

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Laboratory Toxicology Surveillance Panel

Is there a requirement to submit blood samples to the Arizona State Public Health Laboratory for toxicology surveillance?

Due to feedback received from hospitals regarding their challenges with complying with Directive 6 in Governor Ducey's [Executive Order 2017-05](#), and in accordance with A.R.S. § 36-782(G), Director Christ is revising the enhanced surveillance advisory to remove the requirement to collect blood samples from suspected opioid overdoses and transfer them to the Arizona State Public Health Laboratory (ASPHL).

However, ASPHL will continue to provide free transport and toxicology screening for those facilities willing to voluntarily comply with Directive 6.

What type of specimens do I need to collect/send?

Information about what type of specimens will be accepted is available in our [Guide to Laboratory Services – Chemistry Addendum](#) listed as Toxicology Guide on our web page.

| Agent / Chemical | Specimen Type and Quantity* | Transport Container and Conditions | Instrument / Detection | Comments |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|------------------------|--|
| Toxicology Surveillance Panel | Blood - 1 blood tube Minimum volume required: 3 mL | Vacuum-fill, non-gel, purple-top (EDTA) tube (3-mL or larger) Store at 5 ± 3 °C DO NOT FREEZE. While it is preferred that specimens be shipped cold, ASPHL will accept courier shipped specimens at room temperature. | LC-MS/MS | Vacuum-fill, non-gel, gray-top (potassium oxalate/NaF) tube (3-mL or larger) may also be used, but purple-top tubes are preferred. At this time ASPHL is not accepting post-mortem specimens. |

When should we be collecting specimens from the patient?

Blood can be collected from individuals presenting at the hospital for which the healthcare provider [suspects opioid overdose](#). Only ante-mortem specimens will be accepted (collected before death).

Will the ASPHL want specimens already collected and that have been tested in the hospital lab?

Yes, the ASPHL began accepting specimens from suspected opioid overdoses which include specimens that may have been tested by the entity's laboratory on or after 07/31/2017.

Will there be specific paperwork that needs to accompany the specimens?

Yes, please use the [clinical submission form](#), which has been updated, and mark *Toxicology Surveillance Panel* under Chemistry. This form is located on the ASPHL [Shipping and Receiving](#) website.

How should specimens be packaged?

Please refer to the [Toxicology Guide to Laboratory Services](#) pages 5-9 for specific information. If shipping via courier, the courier's container is considered the tertiary packaging.

How will specimens be transported to the Arizona State Public Health Laboratory (ASPHL)?

The ASPHL will be using Specialized Delivery Services courier for transporting specimens to the laboratory. The [courier schedule](#) is posted on the ASPHL [Shipping and Receiving](#) website. Depending on your location, the courier may be picking up every day or may need to be called, **480-900-8026 or 480-900-8027**, indicating you have a pick up.

Do Not Call the courier if you are not on the current list. If you do not see your location on the schedule and you have specimens for toxicology surveillance, please contact **Shipping and Receiving** at labreceiving@azdhs.gov or **602.542.1190** to be added.

If you are using your own courier or sending specimens via mail (FedEx, UPS, etc.) please deliver to the Receiving section of the ASPHL at 250 N. 17th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85007.

What is the expected turnaround time to receive results back from ASPHL?

ASPHL will not be providing results back to submitters.

How long will samples be held?

Samples will be destroyed upon 7 days after analysis and results are finalized.

How will this data be used?

Data will be used by public health to gain a better understanding of the current opioid burden in AZ and will enable the state to identify and implement effective measures to curb the epidemic and prevent future overdoses. For example, this screening will provide better information on the burden of overdose due to multiple substances and provide insight into the burden of illicit versus prescribed substances to better target interventions.

Who will ADHS share the data with?

Data will remain confidential for public health purposes only. [ARS 36-785\(C\)](#) prohibits sharing of any identifiable (patient-specific) information with public safety agencies. Only aggregate summary data will be shared publically.

If you still have questions or comments, please submit them to azopioid@azdhs.gov.