

TML\MSH Microbiology Department Policy & Procedure Manual	Policy # MI\LS\22\v02	Page 1 of 2
Section: Laboratory Safety Manual	Subject Title: Transportation of Specimens	
Issued by: LABORATORY MANAGER	Original Date: April 20, 2001	
Approved by: Laboratory Director	Revision Date: October 22, 2003	

Policy:

All specimens transferred between laboratory sites of the TML/ MSH Microbiology Department and the client hospitals are transported by MDS Courier Services or other designated courier systems. All specimens are transported in accordance to the policy for Transportation of Dangerous Goods and Material.

Purpose:

This policy ensures the safe transportation of specimens and minimizes potential biohazards to staff handling the specimens.

Responsibility:

Management and employees

Key Elements:

- Internal Transportation
- Site to site Transportation
- Receiving of Transported Specimens

Related Documents:

General Information: Transport of Specimens	MI\GEN\07\v01

Procedure:

Internal Transportation

1. All specimens must be placed into leak-proof non-breakable containers and labeled in accordance with W.H.M.I.S. guidelines.
2. Assure that specimen containers are securely closed and clean on the outside (if not, wipe with alcohol).
3. Personnel must be trained in the safe handling practices and decontamination of spills in accordance with the Hospital's Spills Policy
4. Specimens, in their leak proof containers, must be placed into a sealable secondary container, which will contain the specimen if the primary container breaks in transit (eg. plastic zip lock bags).
5. Laboratory requisitions must be protected from contamination. If necessary, put in to a separate bag or container. Do not place requisition in same bag as specimen
6. Hold specimens in the designated holding area at the nursing station until pickup.
7. Do not send specimens with needles attached to any lab, these will not be processed.

TML\MSH Microbiology Department Policy & Procedure Manual	Policy # MI\LS\22\v02	Page 2 of 2
Laboratory Safety Manual		

Procedure:

Site to Site Transportation

1. Specimens in biohazard bags are placed in rigid, leak proof containers. Place vacutainer tubes or universal containers for other body fluids and/or pathological specimens into a foam insert. The foam insert restricts the specimens from contact with each other and will absorb any liquid should breakage occur during transit.
2. Place the foam inserts into leak proof plastic containers with a rubber seal.
3. Place the plastic containers into a MDS Transport box with a zipper closure.
 - **Blue boxes** are designated for the transport of virology, serology and parasitology specimens to the TML site at St. Patrick Street
 - **Yellow boxes** are designated for the transportation of Bacteriology specimens to the Mount Sinai Hospital site.
4. Insert an “Infectious Substance” label into the clear plastic holder on top of the box.
5. Place a colored card into the box indicating the time the box was prepared for transport and the employee who packed the box.

Receiving of Transported Specimens

1. At the receiving end remove the first card and keep in a storage file. Place a second colored card with staff initial and a time stamp in the box to verify that the box has been emptied. Check that all specimens have been removed from the carrier box.
2. Where large numbers of specimens are received, a separate designated area must be provided for their receipt. In a small facility this may be part of a laboratory.
3. Appropriate gloves must be worn when handling all specimens. Gloves should be discarded before answering phone or opening doors.
4. All packages received via mail, air freight or common carrier must be opened in a biological safety cabinet.
5. Personnel must be trained in the safe handling practices and decontamination of spills in accordance with the Hospital's Spills Policy.
6. 1% hypochlorite must be used to wipe contaminated tubes.
7. Visibly contaminated laboratory requisitions must be discarded and replaced.
8. Tubes must be stoppered while centrifuged. Aerosol containment buckets must be used.