

Provincial Laboratory Services



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Health PEI
One Island Health System

Rejection Criteria for Microbiology

October 22, 2020

This information applies to: Covid Testing Clinics, Joint Response Team, Nurse Managers, Long Term Care, Corrections, Island EMS, Home Care

Accreditation standards mandate that the Laboratory must adhere to specimen acceptance and rejection protocols (See attached Criteria for Rejection of Specimens and Alternate Specimen Identifiers documents). We appreciate that clinics and departments are seeing unprecedented growth and testing demands with staffing unaware of our provincial laboratory policies. As a result the microbiology laboratory does receive daily unpleasant conversations from clients that can be avoided with enhanced education and clear communication.

COVID-19 samples are arriving across the Island and we lead the country in speed of testing and are in the top three in testing volumes per capita.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we initially processed mislabeled samples readily as non-recollectable for a variety of factors and we would call or otherwise find a way to make it work. Testing numbers were small initially and there was a testing delay and a recollection delay.

Starting in Mid-September we no longer consider COVID-19 samples as non-recollectable. With this communicate we want to be clear that we will continue to follow our rejection criteria and samples once rejected will not be retrievable. We also want to be clear that unlabeled requisitions for microbiology will be rejected.

Likewise, we would recommend if there are conversations about any sample being not recollectable or proposing policy changes then please direct them to Dr. German (PCH or QEH Switchboard), Vanessa Arseneau at QEH and Tanya Banfield at PCH, or their lab managers in their absence. Besides COVID-19 requests, we continue to receive daily rejectable samples from wound swabs to urines.

It is the Clinicians responsibility to notify their staff regarding this policy as well as to notify their patients to bring their health card to their clinical encounters. We will monitor the rejection rate and reasons.

We would like to expand on our process in enforcing this policy for COVID-19 testing. See Appendix A

Thank you for your ongoing assistance with the care of our patients. Dr. German can be reached at 902-894-2515 or through QEH Switchboard 902-894-2111.

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Appendix A:

Process for rejecting samples for COVID-19

Requisition will have a cancellation sticker applied to it with the following options:

- 1) Missing one of the acceptable identifiers
- 2) Wrong MRN / Missing numbers (other than leading zeros)
- 3) Second identifier not provided (See appendix B on alternative specimen identifiers)
- 4) For those without MRN and out of the country: No country and if USA no state provided
- 5) Request form information does not match exactly label information
- 6) Sample not received within 24 hours of faxed requisition
- 7) Name discrepancies (Nick names, confusion on first vs last name including use of hyphen incorrectly)
- 8) Other: _____

When a requisition is not received and a sample is received a blank sheet of paper will be made with the name and MRN, and indicate sample cancelled due to lack of requisition.

Where possible we will create a test cancellation report and post this to the Clinical information system.

All rejected requisitions/samples will also be sent to the two leads for Health PEI COVID-19 Clinics and CPHO contact.

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Criteria for Rejection of Specimens

IT IS THE POLICY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS TO REJECT LABORATORY TEST SPECIMENS ON THE BASIS OF IMPROPER IDENTIFICATION, UNUSUAL BIOLOGICAL HAZARD OR SPECIFIC TECHNICAL CRITERIA.

NOTES

1. IN THE CASE OF A SPECIMEN REJECTION:
 - A REQUEST FOR ANOTHER SPECIMEN WILL BE MADE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
 - REASON FOR REJECTION WILL BE SPECIFIED ON THE REPORT
2. SPECIMENS FOR BTS WILL BE EVALUATED ACCORDING TO THE TRANSFUSION SERVICE POLICY.

1. SPECIMEN IDENTIFICATION

The adequacy of the identification will be determined by the Laboratory based on the availability of two independent identifiers, one of which is unique:

- Last name and given name(s) of patient as they appear on current Provincial Health Card (PHC).
- Correct Medical Record Number (MRN) / Provincial Health Number (PHN)
 - In certain cases the MRN may be replaced by another unique numerical identifier (Example: RCMP number, military number, provincial health number – province **must** be identified)
 - Date of birth is not acceptable as an identification number

The two identifiers on the specimen should match those on the requisition. As long as these identifiers match and are correct according to Cerner and the Patient Registry, the specimen will be processed.

2. UNLABELED SPECIMENS

Unlabeled specimens will be rejected, except in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include specimens that cannot be recollected such as:

- CSF
- Blood cultures after the patient has been started on antibiotics
- Timed specimens
- Neonatal collections
- Blood gases
- Surgical specimens

3. MISLABELED SPECIMENS / REQUISITIONS

Mislabeled specimens / requisitions will be rejected, except in exceptional circumstances as indicated above (#2).

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Examples of discrepancies include:

- Missing one of the acceptable identifiers
- Wrong MRN
 - MRN belongs to another patient
 - Missing / cutoff number(s)
 - Reversal of numbers
 - "000000000" MRN's
- Wrong name
 - Wrong given name (example: parent's name on child's specimen)
 - Misspelled last name / given name(s)
 - Name discrepancies (example: improper use of hyphenated last names)
 - Missing characters due to "cut off" label
 - Reversal of letters (example: Simth instead of Smith)
 - Use of nicknames (example: Betty instead of Elizabeth)
- Requisition and specimen do not match

4. UNLABELED REQUISITIONS

In the case of incomplete requisitions, the lab may choose not to analyze the sample. If possible, the client will be contacted to fax a complete requisition.

5. TECHNICAL CRITERIA

- Insufficient quantity of specimen
- Sample integrity (example: hemolysis, lipemia, clotted)
- Wrong specimen container
- Collection protocol not followed (example: too frequent collection, non-fasting, incorrect order of draw)
- Transportation protocol not followed (example: not on ice, delay in transport, sample left on clot)

6. OUT-OF-PROVINCE REFERRALS

The laboratory may reject samples which do not meet criteria for specialized testing.

Whenever possible, specimens are batched and sent weekly. Possible difficulties resulting from statutory holidays, weather or labour problems should be kept in mind when specimens are collected.

7. SAFETY CRITERIA

All specimens received in the laboratory must be received in a biologically safe condition.

Specimens, specimen containers and/or requisitions that have become contaminated through leakage or spillage will be discarded without being processed except in exceptional circumstances (see #2 above).

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Appendix:

ALTERNATIVE SPECIMEN IDENTIFIERS

Specimens being submitted on individuals from outside of PEI still require 2 independent identifiers on both the specimen and the requisition.

A. Patients from other Provinces

- Provincial health number
- Province **must** be identified
- Expiry date must be provided

Example:

ON	1234 567 897	exp. 2012-03-25
QC	ABCD 1234 5678	exp. 2014-06-21

B. Non Canadian Patients

When a unique identifier is not available:

- Three letters representing the country from which they come
- Date of birth in the format ddmmyr

Examples:

USA050693 (American patient born June 5, 1993)

Or

ENG300948 (British patient born September 30, 1948)

C. RCMP Patients

Use the MRN/PHN as the unique patient identifier.

If unavailable, the RCMP number is acceptable as a unique identifier

Example: John Doe RCMP #123456

NOTE

Every patient registered in Cerner will be assigned an MRN. This assigned MRN can be found on the laboratory report, and **should** be used in replacement of the non-PEI unique identifier for subsequent visits.