HEALTH HOLDING

HAFER ALBATIN HEALTH CLUSTER
MATERNITY AND
CHILDREN HOSPITAL

Department:	Laboratory and Blood Bank		
Document:	Multidisciplinary Policy and Procedure		
Title:	Sample Packing, Handling, Transportation and Tracking		
Applies To:	All Laboratory, Blood Bank Staff, Nursing Staff and Phlebotomists		
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1. PURPOSE:

1.1 Proper specimen is submitted to provide quality results to patients by standardizing the process for proper and safe packing and transporting specimens to the laboratory from specimen collection areas.

2. DEFINITION:

N/A

3. POLICY:

3.1 All specimens should be regarded as potentially hazardous and infectious. Hence all laboratory specimens are properly handled during package and transportation in such a manner that they present no threat to those sending, transporting or receiving them.

4. PROCEDURE:

4.1 **Packing instructions** (Always use biohazard leak-proof screw capped containers for non-blood specimens like urine, sputum etc.):

4.1.1 STAT Specimens:

4.1.1.1 The request form should be marked as STAT.

4.1.1.2 If the specimen is from the Emergency Room, put Emergency Room stamp on the request form.

4.1.2 Place single or multiple specimens collected from one patient into the zip lock compartment of a plastic biohazard bag and seal the zip. Tighten the lid of non-blood specimen containers (e.g. urine container) before placing them into the biohazard bag to avoid leakage.

4.1.2.1 Place multiple blood specimens from a single patient into a single biohazard bag.

4.1.2.2 Place other types of specimen, such as urine, sputum, stool, or Microbiology swabs into a separate biohazard bags.

4.1.2.3 Staple same-patient biohazard bags together.

4.1.2.4 Plastic bottles for 24 hours urine specimen: place the screw cap lid tightly and place it in a large biohazard bag.

4.1.2.5 Specimens that must be protected from light: wrap the containers in an aluminium foil and place them in a biohazard bag.

4.1.2.6 The request form (doctor's order) will be placed in the outer pocket of the biohazard bag.

4.1.2.7 Safe package and transportation of specimens consist of three layers as follows.

4.1.3 Primary receptacle: A labelled primary, water-resistant, leak-proof receptacle containing the specimen (e.g., blood collection tubes, urine and other body fluid containers).

4.1.3.1 Secondary receptacle: A plastic, water-resistant, zip-lock type biohazard bag that encloses and protects the specimen containers. Information concerning the enclosed specimen such as request form will be enclosed in the outer pocket of the biohazard bag.

4.1.3.2 Outer shipping package: A rigid outer shipping package with ice packs to maintain refrigerated temperatures ranging between 4^{0}C and 8^{0}C and to protect its contents from outside influences such as physical damage and change in temperature.

4.2 **Personnel training** (including safety and proper packaging) :

4.2.1 All members of staff involved in the collecting, handling and transporting specimens (e.g., Phlebotomists, Nurses, Porters and Couriers) are trained to follow infection control precautions to prevent transmission of infection.

4.2.2 Specimen collection may take place in the Outpatient Departments, Inpatient Units/Wards, Department of Emergency Department and Primary Health Care clinics.

4.2.3 Specimen collection is done by either a phlebotomist and/or nurse, after positive patient identification.

4.2.4 All involved staff trained how to safely handle clinical specimens and how to avoid any spillage or leakage of specimen.

4.2.5 The staff member assembling the specimen for packing will wear relative Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for protection.

4.2.6 Infectious specimens (category A) (e.g., specimens suspected for tuberculosis (T.B), will be packaged by using a triple bag system or in a biohazard-labelled plastic box.

4.3 **Specimen tracking system :**

4.3.1 Temperatures for specimen storage and transport:

4.3.1.1 For accurate results, the laboratory will receive specimens as soon as possible, i.e., with in at least 2 hours of collection.

4.3.1.2 The containers designated for transportation of laboratory specimens should never be used for transportation of any other items and will be discarded if it becomes visibly soiled.

4.3.2 Transport of specimen by hand:

4.3.2.1 From the hospital units/wards and OPD, nurses or porters will hand carry different specimens placed in zip-lock biohazard bags in a rigid biohazard labelled box to the laboratory reception where the laboratory receptionist /technical assistant will receive them.

4.3.2.2 All microbiological specimens (CSF, blood cultures, body fluids, urine, sputum etc.) and surgical specimens (body tissues and organs) are accompanied by a logbook in which the lab. Receptionist or phlebotomist will sign upon receipt of specimen.

4.3.2.3 Histopathology specimens are transported in 10% Formal saline solution.

4.3.2.4 Transportation of specimens to King Faisal Specialist Hospital (KFSH) and Covid 19 specimens to Hafar Albatin Regional Llaboratory is through SAMSA courier company.

4.3.2.4.1 SAMSA courier must use special rigid box or container for transport of specimens that will keep the specimen safe during the transit.

4.3.2.4.2 Transport boxes used by SAMSA courier must be strong enough to withstand the shocks and loadings normally encountered during transport including manual or mechanical handling.

4.3.2.4.3 All shipment/transport boxes should be appropriately labelled to identify their contents. Packages are firmly closed and sealed so as to prevent any loss of contents during transportation that might be caused by vibration, changes in temperatures and changes in humidity or pressure.

4.3.2.4.4 SAMSA courier service personnel are informed about the appropriate temperature storage and if courier services have refrigerators or freezers at their centres, can be used to store the boxes until their shipment time.

4.3.2.5 Transportation to Hafar Al-Batin regional laboratory & King Khalid General Hospital laboratory and Al-Damam regional laboratory through internal transportation of Hafar Al-Batin MCH by the same precautions done by SAMSA courier.

5. MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT:

N/A

6. RESPONSIBILITIES:

6.1 Laboratory Director
6.2 Lab. Chief Technologist
6.3 Lab. Quality Assurance Officer
6.4 Laboratory coordinator for Referral Laboratory
6.5 Phlebotomists, Nurses, Porters and all Laboratory staff are responsible for complying with this policy and procedure

7. APPENDICES:

N/A

8. REFERENCES:

8.1 Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI); Protection of Laboratory Workers from Occupationally Acquired Infections; Approved Guidelines –Third Edition; M29-A3: Volume 25 Number 10; Pennsylvania, USA; 2005.
8.2 Laboratory Bio-safety Manual. 3rd Edition, 2004, WHO.

9. APPROVALS:

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