

## Delivering Specimens to the Laboratory

### I. SPECIMEN PICK-UP BOX

After obtaining and identifying the specimen, completing the Laboratory Requisition Form with all information required and marking all requested tests on the form, place specimen in a biohazard plastic bag. The requisition must be placed in an **outside** pocket or attached by rubber band or tape to the outside of the bag. **Do not staple the requisition to the bag.**

To avoid contamination of the requisition, **do not place the requisition in the bag with the specimen.** Place the sealed bag in the Specimen Pick-Up Box located on each nursing or clinic location.

### II. ZSFG MESSENGER SERVICE PICK-UP

Specimens will be picked up by the ZSFG Messenger Service according to the schedule listed at the bottom of this page and delivered to the Laboratory for processing. Specimens obtained after regularly scheduled pick-ups must be sent to the lab by special messenger or ward personnel.

### III. "STAT" SPECIMENS

STAT specimens collected at times when the ZSFG Messenger Service is not available must be delivered to the Clinical Laboratory (2M) by special messenger, physician, nursing staff, or other personnel. Most samples for STAT testing can be sent through the pneumatic tube system. See the table of [EMERGENCY TESTS](#) in the section on Emergency (STAT) Services for further guidance on specimen types that may be sent, and corresponding pneumatic tube station numbers.

### IV. HIV, HCV, HBV VIRAL LOAD TEST

HIV Viral Load tests must be delivered to the Clinical Laboratory Specimen Processing Area for separation of plasma from cells within four hours after collection (collect two 5 mL EDTA-PPT tubes).

### V. TESTS NOT PERFORMED BY THE CLINICAL LABORATORY

Do not send specimens for Public Health or Anatomic Pathology to the Clinical Laboratory. They will be returned to the originator via messenger service.

### VI. EXTERNALLY CONTAMINATED SPECIMENS

Hospital employees who handle laboratory specimens have relatively high rates of work-related hepatitis. Loosely-capped containers and soiled requisitions pose a significant risk to all who come in contact with these contaminated materials. Messengers and laboratory staff are instructed to refuse soiled leaking containers and/or soiled requisitions. These

specimens will be recorded in the computer.

#### VII. PNEUMATIC TUBE SYSTEM:

With specially designed specimen carrier inserts, the pneumatic tube system may be used to send most Routine and STAT blood specimens directly to the Laboratory at a designated tube station number. This system is much faster than messenger service.

##### Clinical Laboratory Pneumatic Tube Stations

Specimen Type	PT Station
Specimens for Microbiology Testing	23
Blood Specimens for General Laboratory Testing	21
Blood Specimens for Blood Bank	100

SPECIMENS that **CAN** be sent through the pneumatic tube include:

- Most blood specimens (except for specimens for PTH, specimens on ice, etc. check lab manual: <http://labmed.ucsf.edu/sfghlab/> and see below.)
- Only urine specimens collected in a special urine collection tube (example below):



- Blood cultures except for AFB/Fungal (see below) - send to PT station #23
- Sputum in CUPS except those collected in ET tubes (see below) - send to PT station #23
- Swabs – send to PT station #23
- Lavender specimen for Malaria- send immediately to PT station #23
- Vaginal Wet Mount in the appropriate collection tube- send to PT station #21

SPECIMENS that **CANNOT** be sent through the pneumatic tube include:

- Urine specimens in **Urine CUPS**
- Any specimens **ON ICE**
- Any specimens in an endotracheal tube (ET)
- Any specimens transported in a syringe
- Any specimens requiring special handling; e.g., kept at 37°C.
- Any samples in pediatric bullets, i.e. infant heel sticks
- Blood gases/ Co-ox tests
- AFB/Fungal blood cultures (collected in yellow **glass** SPS tubes)
- Stool specimens
- Body fluids (CSF, synovial, pleural, peritoneal, pericardial, gastric and ascitic fluids, aspirates, bronchoalveolar lavage, washes, drainage, etc.)
- Blood specimens from a difficult stick

## SPECIMEN PICK-UP SCHEDULE – PATIENT UNITS ZSFG MESSENGER SERVICE

Monday – Friday			Saturday, Sunday, Holidays		
Route	Start Time	Service	Route	Start Time	Service
	7:30 AM	Specimen pick-up		8:15 AM	Specimen pick-up
	10:00 AM	Specimen pick-up		10:30 AM	Specimen pick-up
	11:30 AM	Specimen pick-up			
	1:00 PM	Specimen pick-up		1:30 PM	Specimen pick-up
	2:30 PM	Specimen pick-up			
	4:30 PM	Specimen pick-up			
	6:00 PM	Specimen pick-up		6:00 PM	Specimen pick-up. Lab Report delivery
	8:00 PM	Specimen pick-up		8:00 PM	Specimen pick-up
	10:00 PM	Specimen pick-up		10:00 PM	Specimen pick-up
3:00 AM	Specimen pick-up, ED, 4E, 5E, 5R		No weekend/holiday service at 3:00 AM		

- Due to the number of stops on the route, a routine run takes 35 minutes from location to Laboratory.
- STAT Service Phone: Ext. 68010. If no answer call Operator and state message CLEARLY.
- All service calls for messenger services must go through the Operators.
- Monday - Friday, 4 PM - 7 AM: Call Operator Saturday, Sunday and Holidays: Call Operator The Operator will page the messenger.