

SPECIAL PATHOGENS LABORATORY

VA Medical Center, Infectious Disease Section, 2A-137
 University Drive C, Pittsburgh, PA 15240
 Telephone: (412) 688-6438 Fax: (412) 688-6275

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(Invoice to report contact unless indicated otherwise.)

Sample Information:

Sample location <small>(location: e.g.; building, floor, room, etc.)</small>	Source* <small>(Source: e.g.; faucet, shower, cooling tower, hot water tank, etc.)</small>	Swab or Water	Date Collected	Test Requested**	Special Pathogens Lab use only

Special instructions:

List biocides used (if applicable):

*Potable water sources: hot /cold water distribution systems such as faucets, showers, hot water tanks, holding tanks, drinking fountains, etc. Non-potable water sources: non-drinking water, e.g.; cooling towers, condensers, decorative fountains, etc.
 **Test requested: refer to Special Pathogens guidelines for collection, testing, and shipping procedures on page 2 of form.

(Please duplicate form as needed)

Special Pathogens Laboratory Guidelines for Testing, Collection and Shipping of Environmental Samples:

Testing Performed:	Commonly sampled sources
Culture (C)	Non-potable water from cooling towers, evaporative condensers, reservoirs, decorative fountains, whirlpools, etc. Potable water from water heaters, holding tanks, pipes and plumbing fixtures such as faucets and showerheads. Potable water from cold water lines such as drinking fountains, ice machines, etc.
Copper/silver analysis (AA)	Water distribution systems.
Molecular typing (PFGE)	Isolates from above sources.
Serotyping (DFA)	Isolates from above sources.

Source*:	Collection procedure:	Comments:
Cooling towers, etc.	Collect sample of water from reservoir using a sterile, screw cap specimen container. Submerge open container just under surface of water to obtain approximately 100 ml of sample. Add sodium thiosulfate to sample if water has been recently treated with halogen biocide.	Avoid collecting excessive sediment. Cooling tower sediment can contain very high concentrations of microflora which can inhibit <i>Legionella</i> . If collecting samples from more than one reservoir, it is recommended that disposable gloves be worn and changed after each sample.
Hot water tanks	Open the drain valve at the base of the heater or tank and immediately collect 100 ml of the flowing water into a sterile specimen container. Let the water continue to drain for 15-30 seconds to flush out residual water within the drain pipe. Collect another 100 ml sample into a second specimen container. Submit both samples, labeled Immediate and Post Flush .	Scale and sediment often harbor <i>Legionella</i> bacteria, so it worthwhile to obtain scale or sediment samples from tanks or distal sites. Heavy, "syrupy", samples from the bottom of hot water tanks, however, often do not yield the organism.
Plumbing fixtures and pipes	Faucets: Moisten the outlet by allowing water to trickle through the opening. Insert a sterile, dacron swab and rotate it approximately four times around the inner circumference, moving up into the faucet as far as the swab will reach. Place swab into transport container such as a commercial transport system (e.g.; Culturette II system by Becton Dickinson). Alternatively, a screw cap culture tube may be used. Place swab in tube and add a small amount of water from site to the container to keep the swab moist during transport. Showerhead: Moisten the showerhead by allowing water to trickle through the opening. Rotate a sterile, dacron swab over the entire surface of the showerhead approximately four times. Place swab into transport container as described above.	We recommend that swab samples of fixtures be collected rather than water samples for increasing the sensitivity of the analysis. <i>Legionella</i> resides in biofilm in higher concentrations than in water. If an aerating device is present in the faucet outlet, it is recommended that it be removed prior to sampling. Alternately, a water sample may be collected (100 ml). No neutralizer is needed for routine sampling.)
Drinking fountains, ice machines, etc.	Drinking fountains should be sampled in the same manner as plumbing fixtures. Ice may be collected in sterile specimen cups.	Generally, cold water (< 78°C) will contain low concentrations of <i>Legionella</i> .

Processing and storage of samples:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Label each sample clearly with sample location/description and date collected. Use brief, yet unique, identifier in defining sample location/description. 2. Complete front of form with client information and listing of all samples being submitted. Enter the same sample location/description and date as on the label of each sample to avoid confusion. Use additional forms as needed. 3. Refrigerate sample(s) at 2-8 °C until transporting to Special Pathogens Laboratory. Samples may be stored in this manner 1-2 days without affecting outcome of test(s).*

Transporting or shipping samples:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit samples to the Special Pathogens Laboratory <u>for receipt</u> Monday through Friday only. Samples received in PM will be processed the next working day. 2. If submitting by mail, ship by overnight express. Ship Monday through Thursday only to assure proper receipt. 3. Ship samples within a watertight, insulated shipping container. Include cold packs if not sending by overnight express. 4. Deliver/ship to: Special Pathogens Laboratory, VA Medical Center, Infectious Disease Section, 2A-137, University Drive C, Pittsburgh, PA 15240

*** Please call Special Pathogens Laboratory (412) 688-6438 with any questions regarding described procedures or sample collection from sources not listed. Pricing information is available either by calling or via our website at www.Legionella.org.**