

Understanding Traditional Drug Screening

Step 1 – Locating the collection site

STAT America lists all Quest Diagnostics and LabCorp patient services centers on the STAT America Client Services Web page and on the HIRE-SAFE web page. If a convenient collection site is not listed, STAT America's client services department is able to locate convenient facilities using other networks (e.g. Concentra, EMSI) or by contacting local medical facilities and hospitals directly.

Step 2 – Applicant/employee notification

The employer is responsible for providing the appropriate drug-testing custody and control forms (CCF) and collection site information to all applicants/employees. In addition, the employer is responsible for disclosing the parameters of the employer's drug-testing program to the applicant/employee.

Step 3 – Applicant/employee collection process

The applicant/employee goes to the corresponding collection site and produces the urine specimen. If any complications occur at the collection site, the collector will contact the employer and/or medical review department for guidance.

Step 4 – Specimen shipment to testing laboratory

Once the specimen has been collected and prepared for shipment, the specimen is sent to the testing laboratory by lab courier or overnight delivery (e.g. FedEx, Airborne Express). Specimens generally arrive at the testing laboratory within 24 hours of collections, and often on the same day.

Step 5 – Specimen analysis

When the specimen arrives at the testing laboratory, the specimen is accessioned by the laboratory and is immediately checked for any leaks or signs of tampering. The first step of the testing process is integrity testing. This step measures the specimen's creatinine and/or specific gravity to test the concentration of the urine specimen, and to determine if the specimen has qualities similar to that of human urine. Adulterant testing, if required or ordered, would also be performed at this step.

Once the specimen has passed the integrity testing step, the specimen is then sent to the second step of the testing process: screening. If the specimen is negative for the presence of drugs in the screening round, the specimen's result is reported to STAT America as negative. If the specimen is positive for the presence of drugs in the screening round, the specimen is advanced to the confirmation testing round, known as GC/MS testing. Once the specimen has completed confirmation testing, the specimen's result is reported to STAT America.

Step 6 – Specimen result reported to STAT America

STAT America receives results from the testing laboratory via electronic interface. Once the results are downloaded into the STAT America drug-testing reporting system, the results are downloaded into the client's accounts. If results are negative (non-DOT), the result is immediately reported to the client via either email/Web or fax. If the result is non-negative (e.g. negative-dilute, positive, adulterated, substituted, or cancelled), the result is "held" by the STAT America reporting system so that a STAT America staff member can analyze the result for the proper course of action.

All positive, adulterated and substituted specimens are forwarded to the medical review department. Cancelled results, due to the reason for the cancellation, may also be forwarded to medical review. All negative-dilute specimens are reviewed by a STAT America staff member and then released to the client. (For more information about negative-dilute specimens, please see the document in the appendix titled "Understanding Negative-Dilute Specimens.")

If the specimen is positive, adulterated or substituted, STAT America's medical review staff will contact the applicant/employee via telephone to initiate the medical review process. The applicant/employee's telephone number is generally available on the MRO copy of the chain-of-custody form. If the telephone number is not on the chain-of-custody form (or possibly that STAT America never received a copy of the form from the collection site), the medical review staff will contact the employer indicating that the applicant/employee in question has a result that requires medical review. At that time the medical review staff will request the applicant/employee's telephone number from the employer. Once contact information has been obtained, STAT America's medical review department contacts the applicant/employee of the positive, adulterated, or substituted result to discuss the drug-test result and to allow the applicant/employee the opportunity to present medical explanations for the result.

The medical review officer (MRO) verifies any situations involving a legitimate medical explanation (e.g. prescription information). Cancelled results, due to the reason for the cancellation, may also be forwarded to the medical review department. Medical review generally takes one-to-two days, depending on the complexity of the situation. If the result is a DOT result, all results are reported to the MRO for medical review, including normal negative results, per DOT regulations. This process involves reviewing every CCF for completeness and, if necessary, contacting the applicant/employee if the result is positive, adulterated, substituted, or invalid to discuss the drug-test result and to allow the applicant/employee the opportunity to present medical explanations for the result. Medical review generally takes one-to-two days, depending on the complexity of the situation.

Step 7 – Specimen result reported to client

If results are normal negative results (non-DOT), the result is immediately reported to the client via either email/Web or fax. If the specimen is a DOT result, or requires medical review, the specimen would be reported to the client via either email/Web or fax once the medical review process has been completed.

Please contact HIRE-SAFE's client service department if you have any questions:

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