

**INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESEARCH**

It is hereby notified that ICMR has no objection to initiation of COVID19 testing in Government laboratories operational under the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Department of Science & Technology (DST), Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Since these research Institutes are of eminence under other research organizations, ICMR will not conduct any site assessment nor accord approval for initiation of testing at these laboratories. Secretary to the Government of India of the concerned Departments may accord approval for initiation of testing as deemed appropriate. Responsibility of these laboratories will lie with the concerned departments and not ICMR.

Caution: SARS-CoV-2 is a high-risk pathogen with high transmissibility and infectivity. Sample handling at too many points and by inadequately trained staff can lead to spills and laboratory outbreaks.

ICMR hereby advises the DBT, DST, CSIR, DAE, ICAR and DRDO laboratories to ensure the following safeguards before initiation of COVID19 testing:

- Availability of BSL-2 level laboratory including a molecular biology setup for virological diagnosis.
- Availability of a functioning and calibrated Biosafety cabinet type 2A/2B in the laboratory.
- Availability of cold centrifuge/microfuge for RNA extraction
- Availability of a functioning and calibrated real-time PCR machine.
- Availability of staff with good understanding of laboratory biosafety and biosecurity, trained for handling respiratory samples for viral diagnosis, RNA extraction and realtime PCR.
- Available staff with experience of work in virology and handling clinical specimens, especially respiratory samples.
- A robust Institutional policy on biomedical waste management of human origin.
- Well defined arrangement for segregation and discarding of biomedical waste.

Additional advice is as follows:

- **ICMR will not provide diagnostic kits / reagents to these laboratories.** ICMR advisory on use of commercial kits may also be accessed at www.icmr.nic.in. SoPs available with ICMR will be shared on request.
- Laboratory test should be only offered when the sample is referred by the State health officials or State IDSP.
- ICMR guidelines for testing (available at www.icmr.nic.in) may be strictly followed. Since the guidance evolves periodically, the latest revised version should be followed.
- Testing laboratories to ensure immediate/ real-time reporting to State officials of IDSP (Integrated Disease Surveillance Program of Govt. of India) for timely initiation of contact tracing. Additionally, as mandated by PMO, a report should also be uploaded on the online portal of ICMR. Each laboratory initiating COVID-19 testing should essentially register on the ICMR portal and get a username and password. Data entry should be ensured on a daily real-time basis. Contact email for registration at ICMR is:

[**support.dmu@bmi.icmr.org.in**](mailto:support.dmu@bmi.icmr.org.in)

(Kindly note that all data has to be reported to IDSP and ICMR)