



# Arkansas Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

1 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205

Phone: 501-823-1730 Fax: 501-907-2410

[www.agriculture.arkansas.gov/livestock-poultry/veterinary-diagnostic-lab](http://www.agriculture.arkansas.gov/livestock-poultry/veterinary-diagnostic-lab)

## Sample Submission Guidelines

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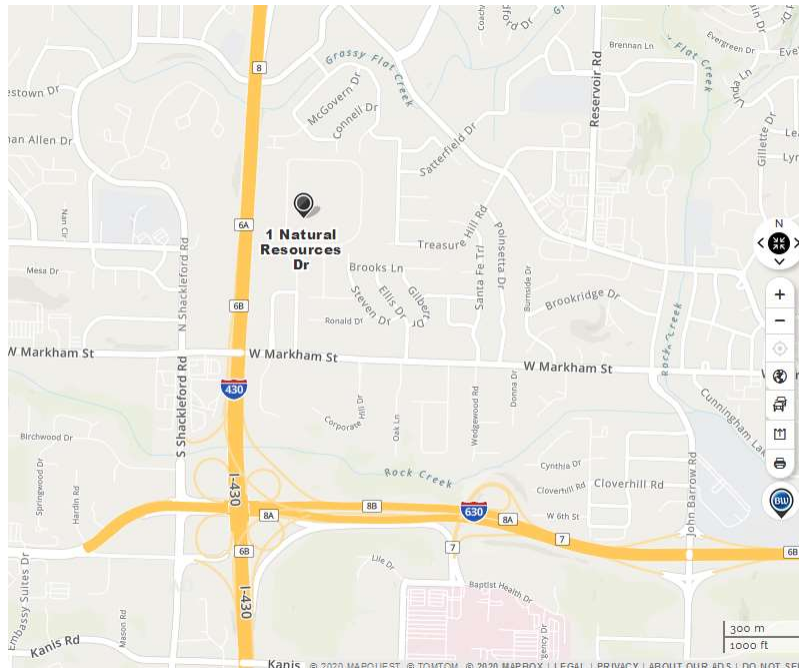
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### General Information

This document and the **List of Tests and Fees** can be found on the [AR VDL website](#).

### Map and Operating Hours



The lab is open from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

The lab is closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day (and the day after), Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, it will be observed on the preceding Friday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, it will be observed on the following Monday.

### After-Hours and Weekend Assistance

Samples and companion animal bodies can be left in the refrigerator located on the loading dock after normal operating hours. The refrigerator is offered as a convenience to the public and is not secure.

Samples left in the dock refrigerator do not enter the custody of the lab until they are retrieved by laboratory personnel during regular working hours.

If you require secure sample submission after hours, please contact Eagle Courier at 501-438-9894.



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If you need to submit a large animal for disposal or necropsy after hours, please call the on-call Veterinary Pathologist at 501-773-2456.

### **Rabies Submissions**

**Brains, small heads, and whole bats and other small mammals** should be submitted directly to the Arkansas Department of Health, 4815 W. Markham Street, Little Rock, AR 72205. Contact ADH for shipment information at 501-661-2840.

**Large heads (cattle, horses) and whole animal carcasses** can be submitted to the VDL for brain removal. A courier fee will be charged for transport of the brain to ADH. If a **whole body** is submitted, a **disposal fee** will apply.

**Brain tissue submitted for rabies testing must be fresh and intact.** Severely decomposed or traumatized tissue may give inconclusive test results or may be rejected for testing.

### **Sample Transportation Guidelines**

Submitters may deliver samples directly to the lab. There are also several services that will transport samples to the lab for testing.

Please address all samples to: Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, 1 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205.

For all transport services, we recommend that packages be mailed with tracking information, and that you retain your tracking number until your package has arrived at the lab. Ensure samples are packaged appropriately to avoid breakage or leaking during transport and include cold packs as appropriate.

The lab is not responsible for transport service delays or for samples that are lost or damaged during transport. For any problems or questions about transportation, please contact your transport provider directly.

#### **Courier Service**

Courier service is available for some areas of the state. Eagle Courier is the recommended courier service for transport of samples and companion animal bodies to the lab. Contact their direct dispatch at 501-438-9894 for service areas, fees, and delivery times.

#### **FedEx**

FedEx offers a variety of options for package delivery. We recommend that samples be sent overnight (priority for morning delivery or standard for afternoon delivery).



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### UPS

UPS offers several options depending on your location and delivery needs. We recommend Next Day Air (Early, Standard, or Saver) for most samples. UPS ground is not recommended for time or temperature sensitive samples, as it may take up to 5 days for delivery.

### Postal Mail (USPS)

We do not recommend sending time- or temperature-sensitive samples through the postal service.

## Submission Guidelines

### Submission Form

All non-regulatory submissions must be accompanied by a completed **Lab Submission Form**. Copies of this form are available on the [AR VDL website](#), at the Receiving area of the laboratory, and in the red wooden box on the loading dock. For regulatory testing submission form requirements, please see the section on **Regulatory Testing Requirements** below.

The submission form represents a contract between you and the laboratory. It must be filled out completely, legibly, and accurately. By filling out a submission form and submitting it to the lab, you represent that (i) you are authorized to enter into an agreement to have the designated services performed, (ii) you are the owner of the specimens submitted, or an authorized agent of the owner, and (iii) you will pay for the services rendered.

### Pet Loss Form for Small Animal Necropsies

All companion animal necropsies must be accompanied by a completed **Pet Loss Form**, along with **the Lab Submission Form**, to indicate the type of cremation to be performed once the necropsy case is finalized. Copies of this form are available on the [AR VDL website](#), at the Receiving area during normal business hours, and in the red wooden box on the dock after hours.

We offer general incineration of animal remains immediately following a finalized necropsy. This service is at no additional cost for all necropsy submissions. No ashes will be returned.

Submitters requesting private cremation must contact the cremation service directly to make arrangements for private cremation. We do not take payments for cremation services. Cremation services are listed on the Pet Loss Form, along with their contact information, for your convenience.

Due to public health and safety concerns, we are unable to release pet remains to submitters, pet owners, or veterinarians. Pet remains will only be released to a pet cremation service.

### Regulatory Testing Requirements

Samples submitted for regulatory testing must arrive in containers which are unexpired and marked with a clearly labeled identifier (official ID and/or sample number) that exactly matches the information on the submission form.

Samples submitted in expired containers or that have mismatched, incorrect, missing, or ambiguous IDs are ineligible for regulatory testing and will be rejected. Rejected samples will be discarded and will not be returned to the submitter.



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**BHI Broth Tubes** must have a visible manufacturer expiration date. Any BHI broth tube where the manufacturer expiration date is obscured, obliterated, or otherwise illegible will be considered expired and will not be valid for testing. Up to 5 swabs may be pooled in 3.0 mL BHI. Up to 11 swabs may be pooled in 5.5 mL BHI. Please note number of swabs per pool on the broth tube.

Testing of **Trichomonas** culture pouches was discontinued on 12/31/24. **Trichomonas samples must be submitted in buffered saline (PBS)**. See the **List of Tests and Fees** on the VDL website for more information.

All regulatory samples must be accompanied by the most current approved regulatory form. All regulatory submission forms must be 100% complete and accurate. Forms with missing or incorrect information will not be accepted. The laboratory will not correct mistakes or omissions on submission paperwork for regulatory testing without prior written approval from the Arkansas State Veterinarian.

Acceptable Official Identification for Brucellosis and Pseudorabies Virus submissions include:

- Bovine Official Identification - Official ear tag (i.e., Vaccination, NUES, or 840)
- Swine Official Identification - Official ear tags (i.e., NUES or 840)
- Caprine/Ovine Identification - Official ID tags (i.e., Scrapie or 840)

### Animals for Export

Samples submitted for export of live animals to other states or countries must be submitted at least 10 days prior to export.

### Reference Lab (Send Out Tests)

We may subcontract work that cannot be completed in-house to an accredited reference laboratory at our discretion. Any subcontracted work will be noted as such in the final report. Submitters will be responsible for all reference laboratory fees and shipping charges for subcontracted testing.

### Turnaround Times (TAT)

Turnaround times listed in the **List of Tests and Fees** (available on the VDL website) are estimated for routine samples and tests and are subject to change. Testing TAT applies to submissions for tests arriving prior to the listed cutoff times.

Actual turnaround times may vary depending on:

- sample quality
- incomplete submission form
- improper sample labeling
- improper sample packaging (broken, leaking, or expired containers)
- confirmatory testing performed at reference laboratory
- additional testing methods
- slow-growing cultures or densely mixed cultures
- culture enrichment procedures

We make every effort to ensure prompt delivery of test results, however, **we do not offer a STAT option for any test.**



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It is no longer possible for submitters requesting EIA (Coggins) tests to pick up a physical copy of resulted EIA forms. Veterinarians submitting EIA on paper forms may request a five-day temporary emailed copy by calling the lab. All emailed copies will be sent to the submitting veterinarian.

### Sample Types

All specimen containers should be unexpired and clearly labeled with submitter (veterinarian/clinic/owner) and animal ID, to ensure that the sample can be unmistakably matched to its corresponding submission form.

**Serum** is obtained from whole blood collected into a red top vacuum tube. Serum is the fluid that remains after the blood has clotted. Red top tubes should be gently centrifuged. Serum should be removed from the clot, free from hemolysis, and refrigerated during shipment. Vacuum tubes with red and grey tops contain a gel that promotes separation of the serum. Please centrifuge these serum separator tubes before shipment.

**Paired serum samples** are taken from the same animal 7 to 21 days apart. The samples are submitted and tested at the same time. If there is a significant increase in the amount of antibody (increase in titer), the animal is considered to have an active infection.

**Whole blood** samples are obtained from blood collected into a vacuum tube containing a chemical that prevents clotting. Lavender top tubes that contain EDTA are the preferred method for collecting whole blood samples. Green top tubes that contain heparin are most often used to collect plasma. Light blue top tubes that contain sodium citrate are used for coagulation tests. All vacuum tubes containing anticoagulants should be gently inverted several times after collection to activate.

**Urine or other fluids for culture** should never be sent in culture swab containers because they leak and the sample can become contaminated, compromising the accuracy of the results. Send the fluid in a leak-proof container such as a red top tube. Do not collect these samples in lavender top tubes.

**Swabs** should be placed in sterile transport media (aerobic and/or anaerobic media). Some regulatory tests require swabs submitted in BHI broth (see below). Swabs submitted in incorrect media may be rejected for analysis. Contact the lab if you have any questions.

**BHI Broth Tubes** must have a visible manufacturer expiration date. Any BHI broth tube where the manufacturer expiration date is obscured, obliterated, or otherwise illegible will be considered expired and will not be valid for testing. Up to 5 swabs may be pooled in 3.0 mL BHI. Up to 11 swabs may be pooled in 5.5 mL BHI. Please note number of swabs per pool on the broth tube.

**Trichomonas pouches** **MUST NOT BE REFRIGERATED, shipped with ice packs, or frozen.** Do not leave sample pouches in a cooler or outside during the fall and winter. Temperature of sample pouch must remain above 18C/64F.

**Tissues** should be packaged separately from each other in leak-proof, clean or sterile containers and accompanied by an ice pack.

**Milk samples** should be submitted in sterile, screw-top containers wrapped with Parafilm to prevent leakage.



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**Hair, scabs, or skin scrapings** for fungal analysis should be sent in dry, sterile containers.

### **Necropsies**

Animal remains should be submitted for necropsy as soon after death as possible to improve the diagnostic quality of samples. Keep remains refrigerated but **do not freeze** them. Remains that are severely decomposed or previously frozen may not permit meaningful diagnostic evaluation. Please call the lab if you have any questions.

We do not offer cosmetic necropsies.

### **Surgical Biopsy Samples for Histopathology**

All samples must be submitted in sealed leak-proof containers.

The required ratio of fixative to tissue is 10:1. We recommend 10% neutral buffered formalin as a fixative.

Large samples that are placed in small volumes of fixative, excessively bloody samples, fatty samples, and samples containing bone may require 48 to 72 hours of additional processing time.

When submitting multiple lesions from different sites on the same animal, lesions should be put in separate containers that are labeled with animal ID and lesion site. If multiple lesions from different sites are placed in a single container, we may not differentiate between them when trimming for histopathology.

### **Billing and Payment Guidelines**

Private livestock owners may submit samples for routine diagnostic testing. Samples submitted for regulatory testing must be submitted through a licensed veterinarian.

All companion animal samples submitted for diagnostic testing must be submitted through a licensed veterinarian, even when testing is paid for by the owner at the time of submission.

All necropsies may be submitted by veterinarians or private owners.

Private owner submissions are not eligible for monthly billing and owners must provide payment at the time of submission. Payments can be made by:

- Cash (in person only). The lab will not be responsible for lost cash that was left in the after-hours drop off or mailed to the lab.
- Check made payable to ALPC.
- Credit or debit card using the [Online Payment Portal](#). For assistance in obtaining an account number, contact the lab during regular business hours.

Licensed veterinarians and veterinary practices whose accounts are in good standing with the lab may be billed monthly for services. An itemized invoice will be available with each finalized submission, and a summarized monthly statement will be issued at the close of each billing cycle.



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NOTE: All lab services will be suspended for be any billing account that has an unpaid balance of 60 days or more until the account balance is paid in full.

Accounts that become suspended three or more times in any 12-month period will be moved to COD account status and will be required to provide payment at the time of each sample submission until 90 days after the end of the billing cycle in which the account is brought current.

### **Obtaining Test Results**

To protect client confidentiality, all test results will be released only to the veterinarian listed on the submission form, and the billing entity (if different). Submitters wishing to authorize the release of test results to an alternate party must complete a **Waiver of Confidentiality**, located on the [AR VDL website](#). The waiver must be completed for each submission.

We encourage submitters to access tests results via [WebSuite](#), a free client portal with 24-hour access to test results and account information. If you would like to access your WebSuite account or have questions about how to use the portal, please contact the lab for more information.