

Title: Transporting Samples from Clinical Areas to the Laboratory

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2. Summary of Revisions

Version	Summary of change
1	Not applicable – first issue.
1.1	Reviewed and updated.
1.2	Included DCR587 from AUD1604 and NC.3790- Included a statement regarding reporting any incidents on Datix/Q-Pulse
1.3	Added in reference to webpages for further information.
1.4	Clarified details for how to manage a spillage during sample transport from clinical areas, as per DCR1468.

1 Introduction

This procedure sets out the process for the collection and transport of pathology specimens to the laboratory from wards and departments.

Pathology specimens are potentially infectious and hazardous. Care must be taken to minimise the risks to staff when transporting specimens through the hospital and sending these via the pneumatic tube system. The collection and transportation of samples are critical factors affecting the quality of results.

If the patient is known to be from a risk group or has a blood borne virus or CJD, please attach a danger of infection label to the sample bottles and request form once the specimens have been obtained. High risk and precious samples must not be transported via the pneumatic tube system.

Patient Confidentiality must be maintained whilst transporting specimens at all times.

2 Specimen Packaging

2.1 Meditech (electronic)

Meditech samples must be placed in the correct plastic pocket.

GREEN – Biochemistry, Haematology and Immunology samples

BLUE – Microbiology and Virology samples

2.2 Blood Sciences Manual Requests

All samples must be placed in the plastic pocket attached to the green combined BHI request form. Remove the brown self adhesive tape to reveal glued area, fold along perforations to ensure glued area attaches to plastic ensuring adequate seal.

For further details on specimen collection, consent and appropriate specimen documentation requirements refer to the Biochemistry, Immunology and Haematology webpages

<http://www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/Haematology/Haematology/>

<http://www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/Immunology/Immunology/>

<http://www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/Pathology/Biochemistry/>

2.3 Microbiology Manual Requests

All samples must be placed in the plastic pocket attached to the blue microbiology request form. Remove the brown self adhesive tape to reveal glued area, fold along perforations to ensure glued area attaches to plastic ensuring adequate seal.

Please contact Microbiology prior to bringing CSF samples to the department. If out of hours then the on call Microbiologist must be contacted via Switchboard.

Blood cultures can be left in Reception at room temperature at any time. These will be loaded onto the blood culture machine by Microbiology staff.

For further details on specimen collection, consent and appropriate specimen documentation requirements refer to the Microbiology handbook.

<http://www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/Microbiology/Microbiology/>

2.4 Blood Transfusion

All samples must be placed in the plastic pocket attached to the blood transfusion request form. Remove the brown self adhesive tape to reveal glued area, fold along perforations to ensure glued area attaches to plastic ensuring adequate seal.

For further details on specimen collection, consent and appropriate specimen documentation requirements refer to the Blood Transfusion Handbook

http://www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/Blood_Transfusion/Blood_Transfusion/

2.5 Histology

All investigations for histological and cytological investigations should be submitted using the black Histology request forms supplied. All forms should be fully completed, including relevant clinical details, patients details (at least 3 patient identifiers) and preferably in block capitals. All request forms must be signed by an appropriate clinician.

Samples in universal containers must be placed in the plastic pocket attached to the black request form. Remove the brown self adhesive tape to reveal glued area, fold along perforations to ensure glued area attaches to plastic ensuring adequate seal. Any larger size specimens the request form must be attached to the specimen container ensuring that the specimen is also labelled.

For further details on specimen collection, consent and appropriate specimen documentation requirements refer to the Histopathology Handbook

<http://www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/Histopathology/Histopathology/>

3 Specimen Transportation General

Urgent and precious samples must be sent to the laboratory immediately for analysis. Please refer to the individual department handbook for specific sample requirements for the tests requested.

4 Specimen Transportation in the Pneumatic Tube System

The pneumatic tube system is the primary transport system. However, certain specimen types must **never** be transported in this way. The following specimens must **not** be sent in the air tube:

Blood Gases

CSF samples

Ammonia

Histology/Gynaecology samples containing formalin – although fluid and urine samples may be sent.

Frozen section specimens

CarboxyHb

Vitamin C, A, & K

Blood bags (full or empty)

MetHb

Homocysteine

Platelet function tests (as part of COAG 3)

Amino Acids

Neurotransmitters

Plasma metanephrines

Platelet Serotonin

Overnight & 24hr Urine

Any sample regarded as “precious”

Known or suspected ‘High Risk’ samples such as HIV, Hepatitis A, B or C and TB MUST NOT be sent.

5 Histology Specimen Transportation

Histology specimens must not be transported to Pathology via the pneumatic tube System. These specimens are not (or not easily) reproducible and should therefore be transported on trolleys from departments directly to the Department.

Please ensure specimen containers are securely fastened and kept upright.

In the case of a formalin spillage please contact Histopathology department ext. 4020 for assistance. Report any formalin spillages as per section 9.

6 Transportation of Liquid Based Cytology Samples

Liquid Based Cytology Samples must be placed in the Sheffield teaching Hospitals, Cytology green sample transport bags along with the HMR101 request form. Please ensure that the cervex brush is placed in the sample vial. The individual sample bags must then be transported to the Histopathology department.

7 Transportation of blood transfusion units

Refer to SOP Collection and return of blood components on the Trust intranet.

8 Spillage Incidents

In cases of accidental blood spillage/bodily fluid on the ward please refer to the Trust Decontamination Policy (Ref. No: 463) and use ward blood spillage kit.

In the case of a formalin spillage please contact Histopathology department ext. 4020 for assistance. Report any formalin spillages as per section 9.

9 Reporting Incidents

Any incidents which occur during transportation that may affect the quality of the specimen or the safety of the personnel must be brought to the attention of a senior member of staff and reported on Datix. The incident will then be managed through Datix and the laboratory Q-Pulse system.