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### Overview

This standard applies to the safe and effective despatch of biomedical samples for screening, analysis, investigation or diagnosis. Transport of the samples may be within or between sites or departments, or to an external source. Samples must be despatched in such a way that their integrity is maintained and they arrive with the required degree of urgency. Methods of transport include postal services, healthcare employees, pneumatic tube, external courier and by the patient.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

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## Despatch biomedical samples

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### Performance criteria

*You must be able to:*

- P1 apply standard precautions for infection control and other relevant health and safety measures when preparing biomedical samples for despatch
- P2 ensure you wear personal protective clothing relevant to the activity and additional protective equipment when dealing with exposure prone procedures
- P3 select the appropriate container to protect the integrity, confidentiality and safety of the samples and ensure arrival within required degree of urgency
- P4 prepare, pack and label the container to ensure that the samples are despatched in accordance with health, safety and other relevant guidelines
- P5 ensure that all relevant documents are included with the samples
- P6 correctly address the package for transport to the appropriate recipient
- P7 clearly label the package with the correct identifier and appropriate warning
- P8 prepare and update relevant and accurate records of samples despatched and store these in the correct location for access by authorised people
- P9 where urgency, risk or specification requires, inform the intended recipient of despatch date, time, method and expected arrival
- P10 take relevant corrective action where difficulties occur with despatch of biomedical samples
- P11 report incidents of failure of normal transport arrangements to the relevant person

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### Knowledge and understanding

*You need to know and understand:*

- K1 the current legislation, national guidelines and local policies and protocols which affect your work practice in relation to despatching biomedical samples
- K2 your responsibilities and accountability in relation to current legislation, national guidelines and local policies and protocols which affect your work practice in relation to despatching biomedical samples
- K3 the importance of working within your own sphere of competence and seeking advice when faced with situations outside your sphere of competence
- K4 the application of standard precautions to the handling and despatch of biomedical samples and the potential consequences of poor practice
- K5 the different types of container and transport media for specimens for:
  - K5.1 histology
  - K5.2 haematology
  - K5.3 microbiology
  - K5.4 cytology
  - K5.5 biochemistry
  - K5.6 immunology
- K6 the transport arrangements for different types of biomedical samples and how to access them
- K7 the relevance of different transport methods to sample type, urgency and analytical requirements
- K8 factors affecting the safety and integrity of biomedical samples when preparing and packing for despatch
- K9 the correct type and use of protective clothing when handling biomedical samples
- K10 requirements and methods for dealing with damage, spillage and decontamination of biomedical samples
- K11 containers and materials for safe and secure packing of biomedical samples for transport
- K12 risks and hazards associated with handling, storing and transporting biomedical samples
- K13 local requirements for notification of recipients
- K14 relevant corrective action and options when dealing with transport difficulties or non-arrival of biomedical samples
- K15 when, how and to whom to report failure of normal despatch or transport arrangements
- K16 relevant documents, guidelines and regulations relating to packing, labelling, confidentiality and transport of biomedical samples
- K17 the importance of including relevant documents with biomedical samples
- K18 the range of relevant records associated with the despatch of biomedical samples and how to prepare, update and maintain these

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K19 local and organisational procedures for monitoring the despatch of biomedical samples and subsequent outcomes

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### Additional Information

#### External Links

This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

Dimension: HWB8 Biomedical investigation and intervention

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