



**ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Alex Briscoe, Director
Muntu Davis, M.D., MPH, Health Officer, Director

Division of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention
Public Health Laboratory

Erica Pan, M.D., MPH, FAAP, Division Director
Mark W. Pandori Ph.D. HCLD (ABB) Director

Mailing Address:
1000 Broadway, Suite 500 QIC 21910
Oakland, CA 94607

499 – 5th Street, Room 403
Oakland, CA 94607
Tel: (510) 268-2700 Fax: (510) 268-2709

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Ebola Virus Disease Testing of Suspected Patients in Alameda County (12/22/2014)

If we have a patient that we believe should be tested for Ebola, what should we do?

Please contact the Alameda County Public Health Department, Acute Communicable Disease Control Unit. The contact number is **(510)-267-3250**, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM. After Hours, please call the Alameda County Public Health Department Duty Officer at **(925) 422-7595**. They will assess whether testing is required and will further assist in getting a patient tested. If testing is required, the Alameda County Public Health Laboratory (ACPHL) will assist in getting specimens tested.

Can you tell me something about the test that is used for Ebola Virus Disease detection?

Testing for Ebola is performed by use of the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), which detects the genetic material of the virus. For specimens drawn in Alameda County, testing is currently available at the California Department of Public Health Laboratory in Richmond, CA. Any test result indicating the presence of Ebola Virus by PCR shall require confirmation testing at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The turnaround time for a PCR test for Ebola Virus is approximately 24 hours from the time that the specimen is received by the testing laboratory.

What kind of specimen should we take from the patient?

Whole blood is the required specimen for Ebola PCR testing. The minimum volume required is 4 ml, collected in *plastic* collection tubes. *Two specimens must be drawn*. The preferred collection tubes are those that contain EDTA (“lavender” or “purple” top tubes), however those containing sodium polyanethol sulfonate (SPS), or citrate are also acceptable. Specimens should not be collected in glass collection tubes. It is not necessary to separate and remove serum or plasma from the primary collection container. Specimens should either be immediately stored refrigerated or transported at 2-8°C or on cold-packs.

Will the Alameda County Health Department perform specimen collection for us?

No. Specimen collection must be carried out by clinicians at your facility.

What kind of personal protective wear is recommended for clinicians or phlebotomists involved in specimen collection? Any person collecting specimens from a patient with a case of suspected Ebola virus disease should wear gloves, water-resistant gowns, full face shield or goggles, and masks to cover all of nose and mouth. Additional personal protective equipment (PPE) may be required in certain situations. Please see the “PPE Selection Matrix for Occupational Exposure to Ebola Virus (OSHA) 11.24.14” for additional details and guidance (<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3761.pdf>).

Can we store that specimen, or move it within our facility? Yes. Specimens can be stored refrigerated until packed and shipped by ACPHL personnel. Specimens collected clinically can be transported within a facility if it is placed in a leak-proof container that contains absorbent material. It is asked that any specimen collected as above be wiped down with an approved decontaminate, with 10% bleach being the ideal agent.

How will the specimens be shipped to testing locations? Any specimens drawn in Alameda County for Ebola testing will be packaged and transported by members of the ACPHL. The ACPHL has the training in addition to a continuous inventory of the packing materials required to properly pack and transport Ebola testing specimens.

Where will the specimens be shipped for testing?

Both specimens will be taken to the California Department of Public Health Laboratory in Richmond, CA. The California Department of Public Health Laboratory will test a specimen, and if the specimen is found “positive” for Ebola virus, the second specimen will be shipped (by California Department of Public Health Laboratory) to the CDC for confirmation testing. Ground transport of specimens shall be performed by the Alameda County Department of Public Health Laboratory.

Does our facility need to have any shipping materials onsite?

No. The ACPHL will provide all required materials.

Does our facility require any special training to pack and ship specimens?

No. The ACPHL will provide staff members who will come to your facility to pack and transport the specimens.

Are there any special forms that need to be filled out in order to get a laboratory test for Ebola?

Yes, and the ACPHL staff who pack and transport the specimens will assist in the completion of the required forms.

What if I don't have a suspected case, but I have additional questions?

Please email alcoebola@acgov.org. Please use the subject line: Ebola Inquiry (Your Facility/Agency-Date).