Criteria for requesting COVID-19 testing at OSPHL

The Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) provides testing for COVID-19 to support public health priorities established by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Specimens submitted for no-cost COVID-19 testing must meet the criteria outlined below. OSPHL may consult with local or state public health officials to verify acceptance.

For specimens not meeting these criteria, clinicians may order COVID-19 testing at their discretion through commercial laboratories. OHA has published Public Health Recommendations: COVID-19 Testing for Health Care Providers to assist providers in determining when COVID-19 testing should be considered.

Testing at the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory

1. OSPHL will test people who reside in or provide direct care or service in congregate settings for initial outbreak investigation and response. Serial testing for these settings should be conducted at alternate laboratories.

   Examples include:

   a. Residents or staff in a care facility or group living setting (e.g., health care facility, residential care facility, migrant or seasonal farmworker camp, correctional facility, shelter)

   b. Staff who provide direct care through in-home services (e.g., hospice care workers, physical or occupational therapists, in-home personal care workers)

2. The following groups are also prioritized for testing at OSPHL:

   a. People who identify as Black, African American, Latinx, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander attending community low-barrier testing events.

   b. Patients seen at tribal health centers, NARA Indian Health Clinic, and Chemawa Indian Health Center who have symptoms compatible with COVID-19 or have had an exposure to COVID-19.

   c. Postmortem specimens from suspect, presumptive or confirmed COVID-19 cases.
3. Approvals
   a. Oregon law requires reporting of any cluster of COVID-19 infection to the Local Public Health Authority. If submitting specimens for outbreak investigation or response, please have your outbreak number assigned by state or local public health available when contacting OSPHL. Specimens submitted must meet the criteria outlined in the Collecting Specimens section of this guidance.
   b. Submission of postmortem swabs does not require approval. To submit autopsy tissues for testing at CDC, contact the Acute and Communicable Disease Prevention Epidemiologist On-call for approval at 971-673-1111.

4. Collecting specimens
   a. Specimens should be collected under appropriate infection prevention precautions. For information on recommended infection prevention measures for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, see COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations: Clinical Care, and Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control.
   b. Follow all instructions for specimen collection, handling, and storage available at www.healthoregon.org/labtests.

5. Sending specimens and forms
   a. Submit each specimen with a COVID-19 Test Request Form, available at www.bitly.com/phl-forms. Incorrectly completed or incomplete test request forms will delay testing.
   b. Send specimens so that they will be received at OSPHL during expanded business hours for COVID-19 services:
      i. Monday–Friday, between 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM.
      ii. Saturday and Sunday, between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM.

6. Resources & Questions
   b. COVID Response and Recovery Unit (CRRU): Testing Branch – ORESF8.AOCTestingBranch@dhsoha.state.or.us
   c. Local Public Health Authority Contact Information: www.healthoregon.org/lhddirectory
   d. Acute and Communicable Disease Prevention Epidemiologist On-call: 971-673-1111

Document accessibility: For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide information in alternate formats such as translations, large print, or braille. Contact the Health Information Center at 1-971-673-2411, 711 TTY or COVID19.LanguageAccess@dhsoha.state.or.us