Purpose:

To set forth guidelines for the appropriate transport of laboratory specimens via the pneumatic tube system.

Policy:

A. The Clinical Laboratory will accept a specimen via the pneumatic tube system (PTS) only if:

1. it is in an approved container (see below)
2. the container is enclosed in a zip-lock bag
3. the container is not leaking
4. the container is sent in an undamaged carrier lined with a blood tube foam liner
5. it is not a non-allowable specimen (see below)
6. all applicable requirements for the labeling of the specimen have been met.

B. Specimen Containers

The types of specimen containers which can presently be sent via the PTS are:

1. vacutainer tubes and
2. plastic screw-cap 16 mm test tubes in which urine specimens may be submitted.

Be certain that these containers are tightly capped before sending via the PTS.

C. Non-allowable Specimen

1. Any tissue specimen
2. Feces
3. Spinal fluid or any other fluid difficult to recollect or that can’t be replaced. Note: This may include blood on certain patients.
4. Any specimen requiring special and/or rapid transport to the laboratory; examples include blood for lactic acid and ammonia (both of which must be taken to the laboratory immediately on ice) and blood for cold agglutins and cryoglobulins (both of which must be taken to the laboratory immediately at body temperature).
5. Specimens in blood culture bottles, respiratory collection containers, and any other containers that do not fit the specially padded pneumatic tub carriers, must be hand carried to the Laboratory office (E2-6).
6. Any specimen containing formalin.
7. Any muscle or nerve specimen.

**Normal business hours: Call for immediate pick up (54496 or 58450)**
**All other times: Page Anatomic Pathology Resident on call**

D. If leakage has occurred and is contained within the zip-lock bag, nursing service will be notified by the laboratory staff to recollect the specimen. If the specimen is deemed irreplaceable, upon laboratory receipt of an approved waiver, the specimen will be processed.

E. If the inside of the PTS carrier is contaminated by blood or body fluids it must be cleaned and disinfected prior to return to use in the PTS. Refer to the Infection Control BIT for cleaning of blood/body fluid spills.

F. If the outside of the PTS carrier is contaminated by blood or body fluids, contact Bio-Medical Engineering for assessment and possible decontamination of the PTS.

**NOTE:** Biohazard labels are not used for any patient specimen. Standard precautions for infection control mandate the handling of all blood and body fluids with the same appropriate infection control measures.

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Administrator

2/21/12

Date

Approved by Clinical Board: 1/12/01, 2/17/04, 3/20/07, 4/20/10, 2/21/12
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