



March 17, 2021

**To Alaska Health Care Providers submitting specimens to the Alaska State Public Health Laboratories (Anchorage or Fairbanks facility) for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Diagnostic or Confirmation PCR testing:**

To ensure specimen integrity is maintained for quality testing and patient test results, state laboratory guidelines for specimen submission have been updated in accordance with CDC recommendations. These guidelines apply to air, mail, or road transportation within any distance of either state laboratory.

The table below describes the testing algorithm based on transit time and specimen temperature:

- Providers must maintain proper specimen transit temperatures by including refrigerated (2-8°C) or frozen ( $\leq 0$  °C) ice packs with the specimens in an insulated shipper or cooler.
- Frozen specimens must be packaged for shipping with enough frozen packs to ensure specimens remain frozen during transport.
- Samples must be packaged as Biological Substances, Category B in accordance with the Department of Transportation regulations.

**Respiratory Specimen Storage and Shipping Acceptance Criteria for SARS-CoV-2 PCR Testing**

Transit time from date of collection to date received	Specimen temperature upon receipt at state lab	Specimen tested (Yes/No)	Qualifier on test report
N/A	Frozen	Yes	N/A
$\leq 3$ days	Refrigerated		
$\leq 3$ days	Room Temperature	Yes	Specimen was received outside refrigerated temperature (2-8°C) and/or transit time ( $\geq 3$ days from collection). Interpret results with caution and resubmit if clinically warranted.
4 - 14 days	Refrigerated to Room Temperature		
$> 14$ days	N/A	No	Unsatisfactory for testing due to specimen temperature $> 21^{\circ}\text{C}$ and/or date of collect to receipt is $> 14$ days.
N/A	Above Room Temperature		

Please see the test directory for further information: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Labs/Pages/COVID.aspx>

Sincerely,

Jayme Parker, PhD, Health Program Manager IV, Public Health Laboratories