

MLS Laboratory Update: Specimen Temperature Monitoring Upon Receipt at IDL

JULY 29TH, 2025

Purpose of this Message:

To announce that the Minnesota Department of Health Infectious Disease Laboratory (MDH-IDL) has made updates to the IDL Test Catalog to include specific temperature requirements for shipping specimens under “Transport/Stability”. The MDH-IDL will begin monitoring specimen temperatures for acceptability upon receipt starting July 29th, 2025, in preparation for MDH-IDL to begin rejecting specimens that are received out of temperature range after September 1, 2025.

Action Item:

Please review and refer to the “Transport/Stability” section of the MDH-IDL Test Catalog to conform with acceptable specimen temperature requirements for storing and shipping specimens to MDH for testing.

[MN Dept. of Health: Infectious Disease Laboratory \(IDL\) Test Catalog \(https://labinventory.web.health.state.mn.us/#/ \)](https://labinventory.web.health.state.mn.us/#/).

Background:

The MDH-IDL requires specimens to be collected, handled and shipped in a controlled manner to maintain specimen integrity for optimal quality to perform laboratory testing. To maintain quality and ensure accuracy of our testing, MDH-IDL has incorporated specimen temperature monitoring at receipt using calibrated infrared (IR) thermometers prior to specimen acceptance. The recorded receipt temperature will ensure specimens were transported at the proper temperature for the analytical test being requested.

Information:

The Transport/Shipping section of the MDH-IDL Test Catalog has been updated to state a temperature range(s) in parenthesis behind the words “ambient”, “refrigerated”, and “frozen” that is specific for that test. Specimens must be received within this range to meet MDH-IDL specimen acceptance criteria. Specimens that do not meet acceptance criteria will be rejected, and the submitter will be notified.

- The following acceptable specimen receipt temperature ranges have been determined:
 - ❖ Ambient 8°C to 25°C

- ❖ Refrigerated 2°C to 8°C
 - ❖ Frozen <0°C
 - Submitted specimens need to be received within the temperature range associated with the analytical test being requested. Clinical laboratories will receive a test cancellation report when a specimen is not within the acceptable temperature range.
 - Please ensure that specimens are being stored at the proper temperature prior to shipping based on the requirements provided in the MDH-IDL Test Catalog.
 - Recommendations to ensure required temperature is maintained during transport/shipping of specimens are as follows:
 - **Ambient shipping** (8°C to 25°C) – place specimen in a biohazard specimen bag inside a Tyvek™ envelope or secondary packaging then ensure secondary package is placed in shipping box/container. No specific temperature control measures are needed in shipping box.
 - **Refrigerated shipping** (2°C to 8°C) – place specimen in a biohazard specimen bag inside a Tyvek™ envelope or secondary packaging. Ensure secondary package is placed in an insulated container with lid for shipping. Place ice packs (completely frozen*) around specimen packages. Seal insulated container with lid, place container into shipping box.
 - **Frozen shipping** (< 0.0°C) – place frozen specimen in a biohazard specimen bag inside a Tyvek™ envelope or secondary packaging then ensure secondary package is placed in an insulated container with lid for shipping. Place in dry ice to keep frozen. If dry ice is not available, use completely frozen* ice packs and surround the specimen packages. Seal insulated container with lid, place container into shipping box.
- *Freeze ice packs flat for ease of packing.
- When temperature acceptance criteria are not met, specimens will be rejected, and submitters will receive a testing cancellation report with the following options of language:
 1. *“The submitted sample does not meet MDH acceptance criteria: Received at incorrect shipping temperature - Temperature too high. Please submit a new specimen if testing is desired. Collection, shipping and storage instructions can be found at: <https://labinventory.web.health.state.mn.us/#/>.”*
 2. *“The submitted sample does not meet MDH acceptance criteria: Received at incorrect shipping temperature - Temperature too low. Please submit a new specimen if testing is desired. Collection, shipping and storage instructions can be found at: <https://labinventory.web.health.state.mn.us/#/>.”*
 - Weblinks
 - [MN Dept. of Health: Infectious Disease Laboratory \(IDL\) Test Catalog \(https://labinventory.web.health.state.mn.us/#/\)](https://labinventory.web.health.state.mn.us/#/).

- [Infectious Disease Lab Forms](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/forms.html)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/forms.html>)

Thank you for supporting this new temperature monitoring change, we appreciate your partnership.

For questions please contact:

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