

St Vincent's Healthcare Group Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine		Pathology
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MODEL RULES FOR STAFF AND VISITORS /PATHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

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0 INTRODUCTION

0.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

There is a legal requirement under Safety and Health legislation for all employees to adhere to the following:

- To comply with Safety Instruction in their workplace
- To take reasonable care of their own Safety and that of their co- workers
- To co-operate with Management regarding adherence to Safety & Health protocols in the workplace
- To make correct use of Personal protective equipment
- To attend Safety Training

Full information on these requirements is available in the Pathology Laboratory Safety Statement MP-GEN-SAFSTAT.

In addition, there is a requirement for all employees and visitors who access the department to be aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality of information which is created or obtained during the performance of laboratory activities.

Any person entering a laboratory where pathological specimens are handled, examined or stored will be subject to the health risks associated with such materials. The purpose of this document is to define the fundamental precautions that all grades of staff and visitors to laboratories must observe to protect themselves. The model rules outlined in this document must be observed by everyone entering the laboratory area. Precautions specific to a particular work activity outlined in the laboratory documentation and in the laboratory safety statement MP-GEN-SAFSTAT must also be observed. Precautions also include the specific requirements for safe work practices in response to COVID-19.

Model rules in St Columcilles are dictated by a number of Management Instruction (MI) documents which are prominently displayed in the laboratory

0.2 RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the scientific head of individual departments to ensure that the procedures outlined in this document are implemented and that staff and visitors are made aware of the appropriate section of this document.

0.3 REFERENCE TO STANDARDS

ISO15189 6.3 Facilities and Environmental Conditions

ISO15189 4.2 Confidentiality

0.4 DEFINITIONS

Not applicable

0.5 RELATED DOCUMENTS

MP-GEN-FACILITIES Facilities and Environmental Conditions

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MP-GEN-SAFSTAT	Pathology Safety Statement
MP-GEN-DISPROC	Procedure for disinfection of Laboratory work surfaces
MP-GEN-RISKASS	Risk Assessment
MP-GEN-HOSWASDIS	SVUH Waste Disposal Policy
MP-GEN-CHEMSPIIL	Chemical spillage
MI-GEN-001	SCH model rules for visitors and patients
MI-GEN-002	SCH model rules for engineers and service personnel
MI-GEN-003	SCH model rules for admin/IT/clerical staff
MI-GEN-0010	SCH model rules for lab aides
MP-GEN-LONEWK	Risk Assessment for Lone Workers

1 MODEL RULES FOR PATHOLOGY STAFF

1.1 Confidentiality and impartiality

It is the responsibility of each staff member to ensure that all information related to laboratory activities is treated confidentially. This is managed through:

- Hospital policy with regard to patient confidentiality and data protection is detailed in each staff contract
- Mandatory training for all staff – Data Protection – Its Everyone's Responsibility
- Departmental Induction MF-GEN-PINDLAB
- Impartiality, Confidentiality and Ethical Conduct Review and Agreement MF-GEN-IMPARTIALITYCONFIDENTIALITY

1.2 Personal Safety

Most of the work carried out by laboratory staff involves handling specimens from patients. Staff must therefore always observe all of the requirements of the general precautions outlined in the Laboratory Procedure documents. In addition, when handling or dealing with specimens the following points should be observed.

Personal Protective Equipment PPE

- It is advisable to wear disposable gowns and gloves when there is a possibility that your hands may become contaminated with blood, body fluids or other biological materials. Follow the local rules.
- Always wear a protective gown or coat provided for use in the laboratory. Ensure that gowns are properly fastened. Coats and gowns should be changed at least twice per week. Before you exit the laboratory remove your white coat and place on hooks provided within the laboratory. Never take your white coat or gown outside the laboratory.
- Use protective clothing and equipment (ie gloves, apron, full-face visors, etc) as appropriate for the risk to which you are exposed. Where practicable the dispersion of airborne droplets must be contained within a microbiological safety cabinet.
- Remove your lab coat and wash your hands before leaving the laboratory and when going to an office within the laboratory.

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Personal Safety

- Any cuts, grazes, open wounds or dermatitis, especially on the hands must be covered by a waterproof dressing before starting work.
- Never take personal items such as pens, combs, brushes, cosmetics into the laboratory. Leave them in your lockers. Essential items such as pens and pencils are provided in the laboratory.
- Personal mobile phones should not be used in the laboratory
- Do not manipulate contact lenses in the laboratory
- Never take food, drink or cigarettes etc into the laboratory.
- Eating, drinking, chewing and applying cosmetics in the laboratory is forbidden.
- Mouth pipetting is forbidden. Always use the pipetting devices provided.
- Minimise your use of sharp objects. When such use is unavoidable handle tools, equipment and especially any glass objects with extreme caution. Wherever possible use plastic instead of glass. Do not leave "sharps" lying around- put them in a safe container.

Housekeeping

- Keep your work bench as clear as possible. Clutter can cause accidents. Use racks or trays to contain specimens whenever you can.
- Clear up spillages immediately using the agreed laboratory procedure. (MP-GEN-BIOSPILL)
- Clear and wipe down your work bench with appropriate disinfectant at the end of each day and each time splashing or spillage of biological materials occurs (MP-GEN-DISPROC)
- Dispose of contaminated glassware safely. Pasteur pipettes etc must be placed in sharps containers for disposal.
- Dispose of waste safely. Never leave it lying around and make sure that the approved methods for dealing with spillage or breakage are always used.
- When you are fully trained, be prepared to assist other members of staff to deal with spillages or breakages
- When working alone or out of hours, be familiar with the additional risks associated with Lone Workers as per MP-GEN-LONEWK
- Be familiar and compliant with the local requirements regarding the safe practices for COVID-19:
 - Complete the relevant safety training programme to include COVID-19 Safety training
 - Be familiar with the relevant risk assessments
 - Be familiar with the Occupational Health Department COVID-19 information available at <https://svuhintranet.svhg.ie>
 - Awareness around hand hygiene –
 - Frequent hand washing is the most important measure to protect yourself and others from spread of COVID-19.
 - Please read the displayed posters on how to wash hands that are available throughout SVUH and the Pathology Department.
 - Hand Sanitising Stations are located throughout the hospital and in Pathology.
 - Respiratory Hygiene –
 - Avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth
 - Cover coughs and sneeze with an elbow or a tissue
 - Dispose of tissues in a clinical waste bin

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- Physical Distancing – There is a one way system implemented throughout the hospital in order to practice social distancing. The layout of SVUH and the Pathology Department has been changed to allow for physical distancing. Safety signage is in place throughout Pathology to remind all staff in the workplace of the physical distancing required.
 - Familiarise yourself with the Safety Signs for physical distancing
 - Wear face masks if it is not possible to ensure correct physical distancing.
 - Ensure you minimise any direct worker close contact.
 - Avoid physical contact with colleagues, customers and visitors.

2. MODEL RULES FOR VISITORS TO LABORATORIES

Most visitors to a clinical laboratory will not be conversant with the general precautions or local rules associated with the workplace. Visitors should not be allowed to enter the laboratory area unless accompanied by a senior member of staff who will be responsible for them whilst they are in the department. Out of hours, visitors must access the laboratory at doors N3/250. Use the intercom to gain access. Visitors must not enter the laboratory unannounced.

Refer to section 7 for information and measures for external workers and visitors to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Visitors must:

- Comply with the departmental requirements in relation to confidentiality of information.
- wear appropriate PPE
- be aware of and comply with the requirements for section 7 below (Model Rules for external contractors/ visitors to the Department for COVID19).
- be instructed not to touch anything while in the laboratory, unless their visit demands such action, in which case they should comply with the local rules.
- Wash their hands thoroughly after removing their protective coat if appropriate, and before leaving the laboratory;
- not use personal items such as pens or pencils while in the laboratory and should be instructed not to chew, smoke etc before entering;
- not be taken into areas of the laboratory where they could become exposed directly to an infectious risk;
- not be left unsupervised while they are in the laboratory. It is the responsibility of the employer to decide where visitors may and may not go and the additional precautions which may be required.

2.1. Model Rules for Maintenance Staff and Equipment Service Engineers (External Personnel)

Much of the work in a clinical laboratory is concerned with handling specimens and materials that are potentially infectious. External Personnel (Repair and maintenance staff) will be required to handle

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equipment that has been used to process these materials. Every endeavour will be made by the laboratory to ensure that equipment is safe for service engineers to handle. However, service engineers may accidentally come into contact with infectious materials and must, therefore, follow the instructions outlined below.

Refer to section 7 for information and measures for external workers and visitors to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

For work in the Laboratories:

- Report to the scientific head of department senior member of staff to receive any such special instructions before commencing any work in the laboratory.
- Be aware of and comply with the requirements for confidentiality of information. This includes all information produced or available in the laboratory. This includes remote access to laboratory software by Engineers and Suppliers.
- Confidentiality of Information is a component of the service level agreement with the supplier.
- Be aware of and comply with the requirements for impartiality. Visitors to the laboratory who can influence activities (eg completing maintenance etc) must act impartially, ethically and with competence in relation to carrying out the specified work.
- Be aware of and comply with the requirements for section 7 below (Model Rules for external contractors/ visitors to the Department for COVID19).
- Prior to starting any maintenance work on building fabric, services, drainage, fixtures, fittings, plant or equipment, ensure that appropriate cleaning and decontamination precautions have been carried out. Alternatively where decontamination is not possible, you must be informed of this and receive special instructions concerning protective measures that you must take while working.
- You must wear the protective clothing deemed necessary by the specific nature of the work undertaken.
- Any tools or test equipment used in the laboratory must be inspected afterwards and, when considered necessary, they must be decontaminated before being returned to the workshop.

External personnel who visit the department will be requested to complete the associated form MF-GEN-EXTMODRULES to confirm that they agree in relation to the above requirements.

Equipment to be sent to the workshop or elsewhere:

- All equipment must be labelled to indicate whether any cleaning or decontamination has been carried out and to inform those concerned of any special precautions that still need to be taken.
- These special precautions, which may include the use of protective clothing or equipment, must be closely followed by all maintenance and/or repair staff.
- Joints, seals and connections must not be opened or broken unless advice about the possible contents of pipes, tubes or containers has first been obtained from the laboratory staff. Normally, they will have been drained and decontaminated.

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If materials are found inside pipes or tubes, they must not be touched. Reseal joint and obtain advice from the scientific head of department.

2.2 Model Rules for Laboratory Porters, Couriers and Messengers

- In order to avoid accidental contact with material which may be infectious, the following guidance should be observed:
- Cover any cuts or grazes on your hands with a waterproof dressing.
- Carry all specimens in yellow bags provided, not in your hands or pockets. Treat the specimens carefully and transport them immediately to the laboratory.
- Do not touch specimen containers unless wearing appropriate PPE. Wash hands frequently.
- Always wash your hands before meal breaks and at the end of a spell of duty.
- If a specimen leaks into a tray or box, tell the laboratory reception staff and ask them to make it safe.
- If a specimen breaks or leaks, request assistance from laboratory staff or your supervisor. Spills should be cleaned up according to laboratory spill procedures.
- Handle specimen containers gently at all times.
- Take care when carrying waste or rubbish from the laboratory- there may be broken glass or needles. If you find these tell your supervisor. Special "sharps" containers are provided for glass, syringes and needles- these must be handled carefully as leakage or penetration by sharp objects can occur.
- Only fully trained personnel may enter the mortuary body store. Refer to the senior technician about any special precautions that must be taken (eg wearing gloves, overshoes and a new gown) before entering.

2.3. Model Rules for Cleaning Staff in the Laboratory (Domestic and Ancillary)

As well as the general precautions outlined above, cleaning staff must also observe the following safe working practices.

- Always wear the overall provided for your protection when working in the laboratory.
- Wash your hands often while at work, especially after you have handled laboratory equipment or materials that you have been instructed to move or clean and always before leaving the laboratory.
- Cover cuts and grazes with waterproof dressings. You may sometimes be instructed to wear gloves.
- There are agreed specific cleaning procedures in place for cleaning staff to perform in the Laboratory. Do not touch any bottles, tubes, dishes or equipment on the laboratory benches and do not clean any work benches unless you have been specifically directed to do so by a member of the laboratory staff or by your supervisor.
- If you have an accident of any kind, inform your supervisor or one of the laboratory staff at once. You must make sure that the matter is reported because the accident may have caused infectious material to be spilled.
- In case of an accident, follow your supervisor's and laboratory staff instructions.

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- Do not enter any room which has a "Danger of Infection" sign on the door unless you are told that it is safe and are required to do so by your supervisor or a member of the laboratory staff.
- Never empty any laboratory waste containers unless a label is attached or an instruction is issued giving permission to do so.

3. MODEL RULES FOR UNDERTAKERS AND EMBALMERS

1. Do not enter any area marked "staff only" including the mortuary office.
2. Do not eat, drink or smoke in the mortuary area.
3. Always wear appropriate PPE when handling "remains".
4. If hygienic treatment of remains is required- the following must be followed,
5. Wear full protective equipment which includes surgical gowns, gloves, goggles.
6. All spillages must be immediately cleaned up following correct protocols.
7. All surfaces must be disinfected after use.

(Full details outlined in (LP-MOR-EMBALM)

Please note that undertakers/Embalmers must provide their own protective equipment. Protective equipment will be provided in circumstances where none is available to the embalmer.

NB Under no circumstances should embalmers/undertakers proceed to embalm without wearing full protective equipment.

4. MODEL RULES FOR EXTERNAL CONTRACTORS AND VISITORS FOR COVID-19

This section contains information and measures for external workers and visitors to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. It also addresses the requirement of a Covid-19 site prevention plan for accepting external staff onsite. It is critical that all workers in Pathology remain very vigilant and aware of the ongoing risk of COVID19 infection.

No worker should attend the Pathology Department in SVUH if they are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19

AWARNESS AROUND HAND HYGIENE

- Frequent hand washing is the most important measure to protect yourself and others from spread of COVID-19.

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- Please read the displayed posters on how to wash hands that are available throughout SVUH and the Pathology Department.
- Hand Sanitising Stations are located throughout the hospital and in Pathology.

RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

Good Respiratory Hygiene measures limit the spread of the COVID-19:

- Avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth
- Cover coughs and sneeze with an elbow or a tissue
- Dispose of tissues in a clinical waste bin

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Safety signage is in place throughout Pathology to remind all staff in the workplace of the physical distancing required.

CLEANING and DISINFECTION

- It is important to regularly clean and disinfect surfaces and shared Equipment.
- All Workers including external staff are responsible to keep their own workplace clean.

Personal Protective Equipment

It is essential that all external Staff and Visitors to SVUH Pathology Department wear appropriate PPE when working in the Department.

NOTE: Disposal Gloves & Laboratory Coats, Masks, Goggles and Visors are available throughout in the Pathology Department.

5. REFERENCES

Health Services Advisory Committee: Safe Working and the prevention of infection in clinical laboratories- Model rules for staff and visitors – HMSO London

Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005

Return to Work Safety Protocol COVID-19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/>

Note: The checklist is reviewed in SVUH on an on-going basis and amended to take into account new guidance from <https://www.gov.ie>, www.dbei.ie, www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie and www.hsa.ie

RESOURCES in SVUH

The Occupational Health Department SVUH has a specific section dealing with COVID-19 and it can be assessed from this site: <https://svuhintranet.svhg.ie>

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