to first responder partners to help them to identify public health contacts.

Identify Key Stakeholder(s) in Your Jurisdiction

- Law Enforcement
 - Local
 - State
 - University Police
 - Federal (e.g. FBI Weapons Mass Destruction Coordinator)¹
 - Transit
- National Guard Bureau (NGB) Civil Support Team (CST)
- Military Bases
- Fusion Center
- Fire Department
- Local/State Hazardous Materials Team (HAZMAT)
- Local/State Emergency Management Coordinator
- Local/State Epidemiologists
- Local/State Homeland Security Offices (e.g. Special Operations)
- Local/State Office of Emergency Management (e.g. State Duty Officer)
- Tribal Nations
- FEMA Regional Office
- United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS)
- Other Federal Partners for Special Events (e.g. Secret Service)
- Sentinel Clinical Laboratories
- Poison Control Centers
- Emergency Medical Services
- Medical Examiner's Office
- Local/Regional Airports
- Public Transportation Services

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Communications

- Establish communications with identified stakeholders
- Define roles/responsibilities of each stakeholder
- Share information on the capabilities of the public health laboratory

Sample Collection, Transport and Receipt

- Establish and share sample acceptance criteria/ acceptable sample types and volume
- If resources are available, provide collection kits for use in the field
- Share guidance on field screening²
- Packaging and Shipping
 - Provide advance training or resources for training
 - Assure compliance with shipping regulations and guidelines^{3,4}
- Testing and Reporting: PHL
 - Follow standardized protocols for testing unknown environmental samples for threat agents
 - Report all results to on scene coordinator

Additional Resources

- [USPS Facilitator's Suspicious Mail and Unknown Powders or Substances Tabletop Exercise Guide](#)
- [APHL Unknown Algorithm](#)
- Sample Exercises and Exercise Templates
- National Training Programs (e.g. CDP)
- National or Local/State Proficiency Testing Providers

Training and Exercise Program

If resources are available, APHL recommends engaging key stakeholders to design and develop joint training programs. These programs should include:

- Policies for field screening
- Overview of the LRN
- Hazard Awareness 101
- Risk Assessment
- Threat Assessment
- Safety
- Biosafety
- Biosecurity
- Sample Collection
- Packaging and Shipping
- Technical: hands-on and lecture based discussions on technologies, limitations and capabilities
 - Radiation Screening
 - X-Ray for explosive devices
 - Acute Chemical Hazards
 - Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) Analysis
 - Raman Analysis
- Results Reporting
- Communications/Risk Communications
- Exercises
- Proficiency Testing

¹ In addition to engaging the FBI WMD, APHL also recommends that you connect with FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force.

² Association of Public Health Laboratories (2018, March). Algorithm and Guidelines for Responding to an Incident Involving a Suspicious Non-Clinical Sample. Retrieved from <https://www.aphl.org/aboutAPHL/publications/Documents/PHPR-2018-Mar-Algorithm-White-Paper-Update.pdf>

³ Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (2018, April). How to Comply with Federal Hazardous Materials Regulations. Retrieved from: <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/hazardous-materials/how-comply-federal-hazardous-materials-regulations>

⁴ International Air Transport Association (2018, June). Dangerous Goods Regulations (DGR). Retrieved from: <http://www.iata.org/publications/dgr/Pages/index.aspx>