



## FAQ for State Animal and Public Health Officials on Companion Animal Coronavirus Testing

### How will the decision to test be made?

The decision to test will be made collaboratively between local, state or federal public and animal health officials.

At this time, testing for companion animals will only be done if animal and public health officials agree testing should occur due to a link to a known human case of COVID-19. We will not be testing the general companion animal population.

State animal health laboratories can/will conduct animal testing, but any positive samples would need to be confirmed through additional testing by USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratory.

### Who will collect the companion animal samples?

Once the decision is made to test, a state-appointed veterinarian, USDA accredited veterinarian, or Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostician (FADD) should collect the sample [using appropriate personal protective equipment and sample collection methods](#). The state animal health official(s) will know who their FADDs are and identify the appropriate person to collect the sample.

### What sample types will be collected?

Oral, nasal and rectal/fecal swabs should be collected per [OIE recommendations](#) and according to [established sample collection protocols](#). Please store oral and nasal swabs in separate vials. If desired/agreed, collect blood samples (for archiving – testing not yet available) in sterile tubes (Vacutainer preferred, SST optional). The tubes should be spun and the serum be removed and placed in a clean tube and refrigerated. Do not freeze whole blood or samples with the clot remaining. It is not necessary to remove the serum from the SST tubes prior to shipping.

### How should samples be stored?

Samples should be stored in viral transport media (e.g., universal VTM or BHI); dry swabs are not acceptable for testing. Samples may be stored at 2-8°C for up to 72 hours after collection. Serum may be frozen at -20°C.

### How should samples be packaged and labelled?

Please follow NVSL protocols for [packaging and labeling submissions to the NVSL](#). Label the samples per other diagnostic samples with potential to infect humans, under code "UN2814". Maintain sample cold chain using gel ice packs.

### How should samples be submitted to NVSL?

Please follow the [NVSL sample submission procedure](#). Please also call ahead of sample shipment – during business hours 515-337-7551 – and email the specimen submission form (VS 10-4) and tracking information to: [NVSL.DVL.Heads@usda.gov](mailto:NVSL.DVL.Heads@usda.gov).

**What is the reporting process?**

Labs should follow their reporting process; however, no results should be reported publicly until confirmed by NVSL; SARS-CoV-2 detection in any animal is currently reportable per OIE guidance.