**Anatomic Pathology**

**Guidelines for Pathology Tissue Specimens**

1. A requisition form must be submitted with every tissue specimen. The requisition is either produced by the client EMR system or the “Tissue Examination Request Form” (UWH #1280033, Rev. 5/29/20 by Meriter) supplied by Meriter Laboratories (ML).
2. *Specimens from the Operating Rooms/Medical Imaging:*
3. All patient data requested on the requisition should be filled in, including preoperative and postoperative diagnoses. The requisition must have the surgeon’s name printed in the correct space.
4. All containers must be properly labeled with the patient’s identification label. The label must be affixed to the face (side) of the specimen container.
5. The following specimen containers are available:
   1. Bottle with fixative – use for small specimens where size permits.
   2. Multi-purpose containers – assorted sizes are available.
6. All Specimen containers are to be put into a specimen bag with an attached pouch. This pouch is where the tissue requisition is to be placed. This will keep the specimen container and requisition together and keep the requisition from being contaminated. Most containers will fit in the various size bags that are available from the Meriter storeroom. The use of this bag with the pouch is mandatory for infection control and to keep specimens and requisitions together as they are transported through the processing system.

**NOTE:** Writing on the container lids or wrapping the requisition form around the specimens without a label being affixed to the container is not sufficient to ensure proper identification. These specimens will require proper identification prior to being processed for analysis. **Plastic bags are not to be used as the primary specimen container.**

1. **Limbs for examination should be refrigerated. The limb should be placed in multiple plastic bags and sealed tightly. The requisition should stay with the specimen and may be attached to the outside of the bag.**
2. *Frozen Sections*
   1. **Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4:30 pm:** If there is not a pathologist already in the fourth floor Pathology Laboratory (where frozen sections are performed), page the pathologist at 129-1331 at least 10 minutes before the tissue is to be delivered. If there is no response to the page, call Client Services at 608-417-6529.
   2. **Evenings, weekends, holidays**: Page the pathologist on call via UWH messaging at 608-262-2122. Ask to page “Pathology Meriter Frozen” and provide OR callback number. Notify Specimen Processing at extension 7-7794 for specimen transport.
      1. Fresh tissue is brought to the fourth floor Pathology Laboratory for frozen section accompanied by a completed Histopathology Requisition as produced by your EMR.
      2. The specimen should be logged in according to the information located in the log book in the fourth floor Pathology Laboratory.
      3. **Specimens for frozen section exam should not be placed in fixative**. For transportation purposes, however, they must be covered in a manner consistent with proper infection control practices.
      4. All specimens submitted for frozen section exam will also be processed routinely.
3. *Breast Specimens*:
   1. Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4:30 pm: page the pathologist at 129-1331.
   2. Evenings, weekends, holidays: Place specimen in formalin and document time on breast triage sticker and affix to container.
   3. The volume of formalin should be 1:20 ratio.
   4. In cases where margins are important, place sutures at margins with explanatory note.
4. *Special Studies Requests*:
   1. The pathologist must be contacted immediately for any special studies that may be requested on a specimen. Do not put the tissue into fixative or any other solution until the pathologist is contacted and has indicated the correct solution to use. (Many special studies cannot be performed on formalin-fixed tissue.)
   2. Indicate what type of special studies being requested.
   3. If a pathologist cannot be contacted, call Client Services at 608-417-6529 for information. The tissue may be put in a saline solution only and refrigerated until a pathologist is contacted.
   4. If special studies on tissue are going to be sent out to a reference laboratory (i.e. genetic studies, muscle or nerve biopsy, etc.) these specimens must go through the ML Laboratory. They will be recorded and sent out to the laboratory as requested. **Specimens should never be sent out before being processed through the ML Laboratory.**
   5. **If a specimen is to have a microbiology study done also, write “Microbiology Also” on the requisition. Do not place in formalin.**
5. *Specimens from Meriter Hospital*:
   1. All specimens should be submitted directly to ML Specimen Processing via direct handoff, pneumatic tube, or 4T Frozen Section room.
   2. All patient data requested on the requisition should be filled in, including diagnosis and the requesting physician.
   3. Bottles with fixative and other muti-purpose specimen containers, including cytogenetic tissue media, are available from ML Specimen Processing or Client Services.
   4. All containers must be properly labeled with the patient’s identification label. The label must be affixed to the face of the specimen container. The container is to be put in a plastic biohazard bag. The requisition is to be put in the pouch (not with the specimen). Do not write on the container lids or wrap the requisition form around the specimen. A label must be affixed to the container to ensure proper identification.
   5. All specimens from isolation patients should be labeled, put in a fluid-tight container and then placed into the plastic biohazard bag. (Biohazard bags are not to be used as the primary specimen containers.)
6. *Specimens from Clinics or Outside Hospitals*:
   1. All specimens are submitted to Meriter Laboratories.
   2. All patient data requested on the requisition should be filled in, including diagnosis and requesting physician.
   3. Bottles with fixatives and other multi-purpose specimen containers are supplied by ML.
   4. All containers must be properly labeled with the patient’s identification label. The label must be affixed to the face of the specimen container. The container is to be put in a plastic biohazard bag. The requisition is to be put in the pouch. Do not write on the container lids or wrap the requisition form around the specimen container.
   5. All specimens from isolation patients should be labeled, put in a fluid-tight container, and then placed into the plastic biohazard bag. (Biohazard bags are not to be used as the primary specimen containers.)

**Specimen Collection, Tissue**

ML provides 120-mL, screw-capped, plastic-top containers with no preservative which may be used for pathology specimens. ML also provides prefilled 20-mL, 40-mL, 60-mL and 120-mL bottles with formalin for pathology specimens (formalin label attached).

**Specimen Labeling**

In order to maintain a high standard of clinical laboratory service and quality patient care, all specimens submitted to ML must be properly labeled and accompanied by a completed requisition or electronic order. Every specimen tube, slide, or container submitted to ML must be properly labeled with the **two patient specific identifiers** on the tube or container (not the lid).

Patient Specific Identifiers include but are not limited to:

* Patient full name (first and last)
* Date of Birth
* Requisition Number
* Medical Record Number

The date and time of collection and the origin (source) of the specimen, when applicable, must also be included. Please identify all tubes and containers using these labels. The patient’s name as it appears on the specimen tube, slide, or container **must** be written exactly as it appears on the test requisition or within the electronic order.

Specimens drawn for compatibility testing or for blood products require a Meriter Hospital key number arm band or a Typenex (red band) key number arm band for outpatient/reference samples collected. The patient medical record number serves as the key number for Meriter inpatients. The key number arm band must be worn by the patient, and the key number must appear on all specimens drawn for compatibility testing. See Transfusion Service in General Information.

Common labeling errors that delay testing include:

* Labeling specimen with patient’s last name only
* Name on tube, slide or container is not written exactly as it appears on the requisition
* Names of tests written on the specimen container or tube do not match the tests requested on the requisition
* No label

If the identifying information is in question, ML will contact the client and encourage redrawing the specimen before proceeding with testing. If redrawing is not possible due to unstable or impossible to duplicate specimens, such as timed specimens and tissues, testing will be performed and results held until verbal authorization has been received. The final report will include a comment indicating that the specimen identity needed verification after receipt in the laboratory.