

# Specimen Transport Procedures and Policies

## Specimen Transportation in Secondary Containers

This procedure describes the requirements for clinical specimen transport in secondary containers (ie, bagging) following the OSHA guidelines for blood-borne pathogens.

1. Ziploc® bags are the only acceptable bags for specimen transport (bags with twist ties are not acceptable).
2. Only one patient's specimen(s) is allowed per bag.
3. Ensure that screw cap specimen containers are tight before placing the specimen in the bag.
4. Blood, urine, and other body fluid containers must be placed in separate bags.
5. Requisitions/transmittal forms for the specimen(s) in the bag must be secured to the **outside** of the bag with rubber bands.

## Special Considerations

1. **Specimens on Ice:** The specimen should be first placed in the bag, then the bag may be placed in the container of ice (larger bag or cup). The requisition is attached to the outside of the second bag or container. Do not add ice to the bag containing the specimen.
2. **Large Containers:** Specimens in containers larger than urine cups should not be bagged (ie, 24-hour urine containers).
3. **Specimens Not Requiring Bagging:** Dry smears in cardboard/paper envelopes or plastic slide containers.

## SPECIMEN TRANSPORTATION METHODS

**Pneumatic Tube:** The pneumatic tube system is connected to Laboratory Specimen Receiving Areas from a variety of different clinical units within VCUHS. These rapid transportation systems should be used whenever possible to transport stat specimens, but may also be effective for routine specimens. The requirement for specimen transport via these systems is that the specimen must be of an appropriate size to fit in the carriers, and the specimen, if fluid, must be in a leakproof container. Adequate packing material must be used to protect the enclosed specimens during transportation in these systems. Specimens in Luken's traps may leak in the pneumatic tube system. There are two pneumatic

## Specimen Transport Procedures and Policies

tube systems in use with different capabilities. Please refer to specific instructions posted at each station.

**Phlebotomy Service:** All phlebotomy services are responsible for the delivery of all specimens that they collect at each location. The timing of this delivery may be dependent on the phlebotomist's schedule and location. The use of phlebotomy services for procurement of specimens is encouraged by the laboratory, since the proper transportation time and conditions are the responsibility of the phlebotomist.

**VCUHS Patient Transportation Services:** The use of Transportation Service is available for the transportation of specimens to the Laboratory Specimen Receiving Areas. Contact this service for the details of their schedule of service and their transportation procedures and policies. Transportation Service is responsible for the proper transportation time and conditions.

*Direct Delivery:* The direct delivery of specimens by the person collecting the specimen is always an option. This mode of transportation is required for stat specimens if a pneumatic tube system is not available. The responsibility for the proper transportation time and conditions is the responsibility of the delivering person.