

University of California, Davis
Medical Center, Sacramento
Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine

SPECIMEN TRIAGE

Administrative Procedure #545 A

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the designations for laboratory specimens and the proper handling procedures for each.

Each Department of Pathology employee assigned to the Specimen Receiving /Client Services Specimen Reception Desk is responsible for performance of the following procedure.

PROCEDURE:

A. Specimen Receipt Time

1. The actual time of receipt of Clinical Laboratory specimens must be recorded.
 - a. This practice must take place at all locations where specimen requisitioning is performed, including all UCDCM and PCN draw sites.
2. If a specimen will be requisitioned immediately upon receipt or collection, time stamping is not necessary. The collection time will be recorded "as received" at the time of requisitioning.
 - a. Immediately is defined as a period of less than five minutes as related to time received.

B. Routine Specimens:

1. Check all incoming laboratory specimens and requisition form(s) for proper containers, labeling, processing, demographics, adequacy of specimens, appropriate handling, and required documentation (as specified by the "Unlabeled/Mislabeled Specimens" and "Documentation Problems" policies and procedures). The employee will then write the date, time and their initials (block letters) onto the requisition form(s) to assure the checking process has been completed and the specimen(s) are being directed to the proper testing section.
2. Rack specimens by performing department.
3. Deliver specimens to the appropriate department
4. All racked specimens being sent via courier must be placed into a specimen Biohazard bag and placed inside the specimen transport courier bag.
5. Blood Bank specimens with requisitions need to be time stamped when delivered to blood bank.
6. Special Chem, Immunology, Toxicology, Special Coag and Microbiology specimens are delivered to the STC every hour from 8:00 am to 12 midnight by the UCDCM contracted courier service.
7. Anatomical Path and Cytology specimens are delivered to the Pathology building

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every hour from 0900 to 2100 by the UCDHS contracted courier service.

8. Follow HIS/EMR/LIS interface procedure.
9. Place specimens in the appropriate area for requisitioning/receiving (data entry).
10. Wear protective gloves at all times when handling specimens.
11. Maintain effective communication with Specimen Receiving /Client Service supervisors.

C. Coagulation Specimens:

The purpose of "Checking for Clots" on coagulation specimens is to determine if clots are present in the sample indicating clotting factors have been consumed resulting in inaccurate clotting times and rendering the sample unsuitable for analysis. This task involves the following steps:

1. Remove the cap from the tube.
2. Insert two wooden applicator sticks to the bottom of the tube and **SWIRL** the applicator slightly.
3. Remove the two applicator sticks and observe the sticks for any adhered clots or fibrin strings no matter how small.
4. Discard the applicator sticks into a waste container.
5. Replace the cap on the tube with a twisting motion and secure.
6. Check the label: **NOTE: PLT (platelets) and PFA (platelet function analysis) specimens are checked but DO NOT CENTRIFUGE THESE SPECIMENS!!**
7. Place the checked tube in the appropriate rack.

If clots or fibrin strands are observed in step 3 the specimen will not be centrifuged. The cap will be replaced and "**CLOT**" will be written across the barcode. This specimen will immediately be brought to the attention of the CLS on the Coag bench. You will cancel the specimen accordingly.

D. PRIORITY/URGENT/STAT Specimen Reception:

1. All PRIORITY, URGENT, and/or STAT specimens must be given handling priority.
2. Immediately follow steps 1, 8, 10 and 11 of B (Routine Specimens) above.

E. Frozen Specimens:

1. All Frozen specimens **MUST** remain frozen during the requisitioning process and through the entire delivery process to the testing destination.
2. Check incoming frozen specimen(s) to confirm specimen is frozen upon arrival to our laboratory. If specimen is **not** received frozen, then comment,

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- “Specimen not received frozen” in the comments section LIS during the requisitioning process.
3. Check for proper requisition, container and labeling. Remove requisition from Specimen Biohazard bag. **Then immediately** place the **frozen** specimen(s) into the Dry Ice thermos located in the Specimen Receiving triage area or place into the freezer to maintain integrity of the specimen. If specimen is **not frozen, do not refreeze** the specimen.
 4. Follow EMR/LIS interface procedure or manually requisition into LIS.
 5. Upon delivery to the testing destination, assure specimen(s) will remain frozen by placing specimen into the proper specimen delivery thermos with Dry Ice.
 6. Alert the technical section staff that you are delivering critical frozen specimen or a critical specimen that was received into our laboratory unfrozen.
- F. Any “Special or Unusual” specimen or test requests should be referred to the Specimen Receiving supervisor, Specimen Receiving trainer or Core Lab Supervisor for review of triage or specimen handling.
- G. Molecular and Cytogenetic Specimens
1. All Molecular and Cytogenetic Specimens should be routed directly to the Molecular / Cytogenetics Lab in the STC, Monday –Sunday 6:00 am - 1630.
 - a. After these hours specimens should be stored per the Mol/Cytogen Specimen Handling guidelines spreadsheet.
 2. Amniotic fluids received after hours, should stay at room temp. CALL 734-1670 to leave a voice mail notifying staff of specimen received and its storage location (SESP or STC)
 3. All other specimens are to be refrigerated 4C with a call made to the voice mail as in Item #2. A technologist will check the voice mail during off hours to ensure that specimens are processed in a timely and appropriate manner.
 4. Page the Cytogenetics supervisor at 762-2140 for emergencies.

See "Specimens Received After Hours" policy and procedure.

Assist within the Specimen Receiving/Processing positions during times of decreased specimen triage desk activity.

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H. SPECIMEN RECEIVING STAT/Special Courier Bone Marrow Delivery Guidelines

1. Bone Marrow lab calls **Specimen Receiving STAT telephone line of 4-3347** for Bone Marrow specimen(s) pick up by the **Specimen Receiving STAT/Special courier**. Bone Marrow specimens are to be handled **only** by the **Specimen Receiving STAT/ Special courier** and never by the Routine specimen or UCDHS Contracted courier.
2. The **Specimen Receiving STAT/Special courier** will pick up Bone Marrow specimens at Cancer Center Lab. **The Specimen Receiving STAT/Special courier MUST:**
 - a. Complete the Bone Marrow log properly for each patient's specimen(s) with time of pickup and their initials. (See Attachment A)
 - b. **The Specimen Receiving STAT/Special courier** will then double check the specimen(s) and the log to ensure they are picking up the correct specimens.
4. The **Specimen Receiving STAT/ Special courier MUST** deliver the Bone Marrow specimens to the following locations and in the order as listed below:

STC

- a. Complete the STC log properly with time and their initials. (See Attachment B)
- b. Write BONE MARROW on log and affix the small label with the patient's name (provided in the bag) on the log. Then write each delivery location onto the log, ie.: (IMMUNOLOGY, CYTOGENETICS and/or MICROBIOLOGY).
- c. The specimens may be given to the STC Specimen Reception staff member for distribution. The STC Specimen Reception Staff member will deliver the specimens to designated areas (IMMUNOLOGY, CYTOGENETICS, and/or MICROBIOLOGY) and have their staff initial the log upon reception. In the absence of the STC Specimen Reception staff member, the **Specimen Receiving STAT/ Special courier must personally deliver the Bone Marrow specimens to the designated areas** of IMMUNOLOGY, CYTOGENETICS, and/or MICROBIOLOGY and have their staff initial the log upon reception. If specimens for IMMUNOLOGY and CYTOGENETICS are delivered after 17:00 (their closing time), have staff from MICROBIOLOGY or TOXICOLOGY initial the log upon the reception of the specimens.

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2. Pathology Building

- a. Complete the Path Building log properly with time and their initials (see Attachment C).
- b. Affix **ALL** of the small labels with the patient's name (provided in the bag) on the log. There may be one or several labels. The labels may be marked as "C" (core biopsy) or "D" (clot section). On rare occasions small labels may be marked with "F" or "G".
(For example, if only a biopsy is collected, only one label is necessary that is marked "C" so AP knows they only received a biopsy and not a clot section. If small labels are marked with "C", "D", "F", or "G", all labels are to be affixed to the log.)
- c. The Pathology staff is responsible for checking the log and correlating the specimens received to the log and placing their initials on the log indicating that they received the specimens properly.

3. Specimen Receiving SESP Lab – SEND OUT

- a. **Specimen Receiving STAT/Special courier** returns to Specimen Receiving (Specimen & Report Center) North 2 Main lab.
- b. Delivers the Bone Marrow specimens to Send-Out lab.
- c. **Specimen Receiving STAT/Special courier** completes the Send-Out log with the time and their initials. (See Attachment D)
- d. Affix the small label with patient's name (provided in the bag) on the log.
- e. **Send Out person** initials the log indicating that the specimen was received properly.

The Specimen Receiving STAT/Special courier MUST always deliver the Bone Marrow specimens directly to the locations. Bone Marrow specimens are NEVER to be left in Specimen Receiving overnight.

Any DEVIATION of these guidelines requires immediate SUPERVISOR NOTIFICATION

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PROCEDURE HISTORY

Date	Written/ Revised by	Revision	Approved Date	Approved by
11/06/96	C. White	Revised	11/96	E. Larkin
10/98	C. White	Revised	11/98	E. Larkin
11/00	D. Wright	Reviewed	11/00	E. Larkin
10/02	D. McGee	Reviewed	10/02	E. Larkin
09/15/04	D. McGee	Revised	10/04	E. Larkin
12/04	D. Wright	Revised	12/04	E. Larkin
10/05	D. McGee	Reviewed	10/05	E. Larkin
6/06	D. Wright	Revised	9/06	R. Green
5/07	D. Wright	Reviewed	5/07	R. Green
5/08	D. Wright	Revised	5/08	R. Green
2/09	C. White	Revised	2/09	L. Howell
11/09	C. White	Reviewed	12/09	J. Bishop
06/10	C. White	Revised	06/10	L. Howell
10/10	D. Wright	Revised	10/10	L. Howell
10/10	C. White	Revised	10/10	L. Howell
2/11	C. White	Revised	2/11	L. Howell
09/11	C. White	Revised	09/11	L. Howell
08/14	A. Castaneda	Revised	09/14	