

STAT - Critical and Priority Request Definitions for Anatomical Pathology Samples

Applicability This document applies to all Health Care Providers that submit anatomical pathology (AP) samples and all AP medical and technical staff of Alberta Precision Laboratories and Dyna**LIFE** collectively referred to as Laboratory Services. Anatomical 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 anatomical 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 4 working days
 - b. Surgical Pathology HL 5 & 6 (complex cases) = within 6 working days
 - c. Non-gynecological cytopathology cases = within 3 working days
 - d. Gynecological cytopathology cases = within 7 working days

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. 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 and approval is not provided, 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:
 - i. Be clearly labelled as either STAT-Critical or STAT-Priority.
 - ii. Have supporting clinical history to indicate the reason for the request.
 - iii. Test request must include physicians' direct contact information
 - iv. For **STAT-Critical** requests: **MUST** be approved by a Pathologist (or designate).
 3. If the above requirements are not met, sample(s) 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. STAT-Critical requests that are phoned in and approved by a pathologist **MUST** be communicated to the technical staff/AP department, by the approving pathologist, to ensure appropriate handling/processing.
 - Approved requests that are ordered and reported in Connect Care will receive a "STAT-Critical" case flag.

**Additional
Notes**

This policy excludes frozen section samples.

Responsibility

Pathologist (or delegate) is responsible for:

- a. Reviewing and approving, where appropriate, the STAT-Critical request(s) when required.
- b. Communicating the result(s) within the period of time defined by the request type. Refer to the **Laboratory Communication of Results and Communication of Urgent, Critical, Unusual Anatomical Pathology and Cytopathology Findings** policies.

Laboratory Personnel are responsible for:

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

Definitions

STAT-Critical Anatomical Pathology Request is 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 Anatomical Pathology Request is a request to the AP Department to process and communicate the result in less than the target routine turnaround time.

Related Documents

1. Laboratory Communication of Results Policy / APL Provincial Quality Manual
<https://ahs.labqms.com/labFrame.asp?DID=30979&FLDVr=2345>
2. Communication of Urgent, Critical, Unusual Anatomical Pathology and Cytopathology Findings / APL Provincial Anatomical Pathology Manual
<https://ahs.labqms.com/labFrame.asp?DID=9703&FLDVr=1239>