The Pathology Laboratory

General · Policy

830 BAYOU PINES WEST · LAKE CHARLES, LA. 70601

SPECIMEN REJECTION AND SUB-OPTIMAL CRITERIA

GEN.40535; COM.06300; QSA.07.01.01 EP 2; DC.02.03.01 EP 2; LD.04.05.09 EP 5

GEN-15

Adopted Date: November 1, 2001

Purpose:
To explain how to handle specimens that are unacceptable by The Pathology Lab or when a reference lab is unable to perform testing. Also, to explain how to handle rejected specimens and notify the client when specimens are sub-optimal.

Policy: Clinical Laboratory
CP specimens shall be evaluated for adequacy and acceptability for diagnostic evaluation when received in the lab. They may be rejected for any one of the following reasons listed in the Rejecting a Specimen procedure below. Specimens should not be rejected until the appropriate efforts have been made to correct the problem. Specimens that are sub-optimal need the order code SUBOPTIMAL attached to the accession, informing the client of the specimen's sub-optimal integrity. Specimens that exceed stability, but the client requests the test to be performed, should have the STABILITY MESSAGE CODE attached. This shall be input by the accessioner, but if not recognized at time of entry, this can also be performed by the performing tech. Temperature restrictions shall be entered by the Accessioning department. See the Sub-optimal Specimen procedure below.

Unlabeled specimens.
If the specimen is received unlabeled, improperly labeled, or **without TWO identifiers** (often addressed in Accessioning):

1. Call the doctor's office.
2. Send the specimen back to the account, and have the person responsible for the collection identify and place a proper label upon the specimen. Document this information on the accessioning Returned Specimens Log.
3. Reject the specimen and have recollected if there is any doubt about positive identification or the specimen label does not match requisition.

Reference lab specimen rejections.
Specimens may be rejected by the reference lab. Reasons are typically TNP or QNS. It is the reference lab's responsibility to contact the Accessioning department by fax, phone call, or email. *(As of September 26th, 2016, Quest is set up to email all three CP Accessioning/Sendout employees.)* Accessioning will contact the client to discuss how to proceed with recollection. Documentation will be made in SLAB Internal Notes.

Improper specimen collection or condition.

If the specimen is received in an incorrect container, collected improperly, clotted, grossly hemolyzed, QNS (due to leaking or amount received), or improperly labeled, send the client an explanation using the Rejecting a Specimen procedure below.

Procedure:

Rejecting a Specimen

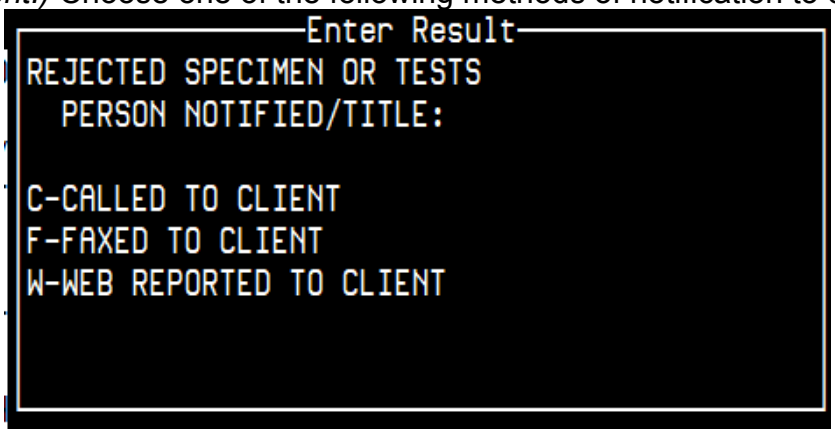
NOTE: This procedure is for all clinical tests EXCEPT drug screens. To reject a drug screen, see the "Rejecting a Drug Screen" procedure below.

1. Order REJECTION order code in SLAB Order Entry (1, 5, 1).
2. If there are other tests that may be performed, order REJECTION code first so it will appear at the beginning of the report.
3. At order entry, you will be prompted to answer six questions:

Question 1: DATE/TIME: *(Input the current date and time.)*

Question 2: LAB PERSONNEL: *(Input your name or initials.)*

Question 3: PERSON NOTIFIED/TITLE: *(Input whether you called, faxed, or web reported to client.)* Choose one of the following methods of notification to client:



If **C-CALLED TO CLIENT** is selected, a new Free Text window will pop up where you will enter the name and title of the person you notified. **This will print on the report to client.**

Question 4: TESTING UNABLE TO PERFORM: *(What testing are you unable to perform?)*

Question 5: REASON FOR REJECTION: *(What is the reason for the rejection?)*

Choose one of the following reasons for rejection:

1 – RETURNING SPECIMEN FOR CLIENT CLARIFICATION
A – DUPLICATE ORDERS
B – EXPIRED ADD-ON
C – INCORRECT SPECIMEN SUBMITTED
D – INVALID RESULTS
E – LOST IN TRANSIT
F – MISSED TEST
G – MISSING OR INCORRECT ORDER
H – NO SPECIMEN SUBMITTED
I – OTHER
J – PATIENT COULD NOT COLLECT
K – PATIENT DID NOT FOLLOW COLLECTION PROTOCOL
L – PATIENT LEFT BUILDING
M – PATIENT REFUSED
N – QUANTITY NOT SUFFICIENT
O – SPECIMEN EXCEEDED STABILITY
Q – SPECIMEN LEAKED IN TRANSIT
R – SPECIMEN MISLABELED/NOT LABELED
S – TEMPERATURE OUT OF RANGE

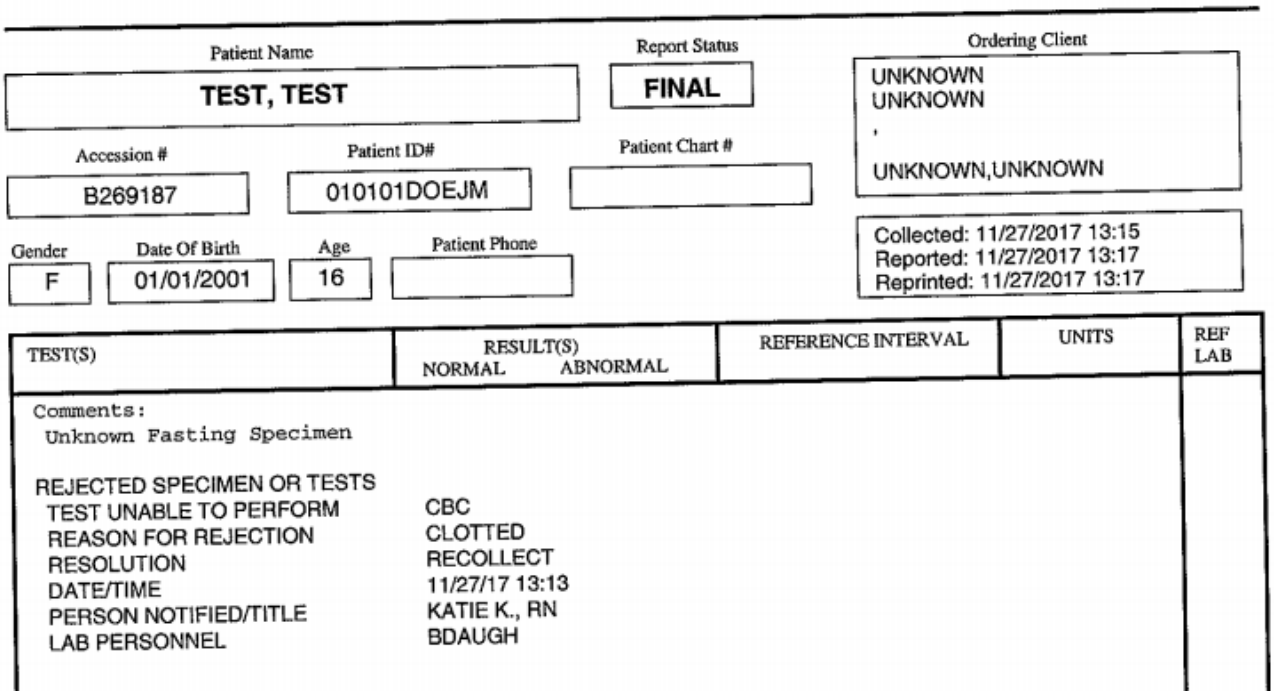
T – TESTING NOT INDICATED/REQUIRED
U – UNACCEPTABLE SPECIMEN CONDITION
V – ANAEROBIC CULTURE-UNSUITABLE SPECIMEN
W – CONTAMINATED SPECIMEN
X – TEST NOT AVAILABLE
Y – SPECIMEN NOT AVAILABLE
Z – HOLDING SPECIMEN PENDING CLIENT CLARIFICATION

FREE TEXT POP UP: Provide a brief summary of the reason for rejection. *(This part is optional and does not print on the report to client. It is for internal documentation purposes only.)*

Question 6: RESOLUTION: *(Indicate a resolution for the client. Ex: resubmit, recollect, etc.)*

4. The person rejecting the specimen is responsible for answering the six questions and informing the department responsible for performing the test, in addition to contacting the ordering client out of courtesy when the reason for rejection is:
   N – QUANTITY NOT SUFFICIENT
   O – SPECIMEN EXCEEDED STABILITY
   R – SPECIMEN MISLABELED/NOT LABELED
   U – UNACCEPTABLE SPECIMEN CONDITION

   All other reasons for rejection may be faxed to the client. **Any rejected STAT specimens MUST be called to the client regardless of the reason for rejection.**



Patient Name: TEST, TEST
Report Status: FINAL
Ordering Client: UNKNOWN UNKNOWN , UNKNOWN,UNKNOWN
Accession #: B269187
Patient ID#: 010101DOEJM
Patient Chart #:
Gender: F
Date Of Birth: 01/01/2001
Age: 16
Patient Phone:
Collected: 11/27/2017 13:15
Reported: 11/27/2017 13:17
Reprinted: 11/27/2017 13:17

TEST(S)	RESULT(S) NORMAL ABNORMAL	REFERENCE INTERVAL	UNITS	REF LAB
Comments: Unknown Fasting Specimen				
REJECTED SPECIMEN OR TESTS				
TEST UNABLE TO PERFORM	CBC			
REASON FOR REJECTION	CLOTTED			
RESOLUTION	RECOLLECT			
DATE/TIME	11/27/17 13:13			
PERSON NOTIFIED/TITLE	KATIE K., RN			
LAB PERSONNEL	BDAUGH			

Rejecting a Drug Screen

1. Order 501 DRUG SCREEN REJECTION order code in SLAB Order Entry (1, 5, 1).
2. You will be prompted to answer six questions:

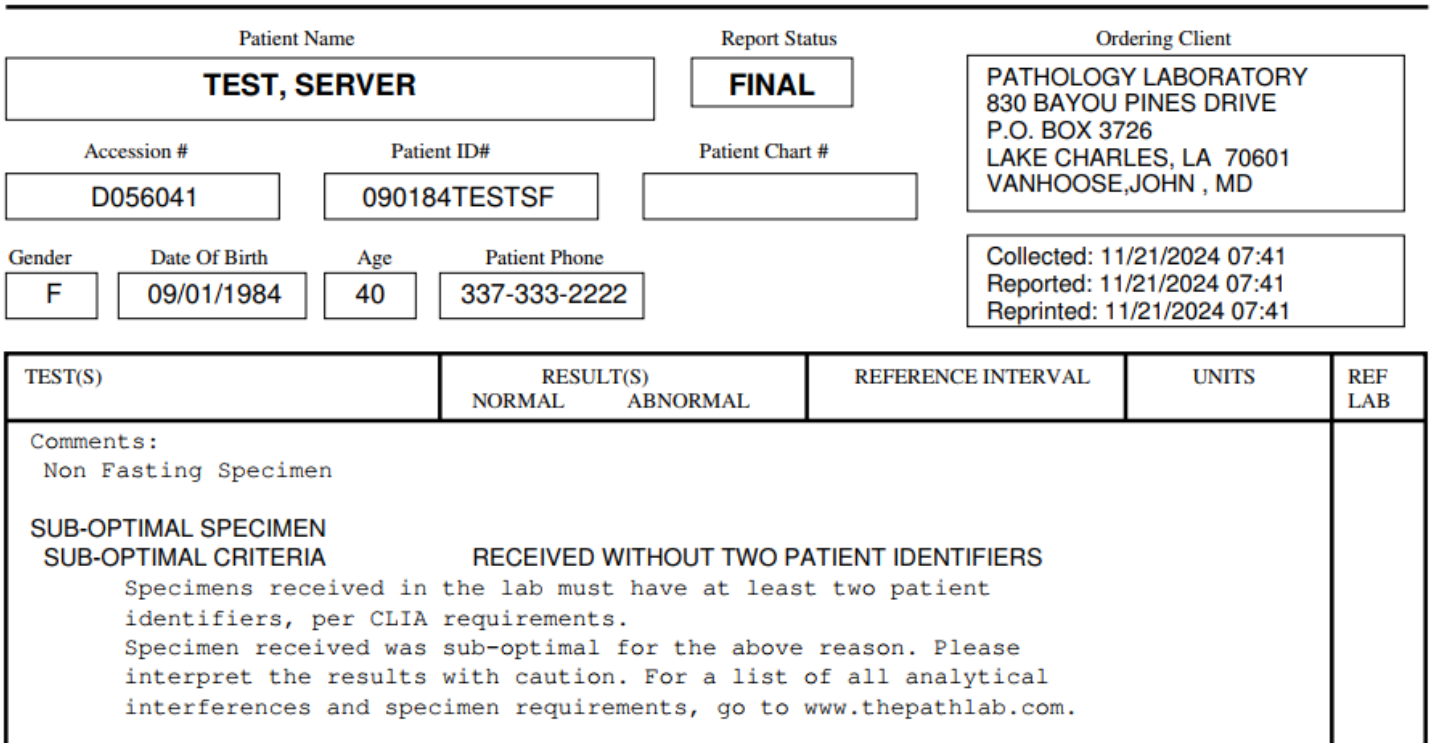
   Question 1: REASON FOR REJECTION: *(What is the reason for the rejected drug screen?)*
   Choose one of the following reasons for rejection:
   1 – QNS – DONOR LEFT WITHOUT RECOLLECTION
   2 – TEMPERATURE OUT OF RANGE – LEFT WITHOUT RECOLLECTION
   3 – UNABLE TO COLLECT – LEFT WITHOUT ATTEMPTING COLLECTION
   4 – PATIENT REFUSED COLLECTION
   5 – PATIENT LEFT WITHOUT COLLECTING

   Question 2: DATE/TIME: *(Input the current date and time.)*

Question 3: LAB PERSONNEL: *(Input your name or initials.)*
Question 4: PERSON NOTIFIED/TITLE: *(Input who you notified followed by his/her title.)*
Question 5: TESTING UNABLE TO PERFORM: *(What drug screen test are you unable to perform?)*
Question 6: RESOLUTION: *(Indicate a resolution for the client. Ex: resubmit, recollect, etc.)*

Sub-optimal Specimen

1. Order SUBOPTIMAL order code in SLAB Order Entry (1, 5, 1).
2. If there are other tests that may be performed, order SUBOPTIMAL code first so it will appear at the beginning of the report.
3. At order entry, you will be prompted to choose one of the following sub-optimal criteria:
   2 – RECEIVED WITHOUT TWO PATIENT IDENTIFIERS
   C – IMPROPER COLLECTION
   D – COLLECTION DATE AND OR TIME MISSING
   H – HEMOLYZED
   I – ICTERIC
   L – LIPEMIC
   O – RECEIVED OUTSIDE OF DESIGNATED TESTING TIME
   S – IMPROPERLY STORED FOLLOWING COLLECTION
   U – RECEIVED UNSPUN OR IMPROPERLY SPUN
4. Once chosen, you will then enter your initials for verification of specimen condition.
   VERIFICATION MADE BY: *(enter your initials)*
5. The disclaimer on the patient report will state the following:
   "Specimen received was sub-optimal for the above reason. Please interpret the results with caution. For a list of all analytical interferences and specimen requirements, go to www.thepathlab.com."
6. Order code **401 STABILITY EXCEEDED** will be used in the event a physician requests testing to be performed knowing the specimen has exceeded testing ability and results may be suboptimal.



Patient Name: TEST, SERVER
Report Status: FINAL
Ordering Client: PATHOLOGY LABORATORY, 830 BAYOU PINES DRIVE, P.O. BOX 3726, LAKE CHARLES, LA 70601, VANHOOSE,JOHN , MD
Accession #: D056041
Patient ID#: 090184TESTSF
Patient Chart #:
Gender: F
Date Of Birth: 09/01/1984
Age: 40
Patient Phone: 337-333-2222
Collected: 11/21/2024 07:41
Reported: 11/21/2024 07:41
Reprinted: 11/21/2024 07:41

TEST(S)	RESULT(S) NORMAL ABNORMAL	REFERENCE INTERVAL	UNITS	REF LAB
Comments: Non Fasting Specimen SUB-OPTIMAL SPECIMEN SUB-OPTIMAL CRITERIA RECEIVED WITHOUT TWO PATIENT IDENTIFIERS Specimens received in the lab must have at least two patient identifiers, per CLIA requirements. Specimen received was sub-optimal for the above reason. Please interpret the results with caution. For a list of all analytical interferences and specimen requirements, go to www.thepathlab.com.				

The REJECTION and SUBOPTIMAL order codes have been created under the ADMIN workgroup and department, allowing us to track problems using the computer rather than documenting the info on the requisition. If needed, you may still document the information on the requisition; however, it is

not necessary. We also no longer need to complete a QNS sheet and fax it to the doctor because SLAB will automatically do this for you. Monthly, a report is generated and reviewed by the Quality Manager to see if there is a pattern that can be avoided.

Policy: Anatomic Laboratory
Specimens will be evaluated for adequacy and acceptability for diagnostic evaluation. Sub-optimal specimens may be processed; however, specimen condition will be documented and the pathologist informed. In the event a specimen is rejected, it will be returned to the submitting facility for correction of the deficiency, if applicable. The case is logged into a notebook and Accessioning tracks when the specimen is returned. If the specimen is determined to be totally unacceptable for processing and evaluation, the requesting physician will be notified and the specimen discarded appropriately. **All deficiencies will be documented in the case notes.**

Procedure:
1. The following is a list of criteria for specimen rejection:

DEFICIENCY	CORRECTIVE ACTION
Inadequate, absent, or improper labeling	Call facility for verification and counsel, or return to facility
Inadequate fixative	Addition of fixative
Grossly contaminated container	Disinfectant and counsel
Time lapse after collection too great to maintain viability of specimen	**Rejection,** discard and notification
Inadequate or absent requisition information	Call facility for additional information
Specimen collected by unauthorized personnel	**Rejection** and counsel

2. The following is a list of criteria for sub-optimal gross specimens:
    a. Empty Container
    b. No Fixative
    c. Leaked

   Prior to dictating the gross description, the prosector will dictate the sub-optimal condition.

3. Exceptions to mislabeling procedures due to time sensitivity include:
    1. Breast Specimens
    2. Lung Specimens
    3. Bones Marrows
    4. Muscle Biopsies
    5. Nerve Biopsies
    6. Lymph Nodes
    7. Specimens Received Fresh (Not in Formalin)
    8. Specimens for cultures/microbiology
    9. Specimens for flow cytometry
    10. Specimens for cytology
    11. Specimens for send out testing

   If discrepancies in labeling cannot be immediately corrected over the phone for these specimen types, the specimen will be sent through to Histology to be processed. Any inadequacies are to be documented in the case and corrected at the earliest possible time (preferably the next day.)

4. Any concerns as to whether or not a case should be considered exempt from routine accessioning guidelines shall be addressed with Kipp or Jimmy.

References:
1. The Pathology Laboratory

2. The Joint Commission Standards
3. CAP Standards
4. HHS Standards