

TML/MSH Department of Microbiology Quality Manual	Policy QPCMI06001.01	Page 1 of 6
Section: Microbiology Lab Specimen Management Manual	Subject Title: Specimen Rejection Criteria	
Prepared by: QA Committee	Original Date: March 1, 2003	
Issued by: Laboratory Manager	Revision Date: December 17, 2003	
Approved by: Laboratory Director	Annual Review Date:	

SPECIMEN REJECTION CRITERIA

LEAKING SPECIMENS

Leaking specimens pose a problem in microbiological specimens since they:

- 1) may be an infectious hazard to those handling the specimen;
 - 2) may provide misleading result if they are contaminated and the contaminants are interpreted as pathogens.
- Leaking specimens are not routinely processed in Microbiology
 - The ward is notified immediately by telephone; reason for rejection and the name of the person accepting the telephone notification is documented in the computer.
 - LIS QA Code: LEAK
 - LIS Report Comment: Specimen leaked in transit. Informed on ... floor
Culture not done.
DO NOT remove the specimen from the biohazard bag when accessioning.
 - Irreplaceable specimen may be processed but a comment is added to the report indicating possible contamination.
In a biological safety cabinet, open the biohazard bag and place the specimen onto paper towels and spray the specimen with VIRALEX. Leave for 5 minutes. Plant the specimen and then place the specimen into a new clean biohazard bag. Change gloves.

UNLABELLED / MISLABELLED SPECIMENS

Unlabelled and mislabeled specimens are not routinely processed in the Microbiology Laboratory. The ward is notified immediately by telephone; reason for rejection and the name of person accepting the telephone notification is documented electronically.

If the specimen is “irreplaceable”, e.g. CSF, O.R. specimen, the microbiologist or charge-technologist must speak to the doctor and/or nurse who collected the specimen or was present during the procedure. It is essential to obtain an accurate matching description of the specimen and container. The above person has to accept responsibility for the specimen. This has to be recorded on the report – full name, position, time, and date. If problem cannot be resolved, the specimen will be sent back, documented electronically as “specimen rejected” and an incident report will be filed internally.

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If unable to contact the person who collected the specimen, keep the specimen in the problem basket for a week. A final report should be sent out stating the reason for rejection and attempts made to notify the ward.

CRITERIA	REPORT COMMENT	LIS QA Code
Unlabelled specimen with requisition or HIS order.	"No specimen with this patient's name was received. Please repeat if necessary. Informed..... onfloor."	UNLB
Mislabeled specimen.	"The specimen received with this requisition is labeled with another patient's name and has therefore not been processed. Informed onfloor."	MSLB
Unlabelled specimen without requisition or HIS order.	If there is a name on the specimen, enter into the LIS and result as "Specimen not labeled" and keep the specimen in the problem for 48hrs.	UNLB

OTHER SPECIMEN REJECTION CRITERIA BY TESTS

SPECIMEN TYPE	TEST	REJECTION CRITERIA	REPORT COMMENT	LIS QA Code
STOOL	C & S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not submitted in enteric pathogen transport media. Patient admitted for more than 72 hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specimen not received in enteric transport medium. "This specimen was not cultured for community acquired enteric pathogens because the patient has been hospitalized for 3 or more days. Discuss with the Medical Microbiologist if necessary." 	WTPM
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple specimens collected from the same in-patient the same day (only one specimen per patient per test per day is to be processed). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "This specimen has not been processed as a specimen submitted from the same day has already been processed." 	>72H RPTS

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SPECIMEN TYPE	TEST	REJECTION CRITERIA	REPORT COMMENT	LIS QA Code
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stools from outpatients often arrive in batches and are usually a series taken from separate days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Multiple specimens received. Only the most recently collected specimen has been processed." 	RPTS
STOOL	O&P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not submitted in SAF container Patients who have been admitted more than 72 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Specimen not received in SAF (fixative for parasite)." "This specimen was not processed for community acquired enteric pathogens because the patient has been hospitalized for 3 or more days. Discuss with the Medical Microbiologist if necessary." 	WTPM >72H
STOOL	<i>C. difficile</i> toxin	Submitted in enteric pathogen transport medium or SAF container.	<p>"Specimen received in enteric pathogen transport medium. Unsuitable for <i>C. difficile</i> testing. Please repeat."</p> <p>OR</p> <p>"Specimen received in SAF (fixative for parasite). Unsuitable for <i>C. difficile</i> toxin testing. If you have any questions, please call the Microbiology Lab."</p>	WTPM WTPM
Foley catheter tips and ETT tips (adult)	C&S	Unsuitable specimen	"Specimen unsuitable for culture.... because of....add qualifier."	UNST

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SPUTUM	C&S	> 25 squamous epithelial cells/lower power field except from PMH patients.	"Greater than 25 squamous epithelial cells per low power field."	
Urine	C&S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condom catheter • Foley catheter tips and bags • Leaking specimens • Inappropriate /swab / non-sterile container • >24 hr delay before specimen received • Duplicate specimens (more than one processed urine within 24 hrs) 	"Specimen unsuitable for culture.... because of....add qualifier."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNST • UNST • LEAK • UNST • DLAY • RPTS
Dry Swabs	C&S	If received in the lab >1 hour after collection.	"Specimen not received in transport medium and was in transit for >1 hour."	WTPM
All specimens other than urine	C&S	If received in the lab >48 hours after collection.	"Specimen was received in the lab >48 hours after it has been collected; unsuitable for culture."	DLAY
All specimen types except : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tissue • Sterile body fluid • Brain and liver abscess • Aspirated pus • Bone and soft tissue biopsies with diagnosis 	Anaerobic culture	Not submitted in special anaerobic transport media.	" No anaerobic swab received; anaerobic culture not done."	WTPM

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of gas gangrene, narcotizing fasciitis or narcotizing cellulitis				
PLASMA	CMV antigene- mia Assay	-Not submitted in EDTA (purple top) or heparin (green top) tube	“CMV Antigenemia cannot be processed on red top tubes. Please collect blood in an EDTA (lavender top) tube.”	WTBE
		-Clotted blood (inadequate mixing of anticoagulant after collection or red top tube)		
		- Extremely low leukocyte counts or insufficient volume (generally <2 mL)	“Insufficient white blood cells to perform test.”	WNST
		- More than 3 samples from the same person in the same week, unless authorized	“This specimen was taken too soon after the previous one, therefore not processed for virology. Please refer to previous specimens.”	RPTS
		- TGH specimens collected between noon and midnight, during weekend and holidays, or received in the Virology lab after 2:00 p.m. would not be fresh enough for processing	“Specimen was collected before 12:00am, a fresh specimen is required. Please repeat.”	DLAY
		- Specimens from other facilities would be rejected if received in the Virology lab after 2:00	“Test cancelled. Specimen was received on weekend when the Virology lab was closed. A fresh specimen is required for CMV antigenemia testing.”	DLAY

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		p.m. or during weekend and holidays	“Specimen was received after cut off time (2:00pm), unable to process. Please repeat.”	DLAY
PLASMA	West Nile PCR test	Not submitted in EDTA (purple Top) of ACD (acid citrate dextrose – yellow top) tube. Specimen taken > 18 hours	Please collect blood in ACD or EDTA (lavender top) tube	WTBE
SERUM	West Nile IgG and IgM serology	Not submitted in Red top or Gel Separator tube	Please collect blood in Red top or Gel Separator tube.	WTBE
All specimen types (unless otherwise authorized)	Virology: Shell Vial or Tube Culture Assay	-Specimens collected in SAF, Enteric, charcoal, Amies or other non-viral transport media.	“Specimen received in unsuitable transport media therefore not processed for Virology.”	WTPM

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