

19th May, 2026

Dear Head of Department,

RE: Testing for Ebola Bundibugyo virus

In the setting of World Health Organisation declaration on 17th May 2026 that the Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda constitutes a public health emergency of international concern, we would like to advise laboratories that VIDRL has reviewed our Ebola PCR assay that is available for testing for patients with appropriate clinical presentation and epidemiology. *In silico* analysis of our real-time PCR assay against the limited available Bundibugyo virus sequences in GenBank identified no primer or probe mismatches. The recommended specimen types for Ebola virus testing primarily include EDTA blood and serum.

As Ebola virus is a Risk Group 4 organism which requires physical containment 4 level processing, it is important that any suspected cases are discussed immediately with VIDRL to ensure appropriate specimen transport and processing. Samples from suspected Ebola cases are classified as Category A biological hazard class (Assigned UN2814; IATA Hazard Class 6.2, Packing Instruction 602; proper shipping name "Infectious substances, affecting humans"). As such, these samples should be packaged appropriately for transport and transported via a reputable courier (e.g. World Courier), accompanied by a Chain of Custody form (available at <https://www.vidrl.org.au/resources/vidrl-forms/>). For those referring from Victoria, please also see the Victorian Department of Health guidelines at <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/victorian-guideline-on-viral-haemorrhagic-fevers>

Please phone the VIDRL Registrar during business hours (Monday to Friday 9am-5pm) on 0427 285 781 or the Laboratory Manager On-Call (outside of business hours) on 0438 599 439. Non-urgent general enquiries can be directed to Dr Kathy Jackson (Principal Scientist) or Mr Thomas Tran (Section Head).

Kind regards,

Dr Katherine Bond

Acting Director

Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (VIDRL)