Section 2	**Sample Management Procedures**	09/01/12 -Effective
Subject	**Outpatient Sample Packaging and Transportation**	
Topic 2.01	**Sample Packaging and Transportation**	

Sample Packaging and Transportation

Audience

All personnel responsible for collecting, labeling, and packaging specimens for transport to UTMB.

Purpose

Guidelines for packaging and transportation of specimens.

Policy

All specimens submitted to Pathology Clinical Services for testing must be appropriately packaged and stored for transportation to insure sample integrity of patient specimens from the time of collection until testing is completed and the result reported.

Procedure

After processing, samples should be stored according to test requirements as outlined in the UTMB Laboratory Survival Guide. Place processed samples in either a test tube rack (preferred) or a small biohazard transport bag.

When racking samples, there should be three racks available: one each for room temperature, refrigerated and frozen samples. Place samples in racks based on the storage requirements for the test being requested.

Keep each patient's samples together when possible. Order of storage precedence for samples which have multiple tests with different storage instructions should be room temperature then refrigerated. Tests requiring a frozen sample should always have a separate sample submitted from room temperature or refrigerated tests.

Width (A-F)

Length (spaces 1-12)

Spaces in the transport racks are labeled 1-12 (length) and A-F (width).

- Start racking tubes in A1 (lower left corner) left to right

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with multiple tubes from the same patient together (example above will be samples for patient #1).

- Multiple samples with the same patient name (Gold top, purple top, etc.) must be racked from left to right.
- After all samples associated with one patient are placed in the rack, continue with the next patient.
- When you reach the end of Row A, go to the left and begin in Row B for the next patient's samples.

At the end of the workday, if a rack has less than 15 samples, transfer those samples to biohazard bags.

To ship a rack with more than 15 samples, write the clinic name and storage requirements (room temperature, refrigerated or frozen) on the outside of the 12"x15" biohazard transport bag. Then place the rack in the 12"x15" biohazard bag, seal the bag and place all patient requisitions, specimen transfer list or manifest if available in the front pocket of the biohazard bag.

When tube racks are not available, samples are to be placed in biohazard transport bags. All samples in a bag should be for a single patient based on storage requirements (i.e. room temperature samples, refrigerated samples, and frozen samples).

Clinic staff should place patient samples in color coded biohazard bags

- **Green bag – Room Temperature Samples**
- **Clear bag – Refrigerated Samples**
- **Blue bag – Frozen Samples**

If colored bags are not available, use the standard clear biohazard bag and mark the appropriate storage temperature (room temperature, refrigerated, or frozen).

Place samples in the zip-lock part of the bag and carefully seal the bag.

Place the patient requisition form in the front pocket of the biohazard bag and store in accordance with test temperature requirements.

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Place the individual biohazard bags into a 12”x15” biohazard bag. Using a Sharpie pen, print the name of the clinic on the outside of the large biohazard bag.

If the courier has not arrived before close of business, place the large biohazard bags for room temperature and refrigerated samples into the lockbox for the courier to pick up. Add a cool pack and large bag into a second large bag. Hold frozen samples until the next morning for pickup.

It is the responsibility of phlebotomy and nursing staff at each clinic to place samples in the appropriately colored sample bags. Couriers will pick up samples and place them in the appropriate cooler based on the color coding of the sample bag.

Green Sample bags are for room temperature samples

Green sample bags will be carried in a cooler that will be maintained at room temperature.

Clear Sample bags are for refrigerated samples

Clear sample bags will be carried in a cooler that will be maintained at refrigerator temperature.

Blue Sample bags are for frozen samples

Blue sample bags will be carried in a cooler that contains dry ice and is kept at freezer temperatures.

Note: If color coded bags are unavailable, specimens will be packaged in standard clear biohazard bags with the temperature requirement noted.

UTMB Couriers pickup samples between 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm Monday-Friday in a nine county area that includes Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Jefferson, Montgomery, Orange, Walker and Waller counties.

Day couriers leave UTMB Galveston by 9:00 am and proceed to pick up samples on one local route and one southern TDCJ route.

Route 1 the southern TDCJ route picks up samples from early morning collections at the prison units south of Houston, in Brazoria and Fort Bend counties.

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Route 5 the local route picks up samples at clinics between Galveston and Pasadena, Texas making multiple stops often picking up frozen samples from the previous day.

Evening couriers leave UTMB Galveston between 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm on one of six courier routes. Couriers begin picking up samples at the furthest clinic on their route and work their way back to UTMB Galveston.

Route 2 picks up clinic samples in the Galveston, Southern Harris County area.

Route 3 picks up clinic samples from the TDCJ and UTMB Clinics in our northern area.

Route 4 picks up clinic samples from the TDCJ and UTMB Clinics in our eastern area.

Route 6 picks up clinic samples from the TDCJ and UTMB Clinics in our southern and western areas.

Route 7 is a shuttle that runs between Victory Lakes Specialty Center and UTMB Galveston.

Route 8 is a shuttle that runs around the Victory Lakes/League City area and delivers samples to UTMB's Victory Lakes Laboratory.

Couriers deliver supplies on the outbound leg of their route and during those stops may also pickup frozen samples. At the farthest clinic stop on their route, the courier will pick up all samples room temperature, refrigerated and frozen. Then begin their inbound route. Couriers will stop at each clinic and pick up additional samples.

Couriers deliver samples to UTMB's Main Laboratory in the McCullough Building Rm 5.136, where custody of samples is taken by Pathology Clinical Services Sample Management Division.

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DIVISION OF SAMPLE MANAGEMENT PATHOLOGY CLINICAL SERVICES

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