



**Date:** September 17, 2020  
**To:** AHS COVID Assessment Centres  
**From:** Karen Williams, Technical Director, North Sector  
Maureen Cyfra, Technical Director, South Sector  
Paul Jacquier, Director, Public Health Laboratory  
**Re:** **Racking Process for All COVID-19 Samples**

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**Key Message:**

- Effective **IMMEDIATELY**, Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) is implementing a provincial standard process for racking all COVID-19 samples. This will require all AHS COVID Assessment Centres to rack specimens, when racks are available, prior to transportation to their corresponding COVID-19 lab for processing.
- Racks will be provided by APL and will be returned to assessment centers when available. If racks are not available, continue with current process. APL is in the process of acquiring additional racks that will be put into immediate circulation.

**Why this is Important:**

- This process will ensure that Lab staff can quickly and efficiently process specimens. Racking specimens at the AHS COVID Assessment Centres will streamline the receiving process in the Lab and allow for data entry to occur sooner, resulting in an improved turnaround time.

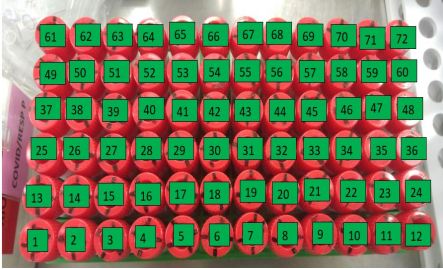

**Background:**

- Samples arriving in individual bags requires receiving Lab staff to remove the sample from the bag and place into a rack, as well as organizing the requisitions. Eliminating this step makes the receiving process in Lab more efficient.

**Action Required:**

- Prior to shipping COVID-19 specimens to Lab all samples must be placed into the lab provided rack, when racks are available. Corresponding requisitions are to be organized according to the specimen order in the rack and placed either into a sealable plastic bag or bundled using paperclips or elastic bands. Place rack(s) into a single large biohazard bag and place into the lab transport container, place the requisitions into the same lab transport container. **DO NOT** place requisitions into the large biohazard bag that contains the racked samples.



Steps	Action	Details
1	<b>Place vial into the rack</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>With the rack sitting horizontally, place specimen vials 12 in a row racking <b>left to right</b> into the rack provided. Begin from the bottom left corner of the rack, ending in the top right corner.  <i>N.B. Do not 'snake' the samples</i></li><li><b>When possible</b> fill the entire racks with either priority specimens (marked with an 'X') or non-priority specimens (not marked with an 'X'). If it is not possible to fill the entire rack place both priority and non-priority specimens into the same rack.</li><li>Place requisitions in the same order as the sample tubes in the rack. Place the requisitions either into a sealable plastic bag or bundled using paperclips or elastic bands.  <i>N.B. Each rack has a corresponding bag of requisitions</i></li></ul>



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2	<b>Shipment packaging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All racks that contain specimens <b>MUST</b> be shipped on the next courier run, even if the rack is not full.</li><li>• Place specimen rack(s) into the larger sealable biohazard bag provided and then into the lab transport container.</li><li>• Place the requisitions in the same lab transport container. <b>DO NOT</b> place the requisitions in the biohazard bag that contain the racked samples.</li></ul>
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**Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:**

- **Natasha Mattoo**, Process Improvement Lead for Racking, email: [Natasha.Mattoo@albertaprecisionlabs.ca](mailto:Natasha.Mattoo@albertaprecisionlabs.ca)

**This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:**

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