



United States
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Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Veterinary Services

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20250

VETERINARY SERVICES NOTICE 10-07

TO: Veterinary Services Management Team (VSMT)

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SUBJECT: Diagnostic Submissions to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this notice is to update Veterinary Services (VS) field personnel on procedures for efficient submission of diagnostic samples to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) and distribution of test results. NVSL recently implemented a new Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS), revised standard submission forms, and reviewed submission and report distribution processes. Field personnel adherence to guidance in this Notice will maximize efficiency.

II. PROCESS

A. Selection of Submission Form

1. Use the current version.

NVSL recently updated several standard submission forms and will continue to update others throughout the upcoming year. Use only the most current version of the submission form.

The current versions in fillable PDF format are available at ww.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/lab_info_services/forms_publications.shtml. Replace any older templates that may be stored locally with the current version from the Web site. **NOTE:** Carbon pack forms are being phased out. Please avoid old carbon packs, as the NVSL scans forms to electronic format in the LIMS. The print quality of a carbon copy is especially poor on scans, and the tissue-like paper quality does not feed well through scanners.

2. Use the proper form

VS has several forms specifically designed for submission of samples to the NVSL (for example, VS Form 10-4, 10-3, 6-35, 5-38). Use the NVSL submission form that best fits the type of sample being submitted. The purpose



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of each form is described in the form-specific instructions, also found on the Web site listed above.

- Use an official NVSL submission form for every sample submitted, even those that may be provided for research or developmental purposes.
- Do not substitute forms that are not intended to accompany NVSL laboratory submissions, as these frequently do not have all the data needed for a lab submission and/or the data are not formatted in a manner that is easily extrapolated to the data fields in the NVSL LIMS.
- Do not use reports generated from other systems (except for Veterinary Services Laboratory Submissions [VSLs]) or forms used to submit samples to other diagnostic labs. If entering into VSLs, enter all known data.
- Do not submit free-text notes in lieu of an official submission form.
- You may append auxiliary forms/notes if they have relevant information, but they should always accompany an NVSL submission form that is properly completed.

B. Completing the Submission Form

- Because the NVSL has updated its submission forms, instructions for completing each form also have been updated. Instructions have been added to forms that previously did not have them. Please read the form-specific instructions to ensure proper completion of the form.
- Fill in the submission form as completely as possible, every time. Make sure any fields marked as required are completed.
- Do not link more than 250 samples to a single submission form. Complete an additional form for each multiple of 250.
- Providing complete information on each form is important even if multiple submissions are sent together. Do not assume that the submissions will always remain together throughout processing.
- Complete the form with enough detail so anybody can understand the nature of the submission. Many NVSL employees handle each submission, and every employee in the work flow is not likely to be aware of pre-submission conversations that may have taken place between the submitter and a single NVSL employee.
- Be as consistent as possible over time when providing submitter contact information. (Frequent sources of discrepancies include providing home addresses versus office addresses or cell phone numbers versus office phone numbers.) The NVSL LIMS maintains master submitter records. Any discrepancy between the contact information provided on a given submission form and the data found in the LIMS submitter record must be manually

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investigated. This reduces the efficiency with which the sample can be processed, and can lead to errors and duplications.

- For additional consistency, use your NVSL Submitter ID. This is a unique identifier assigned by the NVSL LIMS to each submitter. To determine if you are currently configured as a submitter in the NVSL LIMS and/or to obtain your NVSL Submitter ID, contact the NVSL case coordinator at 515-337-7514 or NVSLCaseCoordinator@aphis.usda.gov
- To update the contact information in your NVSL LIMS submitter record, follow the instructions on the NVSL Customer Contact Information Update (VS Form 4-10) found at the Web site listed above.

C. Packaging Submissions

Diagnostic samples must be packaged in accordance with Federal regulations. Failure to follow regulations can result in substantial financial penalties. For more details, see www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/lab_info_services/packaging_labeling.shtml.

D. Distribution of Test Results

1. Method of delivery

- The NVSL LIMS currently supports release of test results by e-mail or fax. U.S. mail delivery is also an option, but this route will cause a delay in receipt of test results and also necessitates manual processing.
- Submitters may specify a preferred default method of delivery using the NVSL Contact Update Form. If no preference is specified, the NVSL will assume e-mail preference if an e-mail address is available.
- Results may be simultaneously routed to multiple authorized e-mail addresses specified by the submitter. Simultaneous delivery by fax and e-mail is not currently supported.

2. Recipients of test results

- Default recipients of test results for most routine submissions are the submitter; the Area Veterinarians in Charge (AVIC) for the State(s) of the submitter, animal's current location, and owner; and the VS Regional Director for the applicable AVICs. Other routing is configured into the NVSL LIMS as default for select types of cases. Default routing is based on memorandums of understanding and follows established VS policies.
- Do not request the release of results directly to an animal owner. It is the policy of the NVSL to release results only to authorized submitters

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(generally Federal-State personnel, other diagnostic labs, or accredited veterinarians). It is the responsibility of the authorized submitter to further distribute results to the owner.

- Special report distribution for individual cases may be specified. Include case-specific routing instructions in the Comments or Additional Data blocks of the submission form; do not alter the submitter contact information. If a special fax or e-mail address is specified, include the identity of the person who will be receiving the results at the specified fax/e-mail.

3. Release of test results

- Test results are released in real-time, as they are available, by the NVSL case coordinator during NVSL business hours (8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. central time, Monday – Friday, excluding Federal holidays).
- Results to the AVIC are batched into hourly releases.
- Final reports are always released by the NVSL case coordinator through the LIMS. Preliminary or partial reports may be released, as necessary, by NVSL laboratory personnel. Such reports are always followed by a final report.

E. Contacts for Questions on Submission and Reporting Procedures

- For questions regarding NVSL submission procedures, contact the National Centers for Animal Health Sample Processing Section at 515-337-7212 or NCAH.Samples@aphis.usda.gov.
- Direct questions regarding test report distribution to the NVSL case coordinator at 515-337-7514 or NVSLCaseCoordinator@aphis.usda.gov.