



## FAQs

### Drug Testing Questions & Answers

#### **How many specimens are tested annually at the Navy Drug Screening Laboratories (NDSLs)?**

The two NDSLs test approximately 2.5 million specimens annually from Navy and Marine Corps active duty, recruit, and reserve members, all Department of Defense (DOD) military applicants processed through the Military Entrance Processing Stations, and other military members (i.e., Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, ROTC).

#### **How are specimens tested?**

Specimens are transported from the submitting units to the laboratory via the US Postal Service, private carrier (FEDEX, DHL, UPS), or hand-delivery. The accessioning department staff documents receipt of the specimens on the specimen custody and control document, examines the package, specimen, and accompanying documentation, and assigns the applicable discrepancy codes. Strict chain of custody is maintained throughout specimen handling and processing. The accessioning department technician prepares an initial testing batch, pours an aliquot of each specimen into individual tubes, and transfers the batch to the screening department to conduct the initial testing analysis using immunoassay instrumentation.

If no drug is detected during the immunoassay testing, the service member's specimen is reported as negative and the specimen is discarded. If a specimen is presumptively positive, the result is compared against data from the electronic prescription reporting system (ePRS); some drug classes may be reported as negative if there is a valid prescription documented in ePRS within the last 180 days. Specimens that are presumptively positive that are not cleared through ePRS are sequestered for confirmatory analysis using a new aliquot poured from the original specimen bottle. These specimens are tested for drug presence and concentration using gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) or liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS) instrumentation. The drug or metabolites must be present at or above the DOD cutoff, and all quality control and reporting criteria must be satisfied, in order to be reported as positive.

All data generated by the laboratory are subject to multiple reviews by laboratory certifying officials to ensure that all procedures have been followed and that the results are scientifically valid and legally defensible prior to uploading the results to the iFTDTL portal.



## What drugs / metabolites are included in the panel and what are the DOD cutoffs?

Drug / Metabolite	Confirmation Cutoff (ng/mL)
THC Metabolites:	
Delta-8 THC-COOH	15
Delta-9 THC-COOH	15
Cocaine Metabolite (BZE)	100
Opioids:	
Morphine (MOR)	4000
Codeine (COD)	2000
Oxycodone (OXCOD)	100
Oxymorphone (OXMOR)	100
Hydrocodone (HYCOD)	100
Hydromorphone (HYMOR)	100
Heroin Metabolite (6AM)	10
Fentanyl (FENT)	1
Norfentanyl (NFENT)	1
Amphetamines:	
d-Amphetamine (DAMP)	100
d-Methamphetamine (DMETH)	100
Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA)	500
Methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA)	500
Benzodiazepines:	
Alpha-hydroxyalprazolam (AHAL)	100
Lorazepam (LORA)	100
Nordiazepam (NORD)	100
Oxazepam (OXAZ)	100
Temazepam (TEMA)	100
Synthetic Cannabinoids: 4MBUT, 4MBTN, 5FADB, 5MPCA, ADBTN, ABFUB, M4PIN, & MFUBN (SYCAN)	1
Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD)	0.2
and metabolite (OHLSD)	0.2

## Can the laboratory test for any other drugs outside of the DOD panel?

The NDSLs are only certified to test for the drugs / metabolites included in the DOD panel but can coordinate additional testing with the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System. Steroid testing requests are coordinated by NDSL Great Lakes. Submission information can be found in the Steroid Testing document under Key Resources on this website.



## **Does the concentration of drug / metabolite in the specimen indicate when / how much of the drug was used?**

The urinalysis result represents a single point in time and does not convey the drug dosage or phase of metabolism. Other confounding variables include the frequency of use, time since last use, physical condition, fluid intake, other medications / drugs, etc. The laboratory expert witnesses can provide technical insight regarding typical rates of metabolism for the reported drugs / metabolites in the specimen.

## **How long does the laboratory retain specimens?**

Negative specimens are discarded after testing is complete. Positive specimens are retained in frozen storage for one year; the retention date may be extended in response to legal document or expert witness requests.

## **How long does it take to get results from the laboratory?**

Results are reported via the iFTDTL portal. Negative and positive results are usually reported within four and six days, respectively, from the date of receipt at the laboratory. Results may be delayed due to workload fluctuations. Steroid and off-panel testing results will have longer turnaround times.

## **Where can I sign up to receive drug test results via the iFTDTL portal?**

Accounts may be obtained by contacting your Service iFTDTL point of contact.

The Navy POC can be reached at 901-874-2458, DSN 882-2458 or by email at

[MILL\\_DTADMIN@navy.mil](mailto:MILL_DTADMIN@navy.mil) The Marine Corps POC can be reached at 703-784-9526, DSN 278-9526 or by email at [usmcinfo@ftdtldata.amedd.army.mil](mailto:usmcinfo@ftdtldata.amedd.army.mil).

## **My Plain Language Address (PLAD), Command name or UIC/RUC changed. What should I do to make sure I receive my test results?**

Notify the laboratory or Service point of contact as soon as possible to request a database change. Results are posted to the portal based on UIC/RUC. If the labs do not have the corrected UIC/RUC, your drug test results will not be posted or sent to the right command.

## **What should I do if I don't receive my test results?**

Contact the laboratory to which specimens were submitted for further guidance.

NDSL Great Lakes: (847) 688-2045, [usn.great-lakes.navdruglabgrlil.list.ndslgl-tech-help@health.mil](mailto:usn.great-lakes.navdruglabgrlil.list.ndslgl-tech-help@health.mil); NDSL Jacksonville: (904) 546-8033, [usn.ndsljax@health.mil](mailto:usn.ndsljax@health.mil)



## Specimen Submission Questions

### **What are common problems with specimen collection and preparation of documents?**

Common problems include:

- Missing, mismatched, or unscannable information on the bottle label
- Failure to include locally assigned four-digit batch number and three-digit specimen number on the bottle label
- Missing initials on the bottle label (Service member and/or the observer/collector)
- Broken / missing tamper evident seal
- Improperly packaged specimens not in individual bags with absorbent
- Specimen custody control document(s) within the package

Strategies to avoid some of these discrepancies are included in this document. You may also contact the NDSLs for additional guidance.

### **Where can I find a list of discrepancy codes?**

A list of all laboratory discrepancy codes can be found under Key Resources on this website.

### **What is the Base/Area Code and why do I need it?**

Base Area Codes are assigned to Marine Corps Units to differentiate between units using the same RUC. This the same number as the Unit's Material Control Code (MCC). Results are posted to the portal based on UIC/RUC.

### **The DODID is incorrect on the specimen bottle label. What is the best way to correct it?**

Complete a forensic correction by drawing a single line through the error, place your initials and the date next to the line, and handwrite the correct information. You can also provide a signed certificate of correction in the same box as the specimen.

### **I broke the tamper evident tape, how can I correct it?**

Place a second tamper evident seal on the specimen bottle and provide a signed certificate of correction that documents why a second seal was applied.

### **How does the laboratory determine whether a bottle was properly packaged?**

The laboratory verifies that each bottle is enclosed in an individual leak-proof secondary container (e.g., sealable plastic bag) with absorbent material.



### **After I seal the bag, should I put tape around it to secure it?**

No, do not place tape around the bag after it is sealed.

### **Can I send the urinalysis ledger with my specimen submission?**

No, the Drug Testing Program Urinalysis Register has confidential information and should not be submitted with the specimens. A discrepancy code will be assigned if the urinalysis ledger and/or the custody control document is submitted to the laboratory.

### **How long can I store specimens before shipping/carrying them to the laboratory?**

Commands should send specimens as soon as possible. If specimens are stored, secure refrigerated/frozen storage is recommended.

### **How do I request non-standard or additional “special” drug test?**

To request testing for drugs that are not on the DOD testing panel, send a request on Command letterhead with the specimen. The request should include the batch number, specimen number, and the DODID for the specimen(s) requiring additional testing. The laboratory will prepare an aliquot of the original specimen for shipment to the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES). You will receive the DOD panel test results through the iFTDTL portal when the Navy Drug Screening Laboratory has completed testing and a separate result from the respective Service Representative when the AFMES testing is complete.

### **How do I request steroid testing?**

Refer to the Steroid Testing document under Key Resources on this website.