



**SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) MOLECULAR DIAGNOSTIC TESTING GUIDANCE**

**Appropriate Clinical Specimens for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Molecular Diagnostic Testing**

Testing Method	Recommended Specimens
SARS-CoV-2 real time RT-PCR ( <a href="#">TaqPath™ COVID-19 Combo Kit</a> )	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Respiratory Specimens</b></p> (NP, nasal, or OP swabs in transport media; NP aspirate; BAL)

***Specimen shipment to VRDL requires prior consultation with your local public health department.***

**Specimen Collection**

For respiratory specimen collection, refer to the CDC’s [Interim Guidelines for Collecting and Handling of Clinical Specimens for COVID-19 Testing](#).

**Specimen Storage**

[Store respiratory specimens](#) at 2-8°C for up to 72 hours after collection. If a delay in testing or shipping is expected, store specimens at -70°C or below.

**Shipping to the VRDL**

To ship approved specimens:

- Electronically complete the [VRDL General Purpose Specimen Submittal Form](#) for EACH SPECIMEN:

**Test(s) Requested:** SARS-CoV-2 PCR

**Vaccine details:** date(s) of administration and manufacturer of SARS-CoV-2 vaccine, if applicable

**Laboratory data:** if previously tested, include previous test results and specimen information

**Clinical Findings and Symptoms:** symptoms and onset date, travel history, and outbreak name/location, if applicable

- Include hard copy of the VRDL General Purpose Specimen Submittal Form with shipment. Handwritten forms or forms with stickers will not be accepted.
- Notify the VRDL by secure email to [VRDL.Mail@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:VRDL.Mail@cdph.ca.gov).
- Ship approved specimens to:  
 CDPH VRDL  
**Attn: Specimen Receiving**  
 850 Marina Bay Parkway  
 Richmond, CA 94804
- Ship refrigerated specimens on cold packs or frozen specimens on dry ice for same-day or overnight arrival Monday through Thursday.
- For questions about specimen collection, submittal, or shipping, please contact the CDPH/Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory (VRDL) Medical and Epidemiology Liaisons (MELs) Unit at [VRDL.Mail@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:VRDL.Mail@cdph.ca.gov).