CDC Specimen Test Order and Reporting (CSTOR) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Original Submitters

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CSTOR General Information

ABOUT CSTOR AND SUBMITTERS

What is the CDC Specimen Test Order and Reporting Web Portal?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is excited to introduce the CDC Specimen Test Order and Reporting Web Portal (CSTOR, pronounced SEE-store), a central online gateway for CDC Infectious Disease (ID) Laboratory Partners to submit specimens. Please refer to the CSTOR Web Portal page for additional information.

Who can submit via CSTOR?

Primary submitters (state and federal organizations) can onboard and submit to CSTOR within their own jurisdiction. Starting in 2024, organizations that are not state- or federal-level, such as hospitals, medical centers, universities, veterinary institutions, commercial laboratories, etc., are able to onboard to the CSTOR Web Portal with approval by the State Public Health Laboratory whose jurisdiction they fall under. These organizations (called 'original submitters') are able to submit specimens directly to the CDC for testing with visibility and oversight from the SPHL whose jurisdiction they fall under.

How do original submitters request to onboard to CSTOR?

Original submitters can request to onboard using the CDC's secure CSTOR Original Submitter Onboarding Request Form hosted on REDCap. This form contains questions surrounding the original submitter's organization information (address, phone, email), organization director information, and information for their two desired Lab Administrators. Once submitted, there will be an initial CSTOR help desk review and then review and approval from the State Public Health Laboratory (SPHL) whose jurisdiction the original submitter falls under. After receiving SPHL approval to onboard, the original submitter will work with the CSTOR and Secure Access Management Services (SAMS) team to onboard (please see the enrollment guide).

Can you have more than one user in CSTOR?

Yes, you can have as many Lab Users/Lab Administrators in CSTOR as desired. There is a minimum requirement to have at two active Lab Administrators at all times, to prevent any discontinuity due to personnel changes. Once the initial two Lab Administrators are onboarded (after filling out the CSTOR Original Submitter Onboarding Request Form),

they can add as many users or other administrators for their organization as needed in the 'Manage Organization' module within CSTOR.

Do I have to pay to onboard or use CSTOR?
CSTOR is available at no cost.

What is the difference between the Lab Administrator and Lab User roles in CSTOR?
Lab Users: Can request Test Order Requests (TORs), create/edit specimen submission forms, ship packages, check status, and access the dashboard and training/helpful resources.
Lab Administrators: Can request TORs, create/edit specimen submission forms, ship packages, check status, and access the dashboard and training/helpful resources (like Lab Users). Lab Administrator can additionally access the 'Manage Organization' module, where they can add/remove users in their organization and edit the organization level information.

Where can I find CSTOR training material?
CSTOR training material can be found by clicking on the blue [?] icon in the top right-hand corner (next to the user's name) within the CSTOR web portal. Training materials include both written user guides and video CSTOR demos. If you have any additional questions not addressed in the training materials, please contact the CSTOR Team.

Who do I contact about questions on shipment, specimens, etc.?
For test order specific questions, please refer to the Test Order Director (TOD). The TOD additionally includes Points of Contact (POCs) for each test order for additional test order specific questions. For general questions, please contact the State Public Health Laboratory whose jurisdiction you fall under or email the CSTOR Team. For CSTOR specific questions not addressed in the training materials, please contact the CSTOR Team.

CSTOR Functionality

CREATING TEST ORDER REQUESTS

How do I know whether a Test Order Request (TOR) is auto-approved or requires SPHL or CDC pre-approval? What does this mean?

Whether a TOR requires CDC or SPHL pre-approval is listed on the right-hand side of the TOR creation pop-up once a test order name or code has been selected. If the selected test order requires SPHL approval, "SPHL Pre-Approval is required for this Test Order" will appear. If the selected test order requires CDC approval, "CDC Lab Pre-Approval is required for this Test Order" will appear, including a link to the CDC Test Order Directory (TOD) for more information under the blue informational 'i' icon. Whether a test order is auto-approved or requires CDC pre-approval is additionally noted within the CDC Test Order Directory in the 'CDC Pre-Approval Needed' field. If a test is auto-approved, you will immediately receive approval and will be allowed to input specimen information. If a test requires pre-approval, either by the SPHL, the CDC, or both, the TOR will be in a Pending status and you must wait until approval is granted before submitting the specimens to the CDC.

What happens when I create and submit a Test Order Request (TOR) that is auto-approved?

If approval is not required (i.e., auto-approved) for the TOR, the TOR will automatically appear as 'Approved' in CSTOR. You may continue with the submission process by finalizing the specimen submission forms in the 'Draft Specimens for Edit' tab of the 'Submit Specimens' module, and add them to a package in the 'Ship Package' module.

What happens when I create and submit a Test Order Request (TOR) that requires SPHL pre-approval?

For test orders that require prior approval by the SPHL, submitting your TOR will trigger an email to be generated to the SPHL approver Points of Contact (POCs) to initiate a review of your TOR, and your TOR will be in a 'Pending SPHL Approval' status. SPHL Test Order POCs will have the opportunity to approve (with optional comments) or reject (with required comments). This approval process is managed within the SPHL's CSTOR system. When your request is approved or rejected, you will receive an email alert. If approved by the SPHL and auto-approved by the CDC, you may continue the specimen submission process by finalizing the specimen submission forms in the 'Draft Specimens for Edit' tab of the 'Submit Specimens' module. If the test order additionally requires CDC approval, it will enter a 'Pending CDC Approval' status at this point (see the subsequent question for more information on CDC pre-approval process).

What happens when I create and submit a Test Order Request (TOR) that requires CDC pre-approval?
For test orders that require prior approval by the CDC, submitting your TOR will trigger an email to the test order's CDC Points of Contact (POCs) to initiate a review of your TOR, and your TOR will be in a 'Pending CDC Approval' status. CDC Test Order POCs will have the opportunity to approve (with optional comments) or reject (with required comments). This approval process is managed within the CDC's Enterprise Laboratory Information Management System (ELIMS). When your request is approved or rejected, you will receive an email alert. If approved, you may continue the specimen submission process by finalizing the specimen submission forms in the 'Draft Specimens for Edit' tab of the 'Submit Specimens' module.

Does everyone in my organization receive email notifications when a Test Order Request (TOR) is approved or rejected?
Currently, TOR-related system notifications only go to the individual that created the test order. However, all users can see the status of TORs submitted by anyone in their organization in the 'Organization Test Order' sub-tab of the 'Test Order Request' tab in the 'Check Status' module.

SUBMITTING SPECIMENS AND SHIPPING PACKAGES

How do I know which specimen submission fields are required for the test order that I am submitting?
The information required for a test order is noted within the CDC Test Order Directory (TOD) in the 'Supplemental Information Required' field. The TOD page is linked in the draft specimen grid by a blue informational [i] icon in the 'Submit Specimens' module within CSTOR.

Does CSTOR validate incoming data?
CSTOR retains the same validation as found on the 50.34 Specimen Submission Form and the Global File Accessioning Template (GFAT), which includes drop-down lists for some field values and formatting requirements for fields such as dates, times, etc.

If I submitted the Test Order Request (TOR), can my colleague fill out and submit the specimen submission information or prepare the package for shipment?
Yes, colleagues in your organization can access draft specimens created as part of TORs that you have submitted within the 'Draft Specimens for Edit' tab in the 'Submit Specimens' module, allowing a colleague to provide specimen submission information

for a TOR that you initially created. Anyone in your organization can access all specimens created in your organization in the 'Available Specimens for Shipment' grid in the 'Ship Package' module, allowing seamless cooperation between colleagues.

Can I include supplemental files with my submission?
Yes, there are currently two options to upload supplemental files:

- At the Test Order Request (TOR) level, by selecting the 'Attach File' button when creating or editing a TOR
- At the specimen level, by selecting the attachment icon in the 'Specimen Form(s)' pop-up in the draft TOR grid

What happens if a package was addressed to the wrong laboratory?
If a package was shipped to the correct shipping address but with the wrong laboratory labeled, CDC Specimen Triage and Tracking Team (STATT) laboratory is able to correct the label and direct the package to the correct laboratory.

Can CSTOR be used to ship specimens to the CDC in Atlanta and other locations?
Yes. CSTOR can be used to submit specimens to the Atlanta (Georgia), Fort Collins (Colorado), and San Juan (Puerto Rico) CDC locations. CSTOR can additionally be used to ship packages for rabies or viral special pathogens testing, as long as the specimens are included in a separate physical box, and the shipping destination includes Rabies or VSPB respectively.

CHECKING STATUS

When do I receive a notification from CSTOR via email?
You will receive an email notification when your pending Test Order Request (TOR) has been approved or rejected by the CDC, when your package has been received at the CDC, if you have a "Needs Attention" tile that requires specimen data correction, or when a new report is released for a specimen you created.

What do the Test Order Request (TOR) statuses mean in the 'Check Status' module?

- **Approved**: TOR that are auto-approved or require pre-approval and have received it from the test order's CDC point of contacts
- **Draft**: When a test order has not yet been submitted to the CDC
- **Pending CDC Lab Approval**: TOR that require pre-approval from the CDC and are awaiting approval from the CDC point of contact

- **Rejected by CDC Lab**: TOR that have been rejected by the test order's CDC point of contact

What do the Specimen statuses mean in the 'Check Status' module?

- **Accessioned**: The specimen is being accessioned by CDC
- **Attention**: When a specimen has been flagged as needing correction (pre-accessioning) by the CDC
- **Corrected**: When a specimen that has been flagged as needing correction (pre-accessioning) by the CDC has been corrected by someone in your institution
- **Draft**: When a specimen has not yet been included in a package submitted to the CDC
- **Intransit**: When a specimen is in a package that is in transit to the CDC but not yet received
- **Received**: When a specimen is in a package that has been received by the CDC but not yet accessioned

What do the Package statuses mean in the 'Check Status' module?

- **Draft**: When a package has not yet been submitted, i.e., is not yet shipped
- **Intransit**: When a package has been indicated it is in transit to the CDC by having clicked "Ship Package" within the 'Ship Package' module
- **Received**: When a package has been received by the CDC

VIEWING RESULTS AND REPORTS

How do I get access to results/reports for specimens I submitted directly to CDC via CSTOR?

Results and reports are currently delivered only to the state-level organization. You should work with your SPHL to retrieve results/reports using your existing report delivery/retrieval workflow.

CSTOR Lab Administrators

MANAGING ORGANIZATION

How do I request to add a new user in my organization?

CSTOR Lab Administrators can add or remove users in the CSTOR 'Manage Organization' module. Select 'Add User' and complete the required fields. You may also view the 'Manage Organization' user guide within the 'CSTOR Training and Helpful Resources' page (blue [?] icon in the top right) for more information.

Can I remove a Lab Administrator from my organization?
Yes, Lab Administrators can remove users from the organization, including other Lab Administrators, as long as there are always at least two Lab Administrators active in CSTOR, to prevent any discontinuity due to personnel changes.

How can I change a user's role from Lab User to Lab Administrator or vice-versa?
An existing CSTOR Lab Administrator can change another user in their organization's user role using the edit [pencil] icon next to that user's name in the Users grid in the 'Manage Organization' module.