

BASSETT MEDICAL CENTER POLICY		DEPARTMENT (S): Laboratory	REVISION: #3 - 2021	POLICY #: 120-CL
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TITLE: Handling and Transportation of Laboratory Specimens			PAGE #: 1 of 3	

KEY WORDS

- |             |                                       |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Specimen | 3. Transport                          |
| 2. Courier  | 4. Protected Health Information (PHI) |

A. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

Specimens for laboratory analysis must be transported following Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) and Department of Transportation (DOT) guidelines for Blood Borne Pathogens, and handled in a manner to maintain specimen integrity and suitability for analysis.

B. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Bassett.

C. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Network Director, Laboratory is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

D. POLICY ELEMENTS

1. Annual blood borne pathogens training is required for all persons handling and transporting specimens, including contracted couriers.
2. Specimens transported throughout the Cooperstown Campus should be transported as follows:
  - a. Before being transported, the primary container (blood tube, specimen cup) must be placed into an approved plastic ZipLoc bag, which is able to contain the specimen(s) if the primary container(s) were to break or leak in transit to the laboratory.
  - b. Any accompanying paperwork and additional labels should be protected from contamination by placing it in the front pocket of the specimen transport bag.
  - c. The person who collected the specimen(s) or their designee will send the specimen to the lab either using the pneumatic tube system (PTS), the clinic dumbwaiter or by contacting Transport.
    - 1) When transporting any specimens through the PTS, follow Policy 37-FAC, Pneumatic Tube System Operation and Maintenance [Pneumatic Tube System Operation and Maintenance \(37-FAC\)](#).
    - 2) Specimens transported from sites within the clinic building can be sent through the dumbwaiter. If the specimen is ordered as a STAT, it must be placed in the designated STAT container in the dumbwaiter. Routine specimens are to be placed in the rigid container on the bottom section of the dumbwaiter. The top section of the dumbwaiter is reserved for sending supplies to clinic areas and should not be used to transport specimens.
  - d. Specimens must be transported to lab within one hour of collection.

3. Specimens from regional or affiliate sites are transported as follows:
  - a. Specimens that are to be transported from regional facility must be placed in a specimen transport bag, which is then placed in a rigid transport container (in the appropriate temperature section) with a secured lid for transport to the laboratory.
  - b. All specimens being forwarded must be included in a shipping batch or manual courier log if the order cannot be electronically entered.
  - c. The contracted courier service has scheduled routine pickups at every regional and affiliate site. It is the responsibility of the originating site to contact the courier for a STAT or unscheduled courier pickup when necessary.
  - d. Each site is responsible for assuring that the courier has placed the specimen in the appropriate temperature transport container before signing off on the courier sheet. Couriers must also have appropriate spill kits for all transports.
  - e. All specimens must be secured during transport process to adhere to physical safeguard requirements.
  
4. Transport of specimens by employees in private vehicles:
  - a. Any staff transporting specimens in a private vehicle must have documented DOT Hazardous Materials, Blood Borne Pathogens and specimen transport training.
  - b. Specimens should be transported via the contracted courier service whenever possible. However, it is recognized that there are times this is not possible due to timeliness of courier scheduled runs vs. specimen integrity.
  - c. When lab specimens are transported across a public street or highway, they are covered by the DOT requirements. This means they must be boxed and labeled appropriately for a biological specimen. Coolers with the biohazard label on them that are secured in the car (usually on the floor of the back seat) will meet those requirements. A spill kit with appropriate disinfectant and absorbent material adequate to absorb the spill must be readily available.
  - d. Transport containers must be validated by the laboratory that they maintain the appropriate temperature for the duration of the transport prior to them being placed in service. Contact the laboratory for ordering information for validated containers.

E. COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated via email to all Managers, Directors, Chiefs of Service and Executive Operations Team members.

F. DISTRIBUTION

This policy will be placed online in the Administrative Policy Manual.

G. ENFORCEMENT

The Network Laboratory Director is responsible for compliance with this policy.

H. REVISION

The Network Laboratory Director is responsible for making revisions to this policy.

I. REFERENCES

1. IATA Packing Instruction 650 - Biological Substances, Category B  
([http://www.iata.org/NR/rdonlyres/9C7E382B-2536-47CE-84B4-9A883ECFA040/0/Guidance\\_Doc62DGR\\_50.pdf](http://www.iata.org/NR/rdonlyres/9C7E382B-2536-47CE-84B4-9A883ECFA040/0/Guidance_Doc62DGR_50.pdf))
2. DOT 49 CFR Parts 171-180 ([http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title49/49cfrv2\\_02.tpl](http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title49/49cfrv2_02.tpl))