

## The Public Health Lab: Emergency Preparedness and Response (2:10)

**Male Narrator:** Laboratory responses to public health concerns span the Environmental Laboratory and the Infectious Disease Laboratory, both of which are within the Minnesota Public Health Laboratory.

We work with local law enforcement, fellow state agencies, and federal agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the CDC) to respond to chemical, biological, and radiological emergencies.

Our work begins when we receive a sample of a suspicious substance from emergency responders in the field, or other state or federal agencies. The substance could range from a potentially poisoned food to a toxic agent found in the environment. We do not accept samples from individuals.

We are an all-hazards lab, meaning we can analyze substances for any type of potential harm. Preliminary testing determines whether the sample should be analyzed further by our chemical, biological, or radiological groups. We have sophisticated instrumentation and experienced staff that are not found elsewhere in Minnesota.

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After testing is completed, we share the results and coordinate a response with the appropriate state and/or federal agencies, ranging from state epidemiologists to local law enforcement to the CDC.

The Minnesota Public Health Lab is a Level 1 Laboratory, one of 10 public health labs in the country that has an advanced capacity to assist in a large-scale exposure event. We are in the CDC's Laboratory Response Network, which also encompasses federal bureaus like the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Together, the organizations of the Laboratory Response Network maintain the capacity to react quickly and effectively to biological or chemical threats.

The Public Health Laboratory frequently runs drills to prepare our staff to respond efficiently to an emergency. We have a proven ability to quickly adapt our lab for processing more than a thousand samples for a specific substance per day.

The Minnesota Public Health Laboratory is ready, 24/7, to test potentially dangerous substances in both small-scale and large-scale emergencies. We are proud of our role in keeping Minnesotans safe.

(End 2:10)