

**SAHTU HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE AUTHORITY**  
**Policy**

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**TRANSPORTATION OF  
LABORATORY SPECIMENS**

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**POLICY:**

All laboratory specimens including blood, serum, swabs and smears are transported from the Community Health Centre to the laboratory in a safe, responsible and expeditious manner using the following criteria to determine shipping frequency and urgency: **Client Safety, Service Excellence, and Fiscal Responsibility**. Staff are cognizant of the Dangerous Goods legislation which govern the transportation of these substances.

**PURPOSE:**

To ensure all specimens arrive at the laboratory intact, with no breakage or leakage from the mailing container.

To expedite the transport of specimens and ensure they arrive at the laboratory in a time frame which allows for accurate results to be provided.

To ensure that no individual handling specimens is exposed to infectious or biohazardous material.

Reference:

Dynacare Kasper Medical Laboratory Manuel  
[www.dkml.com](http://www.dkml.com)

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#### PROCEDURE:

The Community Health Nurse ensures that:

1. All specimens are correctly labelled with:

Patient's name  
Date and time specimen taken  
Patient's DOB and/or Health Care number  
Source

All specimens are accompanied by the appropriate requisition, correctly completed.

3. Requisitions include the following information:

Name of patient  
Date of birth  
Health Care Number  
Date  
Community Health Centre  
Diagnosis and Treatment (drugs)  
Tests required

4. Requisitions currently in use:

DKML Biochemistry, Microbiology, Cytology requisition  
Canadian Blood Services Perinatal Follow up requisition  
Prenatal Testing – Initial Screen + Follow up.

5. All laboratory specimens are packaged in a safe and responsible manner as detailed below:

- a. Blood specimens

Blood to be in containers of 10 mL capacity or less with leakproof stoppers (such as vacutainer collection tubes or plastic vials with leakproof caps).

Sufficient packing material to absorb the total volume of liquid must surround each specimen to ensure no leakage occurs in the event of damage.

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**Procedure continue:**

Place specimen in a sealed Biohazard bag with each client individually .

Specimen containers to be further enclosed in leakproof containers (hard plastic).

The plastic container should then be enclosed in the designated cardboard transportation box.

b. Smears

Glass slides are placed in plastic slide container and closed.

Cardboard Slide containers to be further enclosed in sealed Biohazard bag.

c. Swabs

Swabs are encased in their own plastic covers and placed in a sealed Biohazard bag. box.  
All specimens are placed in cardboard Transportation Box.

6. Laboratory requisitions accompany the specimens in the pouch of the Biohazard bag. They are not wrapped around the specimen.

7. Specimens are sent to the Laboratory, DKML via Air Cargo as soon as possible after collection. Fax the shipment notification form to DKML.

**NOTE:**

Neisseria gonorrhoea, trichomonas, haemoglobin, red blood cells, white blood cells, cell enzymes and most chemistry levels start to deteriorate after 24 hours. Serum for chemistry analysis may be frozen until shipped. With bacterial swabs, the normal flora will begin to overgrow the infection- causing bacteria within a 24-hour period.

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Procedure Continue:

8. Specimens containing known infectious substances are packaged as previously outlined and the transport box labelled infectious as per Dangerous Goods Transport specifications. INFECTIOUS labels are placed on:

- 1) Specimen
- 2) Requisition
- 3) Inner plastic bag
- 4) Outer cardboard container

**NOTE:**

A shipper's declaration of Dangerous Goods must be filled out for infectious specimens.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Laboratory results are relayed to Health Centres by FAX from the laboratory. Critical Values are relayed by telephone.

If a specimen is unable to be analyzed for any reason (i.e., sample improperly taken, incorrect tube used, breakage or delay in receiving), the Laboratory contacts the Health Centre by telephone with an explanation of why the specimen was not analyzed and a subsequent plan of action will be made.

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Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_



**Chad Fehr, CEO**