


## Autopsy Specimen Handling

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### APPLICABLE LABORATORY(S):

- North Carolina Baptist Hospital (NCBH)
- Lexington Medical Center (LMC)
- Davie Medical Center (DMC)
- Wilkes Medical Center (WMC)
- High Point Medical Center (HPMC)
- Westchester
- Clemmons

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines to Central Processing staff for processing and storage of blood samples from autopsy cases. Accession and Spin rotation are assigned specific functions but staff are expected to work together and communicate when workload is heavy. Autopsy specimens are kept for a minimum of one year.

### SCOPE

This procedure applies to Central Processing Lab team members.

### DEFINITIONS

- A.** Procedure: A process or method for accomplishing a specific task or objective.
- B.** WFBH Lab System: Wake Forest Baptist Lab System is a health system that includes Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and all affiliated organizations including Wake Forest University Health Sciences (WFUHS), North Carolina Baptist Hospital (NCBH), Lexington Medical Center (LMC), Davie Medical Center (DMC), Wilkes Medical Center (WMC), High Point Medical Center (HPMC), Lab at Westchester and Lab at Clemmons.

### SUPPLIES/MATERIALS

Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when handling biohazardous specimens.

### PROCEDURE GUIDELINES

#### A. Specimen Storage

1. Autopsy sample racks are stored long term in freezer 11 located in the main lab storeroom. The current, in-use autopsy rack is kept in the Central Processing Spin freezer. Specimens are electronically stored in Beaker Container Storage.

Place current autopsy samples in the appropriate storage position in the current autopsy rack, located in the Spin freezer.

## **B. Specimen Logging**

1. Autopsy specimens received prior to 1/1/2020 were logged manually on a paper log sheet. Logs were numbered to correspond with the autopsy rack number in use in the Spin freezer. Completed written logs will be retained for the life of the autopsy specimen.

## **C. Autopsy Rack Rotation and Organization**


1. There are 20 Autopsy Racks, numbered WC CP Autopsy Rack 1 through 20, physically and in Beaker Container Storage.
2. Racks should be used in numerical order. For example, Rack 1, Rack 2, Rack 3, etc.
3. Fill each individual rack sequentially. For example, position A1, A2, A3, etc.
4. The person that places the last sample in a rack should place the full rack in freezer 11 in the storeroom.
5. Prepare a new rack:
  - i. Locate the next rack in numerical order. Pull the rack from freezer 11. For example, if you just filled up Rack 5, locate Rack 6.
  - ii. Open Container Storage in Beaker for the new rack. For example, open WC CP Autopsy Rack 6.
  - iii. **Samples are kept for a minimum of 1 year.** If the specimens in the next Autopsy rack are less than 1 year old, notify management and do NOT discard. Autopsy samples are irretrievable. If in doubt about discarding samples, please ask for assistance. If samples are at least 1 year old, proceed to step iv.
  - iv. Check that the first or last sample in the rack matches what is listed in Container Storage. If it is correct, click Dispose All (bottom left of the window).
  - v. Physically discard the old samples in the biohazard bin in Spin.

## **D. Ordering in Requisition Entry (Accession Rotation)**

1. In Beaker, open Requisition Entry activity.
2. Type Autopsy as the Submitter.
3. Verify that the specimen is labeled with a minimum of first and last name and autopsy number.

4. Type requisition number. The requisition number contains the year (for example, 22 for 2022). There are three categories of autopsies, which have different autopsy numbers:
  - i. Hospital Autopsies: A22-XXXX
  - ii. Medical Examiner Autopsies: AM22-XXXX
  - iii. Fetal Autopsies: AF22-XXXX
5. When ordering in Beaker, drop the “WF” portion that may be listed as part of the autopsy number. For example, a label with WFAM22-9999 would be entered as Requisition AM22-9999.
  - i. If micro lab has already received a culture sample on the patient, then the requisition number will already exist in Requisition Entry. Double check the patient name and proceed to section 9.
6. Type in the patient name and hit Enter.
7. If an existing patient record pops up in the Select Patient window, click Cancel. A new patient record will need to be generated.

Enter the Date of Birth (DOB), sex (M/F/Unknown), and click New to create a new patient record. If the patient is a John Doe or Jane Doe, a DOB is not necessary.
8. Enter the provider listed on the requisition as the Ordering Provider.
9. In the Procedure section, order “AUTOPSY SPECIMEN HOLD (LAB4182).”
10. Click Create Specimens. Type in the Collection Date and Time from the requisition. Click Receive.
11. If the patient is a John Doe or Jane Doe, write the Autopsy Number on the top of the zebra label (for example, AM22-9999). This is the second identifier when a DOB is not available.
12. Open Beaker Container Storage and open the current Autopsy rack (listed as WC CP Autopsy Rack 1, 2, 3, up to Rack 20).
13. Scan the autopsy sample into the next available position. Record the storage position number on the aliquot label for the Spin person to store the sample. Close out of Container Storage using the “X” button. Changes will automatically be saved.
14. Place a taglet on the requisition and file in the Manual Requisitions folder.
15. If a requisition number was entered incorrectly and needs to be changed, open Requisition Entry. Enter the Requisition number that needs updating. Click the pencil icon next to the Requisition number box. You can now edit the Requisition number.

Requisition number:	AM22-8877	
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## E. Processing the Specimen (Spin Rotation)

1. Verify the specimen is labeled with the first and last name, and autopsy number.
2. Centrifuge the sample.
3. Label the aliquot tube with the zebra label. Initial the aliquot label to verify that you checked patient identifiers before aliquoting sample.
4. Transfer the serum into the aliquot tube.
  - The sample may be extremely hemolyzed.
  - Do not fill tubes more than halfway full to allow serum to expand when frozen.
5. Place the cells portion (original red top tube) in today's extra rack in the Spin refrigerator.
6. Store the serum aliquot in the Spin freezer Autopsy rack, in the location written on the aliquot tube.

## F. Finding a specimen in Container Storage

1. Open Specimen Inquiry by Patient.
2. Type Last name, First name in "Name/MRN" box. Type Autopsy in Submitter box. Click Find Patient. Highlight correct patient and click Accept.

Patient Lookup

Select Patient Recent Patients  Non-Human Only  Show Inactive

Name/MRN: BEAKER,ALOE Submitter: AUTOPSY

SSN Sex:

DOB:

Use sounds-like

New New & Reg Find Patient Clear Accept Cancel

Select Patient X

Search  🔍

Patient Name	MRN	ID Type	DOB	Legal Sex	Submitter	Street Address	SSN
BEAKER,ALOE				F	AUTOPSY		

Records: 1, all records loaded.

3. Click on the autopsy specimen number to open Specimen Inquiry.
4. Look at Specimen tracking “Put in Storage” to locate the Rack number and position.

1356	Put In Storage	WC CP AUTOPSY RACK 1 slot D7 <a href="#">Remove</a>
1354	Requisition Accepted	
1354	Received	Received into WC LAB
1354	Collection Updated	Date/Time 7/29/2021 1411 EDT
1354	Specimen Created	Requisition AM21-01689

### G. Requests for Admission Blood by Autopsy/Medical Examiner

1. Receive a request from Medical Examiner or designee for blood samples from hospital admission on a deceased patient.
2. Open Specimen Inquiry by Patient. Look for blood samples collected on the date requested by the Medical Examiner.
3. If blood is available from date of admission, print the labels for the samples requested.
4. Write Autopsy on the bottom of the labels. Give the labels to bench techs to pull the blood.
5. When techs bring requested blood to Central Processing, place the samples in a biohazard bag, and in the Autopsy bin in the Spin refrigerator door.

### LITERATURE REFERENCES

None

### RELATED PROCEDURES/POLICIES IN NAVEX

None

**ATTACHMENTS/LINKED DOCUMENTS IN TITLE 21**

Attachment A: Detailed Beaker Instructions for Autopsy Specimens  
Spin Procedures CP-SOP-0015

**REVISION DATES: REVIEW CHANGE SUMMARY AS REPRESENTED IN TITLE 21.**

## Attachment A: Detailed Beaker Instructions for Autopsy Specimens

1. Open Requisition Entry. Enter Autopsy as the submitter.
2. Verify that specimen is labeled with name and autopsy number. Enter Requisition Number. Type name and hit Enter.
3. Enter DOB, sex (M/F/Unknown), and click New to create a Patient record.

The screenshot shows the 'Patient Lookup' window. The 'Name/MRN' field contains 'Williams, Earl'. The 'Submitter' dropdown is set to 'AUTOPSY'. The 'DOB' field is empty and circled in blue. The 'Sex' dropdown is also empty and circled in blue. The 'New' button at the bottom left is circled in blue. There are also search icons next to the SSN and DOB fields.

4. Enter Ordering provider (listed on requisition) and Procedure "AUTOPSY SPECIMEN HOLD (LAB4182)." Click Create Specimens.

The screenshot shows the 'Requisition Entry' window. The 'Ordering provider' dropdown is set to 'TEST SER, PATHOLOGY ATTENDING' and is circled in blue. The 'Procedure' dropdown is set to 'AUTOPSY SPECIMEN HOLD [LAB4182]' and is circled in blue. The 'Create Specimens' button at the bottom left is circled in blue. The window also shows 'Diagnoses' and 'Specimen' tables.

Code	Description
1	

Procedure [6]	Specimen	Status	Specimen Type	Priority	Specimen So
1 AUTOPSY SPECIMEN HOLD [LAB4182]			Blood	Routine	
2					

5. Enter collection date and time from the requisition. Click Receive.

The screenshot shows the 'Requisition Entry' window. The 'Receive' button at the top is circled in blue. The 'Coll Date [7]' field in the 'Specimen' table is circled in blue. The 'Specimen' table has one row with '19W-323CP0001'.

Specimen	Coll Date [7]	Coll Time	Collect	External ID	Draw Type	A/C
1 19W-323CP0001						

6. If patient is a Jane Doe or John Doe, write autopsy number on the zebra label as a second identifier.
7. Store the sample in Container Storage. Write the position number on the zebra label.
8. Place a taglet on the requisition and file in Manual Requisitions folder.