

Critical and Priority Request Definitions for Pathology Samples

Applicability This document applies to all Health Care Providers that submit pathology samples and all Pathology staff of AHS Laboratory Services and laboratories administered under the Covenant Health Group, Calgary Laboratory Services, and Dyna**LIFE**_{Dx} collectively referred to as Laboratory Services.

Purpose

- To establish standardized definitions for cases that require faster than routine processing and reporting in Pathology.
- To establish standardized practices for all AHS Laboratory Services personnel when a Pathology case requires faster than routine processing and reporting
- To establish criteria for the clinician to order a request as either critical or priority.

Background

The terms and processes used for cases that require faster than routine processing and reporting (i.e. rush, priority, urgent, etc.) has previously been inconsistent throughout the various Anatomical Pathology (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.

Policy

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. CRITICAL:**
 - Goal is to provide an initial report within 24 hours from received time in the laboratory (includes non-working days). The report will be provided to the requesting physician within the target CRITICAL case TAT according to site specific processes.
 - The requesting physician **MUST** contact the appropriate Pathologist verbally to request CRITICAL processing and reporting.
 - Size of tissue sample and other factors may require additional processing time.
 - OR
 - B. PRIORITY:**
 - For other urgent cases – the initial report will be completed in less than the standard turnaround time.

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2. These cases **MUST** meet the following requirements:
 - i. Be clearly labelled as either **CRITICAL** or **PRIORITY**.
 - ii. Have supporting clinical history to indicate the reason for the request.
 - iii. Be approved by a Pathologist (or designate).
 - iv. Test request must include physicians' direct contact information

3. If the above requirements are not met, sample(s) will be processed as per routine process.

**Additional
Notes**

This policy excludes frozen section samples.

Responsibility**Pathologist is responsible for:**

- a. Reporting the result(s) within the period of time defined by the request type.

Pathologist (or delegate) is responsible for:

- a. Reviewing and approving, where appropriate, the critical request(s) when required.

Laboratory Personnel are responsible for:

- a. Processing the sample appropriately as per local site specific procedures.

Definitions

Critical Pathology Request is a verbal request to the Pathology Department to process and report the Pathology sample(s) within 24 hours from received time in the laboratory.

Priority Pathology Request is a request to the Pathology Department to complete the initial Pathology sample report no sooner than 24 hours and less than the standard turnaround time.

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