

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT DISEASE INVESTIGATION STEPS

NC REPORTABLE DISEASE/CONDITION	INFECTIOUS AGENT (S)
TULAREMIA	<i>Francisella tularensis</i>
PREPARING FOR INVESTIGATION	
KNOW THE DISEASE/CONDITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read about Tularemia in the CD Manual. • See the case definition for Tularemia in the CD Manual. • Study APHA <i>Control of Communicable Diseases Manual</i>, 19th ed., pp 661 - 664. • Print and review reporting forms: <i>Part 1: Confidential Disease Report (DHHS 2124)</i> <i>Part 2: Tularemia (DHHS/EPI #43)</i>
BIOTERRORISM POTENTIAL CATEGORY A	<i>Francisella tularensis</i> is a potential bioterrorism agent. Notify local law enforcement and state public health officials immediately if bioterrorism is suspected.
CONDUCTING INVESTIGATION	
COLLECT CLINICAL INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform local health director and state public health officials before proceeding with any tularemia investigation, (919) 733-3419. Consider having state medical epidemiologist contact the health care provider. • Obtain admission note, progress note and discharge summary if patient hospitalized for this disease/condition. • Obtain healthcare provider clinical notes from date(s) of service for this disease/condition. • Look for evidence in the medical record that supports clinical findings described in the case definition.
REVIEW LABORATORY INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review laboratory report(s) specific to this disease. • Evaluate laboratory results to determine if requirements of the case definition are satisfied. • Contact healthcare provider if further testing of the patient is indicated.
APPLY THE CASE DEFINITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the case definition to determine if the clinical and laboratory findings meet the case definition criteria.

IMPLEMENTING CONTROL MEASURES	
ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY SOURCE OF EXPOSURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review clinical documentation and interview patient or other knowledgeable person for potential source(s) of exposure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ travel history ○ animal exposure, especially rabbits and other wild game (hunting, trapping, skinning, dressing, eating) ○ work in a slaughterhouse, veterinary practice or laboratory ○ deliberate or accidental (swimming) ingestion of natural waters ○ recent tick or deerfly bites • If source of exposure is suspected to be rabbits or other wildlife contact the state public health veterinarian (919) 733-3419 and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture (NCDA) for assistance.
IMPLEMENT CONTROL MEASURES TO PREVENT DISEASE AND ADDITIONAL EXPOSURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider chemoprophylaxis of laboratorians or others potentially exposed. • Use the CDC website www.cdc.gov to teach at risk people about the disease. • Work with local health director, environmental health specialist, and NCDA to evaluate risk, identify contaminated areas and the need for personal protective equipment, restrict access to contaminated areas or waters and ensure disinfection of contaminated areas.
REPORTING INVESTIGATION	
REPORT TO NC COMMUNICABLE DISEASE BRANCH (CD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter Part 1 and Part 2 Communicable Disease Reports into NC EDSS as a new event, or update the existing event if already entered. • Assign event to State Disease Registrar when case investigation complete.
CASE FINDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the course of the investigation, look for symptoms of the disease in other exposed individuals. • Refer symptomatic individuals to healthcare provider for evaluation.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	
STATE LABORATORY OF PUBLIC HEALTH (SLPH) TESTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If sending a clinical specimen to the SLPH for confirmatory testing, specify on the Special Bacteriology form DHHS T806 to test for <i>F. tularensis</i>. Refer to the following link for information and forms: http://slph.state.nc.us/Microbiology/default.asp • If BT origin suspected, inform SLPH by calling the BT Duty pager at (919) 310-4243 or cell phone at (919) 807-8600.
PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE (PHPR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If bioterrorism event likely: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform local Preparedness Coordinator. 2. Call the PHPR 24/7 pager (877) 236-7477.
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE MEASURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If bioterrorism event, crime control and public safety will direct on-site environmental investigation. • If non-bioterrorism event, public health workers should exercise caution in doing environmental investigations. • Personal protective equipment (including respiratory protection) is indicated if entering any area contaminated with <i>F. tularensis</i> or when handling any material potentially contaminated with <i>F. tularensis</i>.
RISK COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any case of this disease may pique interest among media, health professionals, government officials, and the public. • Consider using risk communication tools conservatively if this is a low profile, naturally-occurring case. • In a bioterrorism event, pre-existing crisis communication plans should be enacted. • Outbreaks of even naturally-occurring cases will need NC HAN alerts, EPI-X reports, MD alerts, and probably a press release. • NC DHHS Public Information Office (919) 733-9190 is available to assist local health departments as needed.