

# Beaumont

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## Specimen Processing Receipt and Handling of Special Pathogen Specimens

Document Type: Procedure

### I. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of this procedure is to give instruction on how Specimen Processing is to handle specimens with potential special pathogens. For specimens suspected of containing highly infectious pathogens suspected to have high risk pathogens, such as Francisella tularensis, avian influenza, Ebola, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) coronavirus, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (SARS), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), or any infectious agent that has a high potential to cause a disease to individuals and the community. Communication between clinical and laboratory staff is essential to minimize the risk incurred in handling specimens from these patients. Such specimens will be labeled accordingly, and laboratory should be alerted to ensure proper specimen handling.

### II. PROCEDURE:

- A. The Standard Precautions procedure emphasizes the need for health care workers to consider all patients as potentially infectious with blood-borne pathogens and to adhere to infection control precautions aimed at minimizing exposure to blood and body fluids of all patients.
- B. Patient specimens labeled with possible exposure to MERS, or any identified special pathogen will not be opened in the general laboratory area. They are to be considered Biological Safety Level 3 or greater and must be transported to the Microbiology area without opening.
- C. Specimens from patients with suspected Ebola exposure will not be received in general laboratory area. Laboratory staff must handle these specimens in the following manner:
  - 1. Specimens arriving in the general laboratory processing area labeled as any of the

possible Special Pathogens are to be delivered to the Microbiology area **without opening the specimen bag.**

2. Microbiology staff will process the specimens in a **certified Class II Biological Safety hood** in accordance with the Safety Guidelines General Microbiology procedure.

D. Specimens from patients with suspected Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) which is the strain of coronavirus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) **can be safely labeled outside the cabinet as long as they are not leaking.**

1. If specimen is leaking deliver to Microbiology area **without opening the specimen bag.**
2. Technical staff will process the specimens in a either a certified Class II Type A1 or A2 Biological Safety Cabinet (BSC) or additional precautions to provide a barrier between the specimen and personnel. Examples of these additional precautions include personal protective equipment (PPE), such as a surgical mask or face shield, or other physical barriers, like a splash shield; centrifuge safety cups; and sealed centrifuge rotors to reduce the risk of exposure to laboratory personnel.

### III. REFERENCES:

CAP Inspection Checklist, Laboratory General GEN.74050 Specimen Handling/Processing, College of American Pathologists, Northfield, IL, 06.04.2020



### Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
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## Applicability

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