



**THREAT-PREPAREDNESS & BIOTERRORISM RESPONSE LABORATORY**  
**OFFICE OF LABORATORY SERVICES**  
**BUREAU OF PUBLIC HEALTH**  
167 Eleventh Avenue, South Charleston, West Virginia 25303  
<http://www.wvdhhr.org/labservices>

## HAZARD CATEGORIZATION SCREEN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIMENS

The West Virginia Office of Laboratory Services (WVOLS) will be considered the Reference Level (Formerly Level B and Level C) Laboratory for confirmatory identification of *Bacillus anthracis*, *Yersinia pestis*, *Francisella tularensis*, *Brucella spp.*, and other agents of Bioterrorism upon completion of the Modular Biosafety Level 3 Laboratory.

If you have any questions about collecting or submitting an environmental specimen that may contain an agent of Bioterrorism, call the **West Virginia Office of Laboratory Services, Threat-Preparedness & Bioterrorism Response Section at (304) 558-3530 x2301** during regular work hours 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

If you have a suspected agent of Bioterrorism and need to submit an environmental specimen to the West Virginia Office of Laboratory Services, Threat-Preparedness & Bioterrorism Response Section for confirmatory testing, please follow the procedure guidelines provided on Environmental Specimen Submission Guidelines information sheet. CURRENTLY, A HAZARD CATEGORIZATION SCREEN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIMENS PRIOR TO SUBMISSION TO WVOLS IS ONLY A RECOMMENDATION AND NOT A REQUIREMENT.

### Screening of Specimens Prior to Submission

In an effort to enhance laboratory security, the WVOLS request that environmental specimens should be screened by the submitter prior to submission for explosives/explosive devices, radiation and/or chemical risks. Each screen performed must be documented. We request that each agency develop specimen screening/hazard categorization protocols and obtain the appropriate field instruments to perform such screening or contact other appropriate agencies to perform the screening.

The environmental specimen should be assessed by individuals specifically trained or certified to perform the assays utilized. The assays should be performed utilizing acceptably calibrated/certified instruments or other acceptable means. Consultation with the FBI Hazardous Materials Response Unit and/or USAMRIID and/or the CDC WMD Response Team may be necessary for any environmental specimen that has been found to contain radioactivity, volatile organic chemicals, chemical nerve agents, and/or incendiary, aerosol, pressurized gas vessels, or other potential dissemination devices. Due to safety concerns, these specimens will **NOT** be accepted by the WVOLS Threat-Preparedness & Bioterrorism Response Laboratory.

### Guidelines for Hazard Categorization Screen Protocol Development

- Determine the appropriate personal protective equipment to collect and screen the environmental specimen.
- Determine the appropriate assay/methodology to be performed for each type of hazard screen.
- Determine the appropriate instruments to perform screening assays and/or methods.
- Determine appropriate agency to perform the Hazard Categorization Screen. Preferably FBI, HAZMAT Teams, Regional Response Teams, and/or National Guard Civil Support Teams.
- Develop agreements with the appropriate agencies to perform the Hazard Categorization screen.
- Develop appropriate documentation forms.
- Develop a reporting policy for screen results and determine the appropriate agency to handle the specimen.

### Receipt of Specimens at WVOLS

Specimen submission forms should accompany the specimen from the scene to the laboratory. If the environmental specimen has been screened before submission to the WVOLS, documentation of screening must also accompany the specimen submission form. Documentation should include the following information: Name and signature of person conducting the assessment; Date of assessment; Assessment performed; Instrument utilized; Results of assessment. A Hazard Categorization Screen is currently recommended, not required, for submission of environmental specimens.

### Required Forms and Signatures

A "Suspected Bioterrorism Environmental Specimen Submission Form" must accompany each environmental specimen. Please complete the screen evaluation questions in the specimen information section of this form.