

**Title: Sample Transport Procedures for the Community**

<b>No.of copies :</b>	2
<b>Location of copies :</b>	1. Barnsley Pathology Website
	2. Rotherham Pathology Governance
	3.

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**2. Summary of revisions**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Summary of change</b>
1.08	Last issue with no summary of change
2	Updated into new SOP template

**3. Risk assessment/Safety controls**

Pathology specimens are potentially infectious and hazardous. Care must therefore be taken to package and transport specimens in compliance with the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR 2017) to minimise the risks to staff, couriers and the general public.

The collection and transportation of specimens is also important in ensuring the quality of results. If there have been any temperature excursions or delays in the transportation of the samples, this should be reported to laboratory reception staff on arrival.

Risk assessments and safety controls are in place for the transport of samples via Courier Logistics.

**4. Responsibilities of personnel**

It is the responsibility of

- all persons sending samples to and from the laboratory
- all persons transporting specimens to and from the laboratory

to adhere to this policy

## 5. Purpose

This document describes the procedure for transporting specimens to Barnsley & Rotherham Pathology Services from community premises or any other off-site location.

## 6. Principle

Pathology specimens are potentially infectious and hazardous and as a result care must be taken when packaging and transporting specimens. The purpose of this policy is to

- Provide guidance on the correct packaging and transport of diagnostic specimens
- Ensure the safety of anyone (staff, couriers and the general public) coming in contact with the specimen during its transport
- Ensure specimen integrity which is important to the quality of test results

## 7. Transport Services

The collection and transportation of pathology samples from and to Barnsley & Rotherham Pathology Services is provided by Courier Logistics Ltd. This is a dedicated service which aims to promote sample integrity by guaranteeing a maximum journey time of 2 hours. All drivers have received specific training in the handling of pathological specimens and Courier Logistics have performed risk assessments for all locations receiving a collection service. Courier Logistics use a track and trace system to log the collection and delivery from each location on each transport run. High and low temperatures are also electronically recorded for each run. Data is provided by Courier Logistics and audits performed by the Quality Team.

## 8. Collection and Labelling of Specimen Bottles

All laboratory specimens have the potential to contain substances that are infectious and therefore it is important to package and label all specimens in a manner so that they present no risks to those transporting or receiving them.

Collect the specimen and place into the correct container for the analysis required (for details please refer to individual laboratory user handbooks)

**Barnsley** – <http://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/pathology/>

**Rotherham** – <http://www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/Pathology/Pathology/>

Label the specimen container with the following essential information:

- Patient's Name (first name & surname)
- Date of birth
- NHS number/Hospital number
- Date collected
- Location/ward

**Note:** ordercomms prints a label with the request form and this should be stuck to the container)

For further details on sample labelling please see the sample labelling acceptance policy  
**Barnsley** - <http://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/pathology/pathology-general/request-and-specimen-labelling/>

**Rotherham** - <http://www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/Pathology/Pathology/>

Fill in the corresponding request form (electronic or hard copy)

## 9. Specimen Packaging

Ensure the lid of all specimen bottles is secured before the bottle is placed into the plastic pockets.

All specimen bottles must be placed in the correct plastic pocket (see below for details).

### **Microbiology, Chemistry and Haematology (ICE Ordercomms requests/specimens)**

For Chemistry and Haematology specimens (Marked Blood Sciences specimens only) use the **green** plastic pocket

For Microbiology specimens\* (Marked Microbiology specimens only) use the

- **yellow** plastic pocket for specimens submitted to Barnsley
- **blue** plastic pockets for specimens submitted to Rotherham.

Remove the brown self adhesive tape to reveal the glued area, and then fold along the perforations so the glued area attaches to the plastic and securely seals the specimen bag. Remove the second brown self adhesive tape and attach the specimen bag to the top section of the ICE ORDERCOMMS ( may be hand written or ordercoms) request form.

\*When packaging individual specimens from patients known to have a blood borne virus or CJD, please attach a 'danger of infection' label to both the specimen bottle and request form. This will ensure the safe handling and disposal of the specimen. Note: these specimens do not need to be transported separately

### **Blood Transfusion specimens**

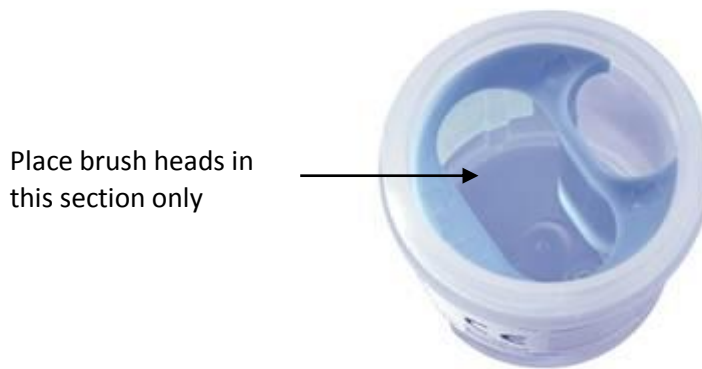
Place all blood samples in the **clear** plastic pocket attached to the blood transfusion request form. Remove the brown self adhesive tape to reveal the glued area, and then fold along the perforations so the glued area attaches to the plastic and securely seals the specimen bag.

### **Histopathology/Cellular Pathology specimens**

Place all samples\* in the **clear** plastic pocket attached to the Histopathology/Cellular Pathology request form.

Remove the brown self adhesive tape to reveal the glued area, and then fold along the perforations so the glued area attaches to the plastic and securely seals the specimen bag.

\* Liquid based cytology specimens must be placed in the plastic pocket attached to the cytology request stationery. These specimen bags are provided by Sheffield Teaching Hospitals. Please ensure that all brush heads, including endocervical brushes are placed in the larger compartment of the sample vial.



Remove the brown self adhesive tape to reveal the glued area, and then fold along the perforations so the glued area attaches to the plastic and securely seals the specimen bag.

Place individually packed specimens into the secondary transport bag and seal. **Note:** all secondary transport bags contain a large sheet of absorbent material to contain the specimen in the event of a leak – **please DO NOT discard this.**

Use a **white secondary transport bag** for

- all centrifuged and capped aliquots of serum. Note: these must be placed upright in the supplied racks
- all individually packaged Pathology specimens except\*

\*Liquid based cytology specimens – use **green secondary transport bags** (provided by Sheffield Teaching Hospitals)

\*24 hour urine specimens - place in a green secondary transport bag and seal and then place this into the 30 litre Diagnostic Specimen container (see right) ensuring the lid is securely fastened. Note Absorbent material must be present at the bottom of the container - please do not remove.

\*Microbiology specimens from **Integrated Sexual Health (ISH) services** – place into a **Purple** secondary transport bag and seal.



## 10. Transportation of Specimens to the Laboratory

Place the sealed secondary bags (white, green, purple) into the Green 'drop tested' Versapak transport case (these are the approved 'Diagnostic Substances UN3373' carrying bags).

Zip fasten the bags fully before leaving the site and transport in the rear of the vehicle. Keep closed until receipt by Pathology reception staff.

**Note 1:** The green Versapak transport cases must only be used for the transport of Pathology specimens. **If mail or any other goods are delivered via specimen transport runs, they must be kept totally separate.**

**Note 2:** Versapak transport cases containing liquid based cytology samples in sealed green secondary transport bags that are transported to Pathology are to be forwarded onto the Royal Hallamshire Hospital.

**Note 3:** Under no circumstances should plastic bags of samples be placed directly onto the floor of the vehicle

**Note 4:** Approved sample bags MUST NOT be placed in the driver's compartment.

## **11. Specimen Delays**

All specimens must be transported to the laboratory on the day they are taken. Any delays in specimen transportation, for example, delays due to adverse weather conditions, may affect the integrity of the sample which can lead to unreliable test results.

### **Chemistry**

All Chemistry gel tube sample tests will be affected. Samples delayed over 12 hours cannot be processed.

Blood Glucose specimens in fluoride tubes and HbA<sub>1c</sub> specimens in EDTA tubes may be stored in a refrigerator overnight.

### **Haematology**

Full blood count specimens in EDTA tubes may be stored in a refrigerator overnight.

### **Microbiology**

All urine, swabs etc may be stored in a refrigerator overnight.

### **Histopathology**

Specimens may be stored overnight at room temperature.

## **12. Transport Incidents and Reporting**

Please contact Pathology Reception on

01226 43 2727 Barnsley

01709 42 7553 Rotherham

for any incidents relating to transportation of specimens which may affect the quality of the specimen or the safety of personnel. You will be transferred to the appropriate laboratory who will give you advice or help.

Examples of incidents include spillages, delays in delivery and problems with sites meeting packaging requirements.

**Note:** In the event of a spill these should be contained within the packaging. Under no circumstances should the packaging be opened. Bring the packaging to the laboratory for disposal.

Pathology staff must raise the above incidents in Q-Pulse and/or Datix

## **13. Environmental controls**

Temperature is maintained between 15°C and 25°C for samples transported by Coruer Logistics. Courier Logistics use a track and trace system to log the collection and delivery from each location on each transport run. High and low temperatures are also electronically recorded for each run. Data is provided by Courier Logistics and audits performed by the Quality Team.

**14. References**

Carriage of dangerous Goods by Road (ADR Regulations 2013)  
 IATA Regulations 1994 and 1998  
 The Health & Safety at Work Act 2005

**15. Heading Consideration**

<b>SOP Sections</b>	<b>Consideration (included, Section N/A)</b>
Summary of revisions	<b>Included</b>
Risk assessment/Safety controls	<b>Included</b>
Responsibilities of Staff/Personnel	<b>Included</b>
Purpose	<b>Included</b>
Principle	<b>Included</b>
Performance characteristics	<b>Not Included</b>
Type of sample	<b>Not Included</b>
Patient preparation	<b>Not Included</b>
Type of container and additives	<b>Not Included</b>
Equipment	<b>Not Included</b>
Reagents, kits, standards and calibrants	<b>Not Included</b>
Environmental controls	<b>Included</b>
Calibration requirements (metrological traceability)	<b>Not Included</b>
Procedural steps	<b>Included</b>
Quality control procedures	<b>Not Included</b>
Interferences and cross reactions	<b>Not Included</b>
Principle of procedure for calculating results including, where relevant, the measurement of uncertainty quantity values	<b>Not Included</b>
Biological reference intervals or clinical decision values	<b>Not Included</b>
Reportable interval of examination results	<b>Not Included</b>
Determining quantitative results when a result is not within the measurement interval	<b>Not Included</b>
Alert/Critical values	<b>Not Included</b>
Laboratory clinical interpretation	<b>Not Included</b>
Potential sources of variation	<b>Not Included</b>
References	<b>Included</b>
Heading Consideration	<b>Included</b>