

Title of Document: Model Rules for Couriers and Porters for Transportation of Samples to the Laboratory.

Q Pulse Reference N^o: GP/PPP/0011

Version N^o: 1.4

Authoriser: Paul Virgo

PATHOLOGY SCIENCES MODEL RULES FOR COURIERS AND PORTERS FOR TRANSPORTATION OF SAMPLES TO THE LABORATORY.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The policy provides guidance for couriers and porters in safe collection and transport of **samples** to the laboratory. For the policy relating to the collection of Blood Products and Components see [Porters to Collect Blood Components and Products from the Blood Transfusion Laboratory Policy CP2c/CG105](#)

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to describe Model Rules for Couriers and Porters. They are not necessarily expected to be prescriptive or cover every eventuality. Circumstances and other rules will also be co-operational such as the Guidelines of the Trust and Contracted Couriers terms of business.

3. DEFINITIONS

There are no terms and definitions used in a technical or special sense included.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

In all circumstances –

IF IN DOUBT CONTACT THE LABORATORY FOR ADVICE

Contact details for laboratory sites:

Southmead Hospital
Blood Sciences Laboratory (0117) 4148383

For Advice Concerning Formalin Spillage

Histology Laboratory (0117) 4149845/4149842/4149800

4.2 YOUR ROLE

You have a vital role in ensuring that the specimens arrive within a time frame appropriate to the nature of the requested examinations and protect the specimens from deterioration - which may be crucial to patient care.

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4.3 YOUR HEALTH

Transport of appropriately packaged laboratory specimens should and in nearly every case is a safe activity. On rare occasions there may be breakage, or leakage of materials. We want you and others to be safe from contact with biological material that may be infectious. This document describes those steps that must be taken at all times to minimise the risk of contact with these materials.

4.4 RULES FOR THOSE TRANSPORTING SPECIMENS

You must:

Completely cover exposed cuts, grazes or broken skin with a waterproof dressing.

Do not eat, drink, or smoke (or apply make-up) whilst handling specimen.

Only accept specimens that are packaged and labelled properly.

Touch specimens as little as possible. If you do touch them directly wash your hands as soon as practicable afterwards.

Always wash your hands thoroughly before rest breaks (or before eating, drinking, smoking or applying make-up at any time) and at the end of your work period.

Trust employees should ensure they are aware of, and follow, Trust policies on Infection Control, Patient Confidentiality, Data Protection and Health & Safety at Work and Dress Code.

Take specimens immediately to the laboratory do not transport them via Rest Areas, Canteens or Patient Areas unless essential to do so.

4.5 HANDLING OF SPECIMENS

Handle specimens reasonably gently and responsibly at all times (not only to prevent the risk of breakage, but rough handling or extremes of temperature may affect the result of the tests to be undertaken). **Do not overload the transport boxes as this may break sample containers or the transport box itself.**

Carry all specimens in the trays or boxes provided, never carry them any distance in your hands (even between adjacent rooms or wards) and never carry them in your pocket.

Do not accept any specimens, specimen containers or carriers that are badly damaged or with obvious signs of leakage.

If a specimen leaks into a tray or box tell the laboratory or ward staff and ask them to make it safe.

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If you drop a specimen do not touch it or try to clear up the spill. Stay with the specimen to prevent others touching it. Be careful not to walk or let others walk through any spill. Send someone for responsible help (e.g. qualified laboratory staff, nursing staff or in other areas a supervisor or manager). If this occurs in a vehicle see next section.

If you spill a specimen onto your uniform/clothing remove the affected clothing, immediately if possible, wash your hands and put on clean uniform/clothing or other covering. Safely bag the affected clothing for cleaning and report the accident to your supervisor; (Trust staff - ask your supervisor if a DATIX form is required to be written).

Formalin Spillage

Histology samples are transported in Formalin. Whilst the sample containers are designed to prevent spillage occasionally poorly sealed containers may leak. Spillage of formalin can be identified by an acrid smell that is irritating to nose and eyes. If you suspect formalin has been spilt please contact the Histology lab on 0117 4149845 or 4149842.

4.6 TRANSPORT BY VEHICLE

Carriage of Diagnostic Specimens by post, road, rail or air is covered by relevant (Carriage of Dangerous Goods) Acts of Parliament even for short distances. You and your employer must work to relevant current regulations which place general duties in law on everyone in this role and drivers must be suitably trained. The proper shipping name for Diagnostic Specimens is now UN3373 – Biological Substances, Category B. Please ensure that all packaging (P650) and labelling conform. **Some high risk pathogens, Category A, may need to be shipped according to UN 2814 - infectious substance, affecting humans. The department responsible for this transport will organise the packaging and appropriately licenced courier.**

Make sure that you have disposable gloves and a spillage kit available in the vehicle and sufficient absorbent material in the packaging to absorb material from breakages. If a specimen is broken or leaks into a box leave it shut and leave it for the laboratory to deal with. For a spillage in the vehicle put on disposable gloves and cover the spillage with special granules from the kit (or disposable absorbent paper/material) then go to the laboratory for help. Do not touch it or try to clean it up yourself.

Always keep vehicles containing specimens locked when unattended, even during collection/delivery.

If your vehicle breaks down, or you have an accident, do not let anyone touch the specimens unless you are sure that they will be competent to handle them (e.g. hospital laboratory staff, medical staff etc).

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do so leave the doors and windows open to aid ventilation, you must stay near the vehicle if this is the case to prevent others from accessing the vehicle.

4.7 DELIVERY LOCATION FOR SPECIMENS

Department	Location for delivery	Transport bags
Haematology & Blood Transfusion	Specimen Reception 1 Pathology Sciences Building Phase 1	Red
Clinical Biochemistry	Specimen Reception 1 Pathology Sciences Building Phase 1	Red
Immunology & Immunogenetics	Specimen Reception 1 Pathology Sciences Building Phase 1	Red
Cellular Pathology Histology/Cytology	Specimen Reception 2 Level 1 Pathology Sciences Building Phase 2	Yellow and White
Infection Sciences Bacteriology/Virology/MRL/ARL	Specimen Reception 1 Pathology Sciences Building Phase 1	Blue
Bristol Genetics	Specimen Reception 1 Pathology Sciences Building Phase 1	Black
Neuropathology	Specimen Reception 2 Level 1 Pathology Sciences Building Phase 2	Yellow and Clear

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Health and Safety Executive Health Service Advisory Committee (1991).

Safe Working Practices and the Prevention of Infection in Clinical Laboratories. HMSO

Health and Safety Executive web site at <http://www.hse.gov.uk>

NBT Specimen Transport Policy. (Q Pulse Reference GPP/PPP/004)

Department of Health (2007) Transport of Infectious Substances Best Practice Guidance for Microbiology Laboratories

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff involved in the transport and receipt of specimens has a responsibility to comply with this policy.