

Quality Management Manual Department of Pathology	Document No. LADM 6030 Q Page 1 of 4
Laboratory Administration Releasing Specimens to Outside Agencies	Origination: 03/2012 Version: 1

Policy Statement	Saint Agnes Hospital is required to provide patient information, specimens and support services to State agencies and other outside entities. These would include, but are not limited to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), Living Legacy Foundation (LLF), private attorneys, contracted legal firms, funeral directors, etc. The Department of Pathology will provide laboratory specimens (including fluids and tissues) upon the request of such entities.
Purpose	To provide guidance on how to release specimens to State agencies and other outside entities and document the transaction.
Scope	This procedure applies to all associates of the Department of Pathology.
Responsibility	<p>It is the responsibility of the outside entity to notify the Department of Pathology of the request for specimen pick-up and to provide the department with a letter of request or authorization, which would include unambiguous identifying information such as the patient's name, date of birth (DOB), and/or medical record or account number.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the Laboratory Charge Tech to review the Lab standard release form for completeness and to turn over the specimen(s) after ensuring that the representative arrives with proper identification and the authorization of the agency or entity which they represent.</p> <p>The Quality Coordinator or designee is responsible for scanning form LADM 6030 F Releasing Specimens to Outside Agencies into an electronic format and saving the forms to a network folder.</p> <p>Pathology Assistants will assume the responsibility for the release of all Surgical Pathology Gross specimens. Specimens can only be picked up during regular business hours of operation.</p>

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Form Retention	All forms will be collected on a monthly basis by the Quality Coordinator or designee and scanned into a designated folder on the P drive using the following file path P:\labadmin\Quality Management\LADM\QSE 6-Process Control\LADM 6030 Releasing Specimens to Outside Agencies-Scanning.
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A. RELEASE OF CLINICAL LABORATORY SPECIMENS

1. Upon receipt of a verbal request for a patient's specimen(s) by the outside entity, the Lab associate will inform the party that they must bring a signed request or they may fax the request or authorization to the Laboratory prior to retrieving the specimen(s) and notify the Charge Tech.
2. The Lab Assistant will obtain the patient's name and DOB from the request and use the inquiry function in Meditech to get the accession or bar code numbers of the specimen(s). The Lab Assistant will pull the most recent rainbow of specimen(s) from archive using Instrument Manager. In some cases the outside entity may request all available specimens; including urine and other fluids. For deaths occurring in the E.D., the OCME will most often request the admission specimen(s) taken from the patient. Make sure the specimen(s) are capped; DO NOT transfer to another container. The Specimen Processor will notify the Charge Tech on duty of the pending specimen pickup.
3. DO NOT send specimen(s) to any reference laboratory or perform additional tests once the outside entity has requested the patient's specimens. Refer anyone requesting additional testing to the Charge Tech on duty.
4. Place all specimen(s) retrieved in a biohazard bag for pickup at the Specimen Processing window.
5. The Charge Tech on shift will release the specimen(s) to the representative of the outside entity.
6. The outside entity's representative/courier should have a copy of the request or authorization letter for release of the specimens. Request to see the identification indicating that they represent the outside entity.
7. DO NOT release specimen(s) until you have the signed and dated request in your hands and the outside entity representative/courier has signed the

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standard release form (LADM 6030 F Releasing Specimens Outside Agencies).

8. Place the request and signed release form in the Release Specimens folder in file drawer in the Processing Area.
9. On a monthly basis the Quality Coordinator or designee will collect the forms from the Processing Area, create an electronic copy of the document and store it in the network folder designated in the Form Retention section of this document.

B. RELEASE OF SURGICAL PATHOLOGY GROSS SPECIMENS

1. Surgical specimens which have been accessioned and processed through the Saint Agnes Hospital Department of Pathology may not be released to any individual, State agency or outside entity until two (2) weeks following issue of the final Surgical Pathology Report. The requesting entity must be informed that all surgical gross specimens are to be picked up within the following timeframe: Monday-Friday, 7:30 AM – 4 PM.
2. Only certain types of specimens (e.g., teeth, prostheses, orthopedic hardware, foreign bodies) may be released from the Histopathology Laboratory to the custody of a patient or family member at their request. Proper identification must be presented when the specimen is claimed and release of the specimen will be documented on the signed standard release form (LADM 6030 F Releasing Specimens to Outside Agencies).
3. If a patient/family insists that their religious customs require them to bury or otherwise dispose of surgically removed or spontaneously passed tissues, they should be instructed to contact a licensed funeral director of their choice who will accommodate their request and provide for the burial/disposal. The funeral director may retrieve the tissue at the Saint Agnes Hospital morgue after signing the standard release form.
4. No fresh or formalin-fixed tissues may be released from the Histopathology Laboratory into the possession of a patient unless that patient is transporting the specimen pursuant to the direction of their attorney in preparation for legal action. Preferably, a professional courier service should be involved in transfer of the specimen to the attorney or a contracted failure analysis company/laboratory. When claimed by the patient, they must present identification and sign the standard release form which admonishes them of the chemical hazard present if the specimen is in fixative. If a courier or other party is involved in the

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transfer, that individual must present a signed letter of authorization from the patient or attorney permitting them to claim the specimen and they must sign the standard release form. All specimens are to be placed in a zip-lock biohazard bag in preparation for release.

5. If received by error in the Histopathology Laboratory, evidentiary specimens such as bullets, shotgun pellets (or other projectiles), knife blades (or any other puncturing or incising weapons) will be released only to appropriate law enforcement personnel or to the OCME. Documentation of the specimen transfer will be on the legal agency's signed chain-of-possession form, which will be copied for departmental records.
6. On occasion, the OCME may request a surgical pathology gross specimen to complete a work-up of a forensic case under their jurisdiction. The specimen may be released from the Histopathology Laboratory with written authorization from the OCME. The standard release form must be signed.
7. After release of the specimen(s), make a copy of the Lab's standard release form and other paperwork; place the originals in the Release Specimens folder in the Processing Area; file the copy in Surgical Pathology.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

LADM 6030 F Releasing Specimens to Outside Agencies
Laboratory Services Manual-Morgue/Autopsy Policies and Procedures
Laboratory Services Manual-Histopathology
College of American Pathologist standard ANP.11550.
Sys HOS 11 Deaths-Fetal
Sys HOS 12 Deaths-General Protocol
Sys HOS 13 Deaths-Jewish Patients
Sys HOS 14 Deaths-Medical Examiner
Sys HOS 15 Deaths-Organ/Tissue/Eye Procurement

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Releasing Specimens to Outside Agencies

Patient Information

Patient Name:

Medical Record (MR) #:

Account #:

Accession #(s):

Specimen Types Released (Blood, Urine, Fluids, Tissue, etc.):

Signatures

By signing below I acknowledge that the specimens indicated above are in my possession and Saint Agnes Hospital is no longer responsible for loss, damage or spillage if that should occur.

Specimen Received By: _____

Printed Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Representative or Organization, if applicable (please print):

(e.g.: patient's physician, nurse, relative, attorney, funeral director, LLF, OCME, etc.)

Courier Company Name, if applicable (please print):

Check if applicable:

I understand that 10% formalin fixative is present in the specimen container and that solution contains formaldehyde, a hazardous chemical. I understand that I should not open either the outer or inner containers and that doing so would expose me to this dangerous chemical or to chemical fumes. I understand that the containers must be kept upright at all times.

initials

Released By: _____ **Date:** _____

Saint Agnes Hospital Associate*

** All tissue specimens must be retained by the department for 2 weeks after issue of the final report. Request proper identification from the individual claiming the specimen. Attach documentation of request/authorization for specimen release, if required.*