

APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Precision Laboratories Ltd. (APL) employees, medical staff, students and other persons acting on behalf of APL (including contracted service providers as necessary).

SCOPE

This document applies to all Health Care Providers that submit Anatomic Pathology (AP) samples and all AP medical and technical staff of Alberta Precision Laboratories. Anatomic pathology includes surgical pathology and cytopathology cases.

PURPOSE

- To establish standardized definitions for cases that require faster than routine processing and reporting in AP.
- To establish standardized practices for all Laboratory Services personnel when an AP case requires faster than routine processing and reporting.
- To establish criteria for the clinician to order a request as either routine, STAT-Critical or STAT-Priority

BACKGROUND

Terms and processes used for cases that require faster than routine processing and reporting (i.e. rush, priority, urgent, etc.) have previously been inconsistent throughout the various AP sites around the province leaving both the AP staff and clinicians unsure of how the case will be handled and the expected date of the report.

Target turn-around times (TATs) for Anatomic Pathology cases have been established for surgical pathology and cytopathology cases. Goal is to provide an initial report for cases ordered as "Routine" as follows:

- a. Surgical Pathology HL4 = within 6 working days
- b. Surgical Pathology HL 5 & 6 (complex cases) = within 8 working days
- c. Non-gynecological cytopathology cases = within 3 working days
- d. Gynecological cytopathology cases = within 15 working days

DEFINITIONS

STAT-Critical Anatomic Pathology Request A verbal request to the AP Department to process and communicate the result of the AP sample within 24 hours from received time in the laboratory.

STAT-Priority Anatomic Pathology Request A request to the AP Department to process and communicate the result in less than the target routine turnaround time.

POLICY

Note:

- This policy excludes frozen section samples.

1. Dependent on clinical history and consultation with a Pathologist (or designate), two standardized terms and associated processes will be used to define cases that require faster than routine processing and reporting:

A. STAT-Critical:

- Goal is to communicate an initial result within 24 hours from received time in the laboratory (includes non-working days). The result will be communicated to the requesting physician within the target STAT-Critical case TAT according to site specific processes.
- The requesting physician **MUST** contact the laboratory, following local laboratory processes, to request and obtain Pathologist approval for STAT-Critical processing and reporting. If the laboratory is not contacted OR approval is not provided by the pathologist, the sample will be processed as STAT-Priority.
- Size of tissue sample and other factors may require additional processing time.

OR

B. STAT-Priority:

- For other urgent cases – goal is to communicate an initial result in less than the routine target turnaround time.

2. These cases **MUST** meet the following requirements:
 1. Be clearly labelled as either STAT-Critical or STAT-Priority.
 2. Have supporting clinical history to indicate the reason for the request.
 3. Test request must include physicians' direct contact information.
 4. For **STAT-Critical** requests: **MUST** be approved by a Pathologist (or designate).
3. If the above requirements are not met, technical staff will confirm approval with approving/responsible pathologist. Sample(s) not approved will be processed as per routine process.
4. If historical terms are used to escalate the priority (i.e. Rush, Urgent), sample may be processed as "STAT-Priority".
5. When a STAT-Critical request has been approved by a pathologist after the clinician has called and discussed the case with them, the approving pathologist **MUST** communicate the approval to the technical staff/AP department to ensure appropriate processing and handling.
 - Approved requests that are ordered and reported in Connect Care will receive a "STAT-Critical" case flag.

RESPONSIBILITY

- Pathologist (or delegate):**
- Reviewing and approving, where appropriate, the STAT-Critical request(s) when required.
 - Communicating the result(s) within the period of time defined by the request type. Refer to *Communication of Laboratory Results KB0019680* and *Communication of Urgent, Critical, Unusual Anatomical Pathology and Cytopathology Findings KB0029484*.
- Laboratory Personnel:** Processing the sample appropriately as per local site specific procedures.

REFERENCES

Not applicable.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- *Communication of Laboratory Results KB0019680*
- *Communication of Urgent, Critical, Unusual Anatomical Pathology and Cytopathology Findings KB0029484*