

All phone numbers, website addresses, and contact names have been removed.

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## **MDPH**<sub>[C1]</sub> **STATE LABORATORY INSTITUTE**

### **Triage Recommendations and Test Algorithms**<sub>[C2]</sub> **for Suspicious Environmental Specimens**

#### **No Apparent Risk / Do Not Submit Specimen**

<sub>[C3]</sub><sub>[C4]</sub>

1. Specimens of this category include presence of powder, particulate matter or liquid material found in a likely location with an obvious explanation (ie white powder in a coffee shop, powder on floors or in books, etc.).<sub>[C5]</sub>
2. Public safety officials (fire and/or police according to local protocols) should be the first point of contact for individuals who report finding suspicious materials.
3. Testing is not recommended. You may dispose of the specimen in the regular trash in a plastic bag if you choose.

#### **Low Risk / Call Lab to Consult on Testing Options**

1. Specimens of this category include unusual powders, particulate matter or liquid materials found in a location with no obvious explanation, but no known threat.
2. Public safety officials (fire and/or police according to local protocols) should be the first point of contact for individuals who report finding suspicious materials. Hazardous Materials Teams should be notified according to local protocols. Local public health officials should also be notified according to local protocols. Assessment of risk should be made by responding fire/Hazmat/police officials, who should consult with laboratory staff <sub>[C6]</sub> before transporting specimens.
3. Sample submission to the State Laboratory Institute is generally recommended in these instances.
  - a. Follow all "Instructions for using the BT/CT Specimen Submission Kit" to package the sample and fill out the "Biological/Chemical Threat Specimen Form" [the instructions and form are posted at the following website: ].
  - b. Transport specimen to the Specimen Receiving Department located at the front entrance of the State Laboratory Institute. DPH does not routinely provide transport of Low Risk specimens.
4. Testing of routine specimens (low risk) submitted to the laboratory Monday-Friday 8am-5pm will begin no later than an hour following receipt. Testing of routine specimens submitted to the laboratory during evening or weekend hours will begin on the next business day.
5. Test results will be mailed to the submitter noted on the "Biological/Chemical Threat Specimen Form" 48 hours after initialization of testing.<sub>[C7]</sub><sub>[C8]</sub>

## High Risk / Call Lab to Consult and Transport Specimen Immediately to Lab

1. Specimens of this category include any substance or object associated with a (1) written or verbal threat, (2) an unusual event that is determined by public safety and/or public health officials to be of high risk or (3) human illness.
2. Public safety officials (fire and/or police according to local protocols) should be the first point of contact for individuals who report finding suspicious materials<sup>[C9]</sup>. Hazardous Materials Teams and the FBI should be notified according to local protocols. Local public health officials should also be notified according to local protocols. Assessment of risk should be made by responding fire/Hazmat/police officials, who should consult with laboratory staff<sup>[C10]</sup>.
3. Priority sample submission to the State Laboratory Institute is required in these cases.
  - a. Notify the Laboratory prior to submission of the sample.
  - b. Follow all "Instructions for using the BT/CT Specimen Submission Kit" to package the sample and fill out the "Biological/Chemical Threat Specimen Form" [the instructions and form are posted at the following website: <sup>[C11]</sup>].
  - c. Transport specimen to the Specimen Receiving Department located at the front entrance of the State Laboratory Institute immediately. DPH will arrange for transport of High Risk specimens if necessary.
9. Testing of High Risk specimens submitted to the laboratory at any time will begin immediately upon receipt.
10. Preliminary test results will be called out to the submitter noted on the "Biological/Chemical Threat Specimen Form" within 24 hours and final test results will be called out after 48 hours followed by a written report by mail.

## State Laboratory Institute Contacts

**Bio/Chemical Terrorism Laboratory on-call (24/7):  
Epidemiologist on call (24/7):**

**Directions to the State Laboratory Institute, 305 South St. Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
can be found at:**

## Current Issues

### **Ricin Testing:**

Environmental samples, e.g. powders, can be tested at the State Laboratory Institute for ricin. Consult with the State Laboratory Institute Bioterrorism/Chemical Laboratory on call 24/7 staff before submitting specimens. **DO NOT COLLECT SPECIMENS IN GLASS CONTAINERS. USE PLASTIC CONTAINERS OR ZIPLOCK BAGS.**<sup>[C12]</sup>

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[C1] It would be good to indicate the version number, the author, and document control information.

[C2] The word 'algorithm' may be confusing; is there a simpler word?

[C3] The text boxes are different lengths, and would be more effective if they overhang the steps.

[C4] Each text box has a category and an action step. It may be clearer with just an action step in each box.

[C5] Increase the space between lines to improve readability.

[C6] Let's put more emphasis on the importance of calling the laboratory before transporting specimens.

[C7] The font size of the date is Times New Roman 14. That's very large; the rest of the text is Arial 10.

[C8] Could we insert page numbers to help first responders know how long this document is?

[C9] Redundancy: This sentence has been repeated three times in this document.

[C10] Redundancy: This sentence has been repeated twice in this document.

[C11] Redundancy: This sentence has been repeated twice in this document.

[C12] This paragraph appears to be wordy.