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**Date:** August 27, 2020

**To:** Emergency COVID Committee  
AHS COVID-19 Collection Sites  
AHS & Covenant Health Physicians & Nursing  
Public Health  
DynaLife  
COVID-19 Swabbing Community Operations  
Pharmacies  
Long Term Care Facilities  
Primary Care

**From:** Tammy Hofer, Chief Operating Officer, Alberta Precision Laboratories

**Re:** **Visualization Process for Priority Specimen Identification**

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**PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE**

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**Key Message:**

Effective **IMMEDIATELY**, Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) is implementing a new process for visual identification of priority specimens for COVID-19 testing. This will require the testing sites to indicate priority specimens prior to transportation to their corresponding COVID-19 lab for processing.

**Why this is Important:**

This process will ensure that Lab staff can quickly and efficiently identify those specimens that are to be processed first. This will streamline the data entry process resulting in an improved turnaround time for priority specimens.

**Background**

The following categories will qualify for **Priority** testing:

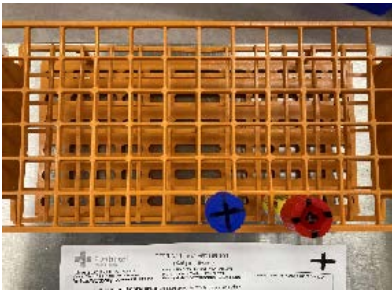

- Symptomatic
- Outbreak Investigation as ordered by Public Health
- Close Contact for Contact Tracing as ordered by Public Health

Please refer to the Alberta Health website for more details: <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-testing-in-alberta.aspx>

**Action Required:**

After collection of specimens for COVID-19 testing collection staff will be required to perform Priority Checks on the specimens.



Step	Action	Details
1	<b>Perform Priority Check</b>	Any specimens with the following indicated will qualify for priority testing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Symptomatic</li><li>• Outbreak Investigation as ordered by Public Health</li><li>• Close Contact for Contact Tracing as ordered by Public Health</li></ul>
2	<b>Apply a black Sharpie "X" on the top of the cap of the specimen and the top right hand corner of the Requisition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply a black Sharpie "X" on the top of the cap of the specimen and the top right hand corner of the Requisition.</li></ul> 
3	<b>Perform secondary check, as per site specific instructions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Perform secondary patient identification checks on specimen and requisition, including priority check, per local site process.</li></ul>
4	<b>Storage of tubes and requisitions</b>	<p><b>Racks Available:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place specimen vial in order in the tube rack provided.</li><li>• Place requisition in the same order as the tube in the small sealable bag provided.</li></ul>  <p><b>Racks <u>NOT</u> Available:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place specimen vial in the specimen bag.</li><li>• Place the folded requisition in the sleeve of the bag with the black Sharpie "X" visible.</li></ul>



Step	Action	Details
5	Shipment packaging	<p><b>Racks Available:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place specimen rack into the larger sealable bag provided and into the lab transport container.</li><li>• Place the requisitions (bagged as shown above) in the same lab transport container.</li></ul> <p><b>Racks <u>NOT</u> Available:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place all <u>Priority specimen bags</u> into the larger sealable bag provided and into the lab transport container.</li><li>• Place all other specimen bags into the same lab transport container.</li></ul>

**Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:**

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

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