## APHL Best Practices Resource Center: Laboratory Specimen Coordinator

Washington State Public Health Laboratories

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Category: Operations, Quality Systems

Topics: Chemistry, Environemntal

Location: Washington

When designing our biomonitoring effort, we were aware that thousands of specimens would be submitted to the laboratory during the sample collection phase of the general population study. The workload on the laboratorians developing, validating, and running the study tests would be overwhelming enough, and sample scheduling and handling would only increase stress and the opportunites for errors.

Washington added a non-scientist position to the team at the PHL whose responsibilities include:

- train field collectors in proper collection, packaging, and shipping of biomonitoring specimens (the person in the position actually edited the clinical laboratory course taught at the WAPHL and taught it to the field teams);

- liaison with the field managers to schedule specimens at a manageable daily rate;

- accession the specimens and check for shipping quality;

- maintain control of the samples during storage and batch set up;

- check for completeness of the finished data package on each sample before final release.

The position has worked out very well, maintaining the focus of the chemists on the chemistry, and efficient specimen and data flow. As a bonus, the training and practice in the LIMS for accessioning and data management allows the position to help smooth out problems encountered by laboratorians in the entire section.

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