PURPOSE

Nursing and hospital personnel will label any specimens to be submitted for laboratory testing completely with the name, MR number, date of birth (when available), date, time, initials, location taken (if appropriate) and employee number of the person collecting **while** at the patient beside at the time of collection and not prior to filling the tube or container. Specimens improperly labeled will be rejected by the laboratory. Errors in specimen labeling may cause erroneous cross matching or results reporting which may, in turn, lead to serious injury or death of a patient.

DEFINITIONS N/A

PROCEDURE

1. The person noting the order will obtain the appropriate number of labels from the computer system or handwrite them if necessary.
2. The collector will identify the patient by:
3. having the patient state his legal name and date of birth
4. two unique identifiers (ID band with the name and date of birth (required), and one other unique identifier such as MRN, FIN, Social Security number or other unique number on the computer label.
5. if the patient ID band is missing, the collector will notify the caregiver to replace the ID band before obtaining the specimen(s). The person applying the ID band to the patient must obtain the following information from the patient or legally authorized representative: the patient’s legal name and date of birth.
6. The collector will obtain the specimen and label it **immediately at the bedside**, adding a legible time, date, their own initials, location taken (if appropriate) and employee number.
7. Specimen containers should not be labeled prior to collection
8. By doing this, this person is guaranteeing that the name on the containers is correct.
9. For specimens other than blood, the type of specimen needs to be indicated on the container (urine, sputum, stool)
10. The specimen(s) will be sent promptly to the laboratory in a plastic zip lock bag. Remove any needles and cap the syringes prior to sending to the laboratory. All orders for specimens will be placed in the computer system at the time of collection.

REJECTION OF SPECIMENS

1. The laboratory will reject the specimen if the patient’s legal name and MR number are not present, are illegible or are incorrect, and will contact the collector or collecting unit.
2. If the date, time, collector’s initials, location taken (if appropriate) and employee number are not present or are illegible, but the patient information is correct, the laboratory will not reject the specimen, but collecting personnel must go to the laboratory to complete the labeling. The exception is Blood Bank specimens. If Blood Bank specimens are collected without the required information (date, time collector’s initials and employee number), these specimens will be rejected and will need to be redrawn.

3. Labels must be on the specimen containers. If the label is on the zip lock bag and not the specimen container, the specimen will be rejected.

4. The pathologist may be consulted in discrepancies in patient identification, if not covered in the above criteria, and is the ultimate authority on specimen rejection. Laboratory personnel will file a Midas report on all inappropriately labeled specimens

5. Individuals, who are responsible for inappropriately labelling and laboratory rejection of specimens as defined in #1 above, may be subject to the Hospital disciplinary process.

RELATED DOCUMENTS VVMC HP 500.58 Patient Identification

FMC HP 300-12 Patient Identification Process

REFERENCES N/A