

# Reducing Specimen Rejections

## A Pre-Analytical Error Checklist

Cut redraws, wasted reagents, and delayed results

Article 14 of 22

5-minute read

**0.5-1.0%**

Industry benchmark for rejection rates

**40-70%**

Of rejections caused by hemolysis alone

**1%**

Reduction saves thousands annually

*Specimen rejections are one of the most wasteful events in a lab's workflow. A rejected specimen means wasted supplies, wasted time, patient redraws, delayed results, and reagent consumed on a sample that will never produce a reportable result.*

## 1 Know Your Rejection Rate

Track rejected specimens as a percentage of total received. Benchmark: 0.5–1.0%. Above 2% means significant improvement opportunity. Break down by reason: hemolysis, clotting, QNS, wrong tube, labeling errors.

## 2 Address the Top Reason First

Hemolysis accounts for 40–70% of rejections. Primary causes: drawing from IV line, small needle gauge, pulling plunger too hard, not mixing tubes properly. Targeted phlebotomy training yields the biggest reduction.

**QUICK TIP:** Focus all initial training on the #1 rejection reason.

## 3 Standardize Collection and Labeling

Provide every client office with a single-page reference: tube type, minimum volume, labeling requirements, transport conditions. Require two patient identifiers on every tube at time of collection.

## 4 Monitor Client-Specific Rates

Track rejections by submitting client. If one office accounts for a disproportionate share, reach out proactively with data and offer training.

**QUICK TIP:** This positions you as a partner, not just a lab rejecting samples.

## 5 Close the Loop

Every rejection should generate a notification with the reason and guidance. Without feedback, providers do not know and errors repeat indefinitely.

## TOP SPECIMEN REJECTION REASONS



*Typical rejection reason distribution for independent labs*

**BOTTOM LINE:** A 1% reduction in rejection rate saves thousands annually. Start by measuring your current rate and tackling the number-one cause.

## FREE TOOLS TO GET STARTED

Template	What It Does
<a href="#">Specimen Rejection Tracker</a>	Log rejections by client and reason with auto-summaries

### Download the complete JIT4LABS Templates Toolkit

23 ready-to-use Excel templates covering inventory, financials, compliance, and more.

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