



PROPER HANDLING OF ENVIRONMENTAL CULTURES

Environmental cultures can be used to assess cleaning or disinfecting practices within an office. Unlike cultures performed on patients, environmental cultures provide your office with basic information regarding the type of bacteria isolated, and the approximate number of isolated colonies. A few points to remember when performing environmental cultures:

- Samples of surfaces, equipment, whirlpools, etc should be collected using a standard aerobic culture swab such as BBL CultureSwab.
- Proper labeling of both specimen and requisition are essential. Since our computer system requires a first and last name, we ask that you use this same method in labeling environmental cultures. Examples of proper labeling include:

"Tabletop, Black"

"Whirlpool, One"

"Xray, One"

Although you may use any description that is meaningful to your office (and that can be matched back to the correct source) it is imperative that both the specimen and the requisition have the same exact "name". A specimen labeled "Whirlpool" accompanied by a requisition labeled "Whirlpool, One" will be rejected.

- Please complete a separate requisition for each source or location, just as you would do if you submitted cultures on separate patients.
- Mark the billing box for "Office, Account". Your Sales/Service Representative will discuss charges for this testing.
- In the comments section of the requisition, write "Environmental Culture - Source: _____" with the source being "Tabletop", "Whirlpool", "Xray", etc.
- When testing is completed, results will be sent back to your office. Please note that specific bacterial identification and sensitivities are not performed. A typical completed report might read "4 colonies of gram negative bacilli" or "20 colonies of staph". No additional testing will be performed.

Please contact your Sales/Service Representative if you have additional questions.