

Specimen Transport

Guidelines for Specimen Preparation and Storage for Courier Pick Up

Introduction

Clinical laboratory specimens must be stored and transported at proper temperatures in order to preserve the viability and integrity of the specimen. This section of the Directory provides instructions for the preparation and transportation of specimens when the specimens are picked up at the providers' facility by employed and/or contracted courier services and delivered directly to Indiana University Health Pathology Laboratory (IUHPL).

Scope

This procedure does not cover the requirements for packing, labeling, and documenting of biological materials for commercial carriers (e.g., Postal Service, UPS, Fed-Ex, etc.) and cannot be used as proof of training for that purpose. The federal regulation covering the requirements is the Federal Department of Transportation (DOT); 49 CFR 170-185. More information can be found at:

http://www.phmsa.dot.gov/staticfiles/PHMSA/DownloadableFiles/Files/Transporting_Infectious_Substances_brochure.pdf

Definitions

GEL PACK: a small plastic pack that contains a special gel designed to hold its temperature for extended periods of time.

SPECIMEN TOTE: a small vinyl fabric zippered pouch designed to hold and maintain specimen temperature for several hours.

Quality Assurance

- Clients will be notified if any of the following should occur:
 - Inappropriately labeled specimens
 - Incomplete or incorrect requisitions
 - Improperly stored/packed specimens
 - Quality of sample which may impact the ability to do testing or impact the reliability of patient test result
 - Receiving lab makes an error in processing
 - Receiving lab reports broken sample/leak
 - Receiving lab loses/misplaces specimen
- Other training will be offered if Client has new personnel or procedural changes are needed.

Procedure

Specimen Transport Temperature Requirements

Consult the IU Health Pathology Laboratory Directory of Service (www.iuhealth.net/pathologylab) for determining the proper transport temperature of each specimen.

Preparation of Specimen Totes and Gel Packs

1. The large Gel Packs will be used to keep **refrigerated specimens** cool. Keep Gel Packs for refrigerated specimens in refrigerator (DO NOT PLACE IN FREEZER) over night or until it reaches 35°F (2°C),
2. To prepare the Frozen Specimen Tote, place the Gel Packs from the white vinyl specimen tote(s) in a freezer over night or until they reach -4°F (-20°C),

3. To prepare the Room Temp Specimen Tote, place the blue vinyl tote with gel packs on a counter or shelf in a 68-77°F (20-25°C) room.

Refrigerated Specimens

1. After collection and processing, place specimen(s) in a biohazard specimen bag with the lab requisition in the outer sleeve,
2. Store sample in a refrigerator that is 35°F (2°C) and leave in the refrigerator until the IUHPL courier arrives to take delivery of the specimen or until it is time to place specimen(s) in the IUHPL specimen lockbox,
3. If refrigerated specimens must be placed in the IUHPL lockbox, place all of refrigerated specimens in a large biohazard bag. Next, place the biohazard bag containing the refrigerated specimens in the bottom of the lockbox,
4. Place the 2 large or 4 small refrigerated Gel Packs on top of the biohazard bag containing the refrigerated specimens.

Room Temperature (Ambient) Specimens

1. After collection, place specimen(s) in a biohazard specimen bag with the lab requisition in the outer sleeve,
2. Store sample on a counter or shelf where the temperature is 68-77°F (20-25°C) until the IUHPL courier arrives to take delivery of the specimen(s) or until it is time to place specimen(s) in the IUHPL specimen lockbox,
3. If the Room Temp specimen(s) must be placed in the IUHPL lockbox, place the specimen(s) in the blue vinyl specimen tote designated “Room Temp”,
4. Place the Room Temp tote in the lockbox. If there are refrigerated samples in the lock box, place the blue room temp specimen tote on top of the refrigerated specimens.

Frozen Specimens

1. After collection and processing, place specimen(s) in a biohazard specimen bag with the lab requisition in the outer sleeve,
2. Store the specimen(s) in a -4°F (-20°C) freezer until the IUHPL courier arrives to take delivery of the specimen(s) or until it is time to place specimen(s) in the IUHPL lockbox,
3. If the Frozen specimen(s) must be placed in the IUHPL lockbox, place the frozen gel packs in the inner pockets of the white specimen tote
4. Place the frozen specimen(s) in the white specimen tote designated “Frozen”,
5. Place the white frozen specimen tote in the IUHPL lockbox. If there are refrigerated specimens in the lock box, place the white frozen specimen tote on top the refrigerated specimens.