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|  | **Title**: | SPECIMEN COLLECTION, STORAGE AND DISPOSAL | | **Policy #** | | MO.2.03 |
| **Division:** | Forensic | | **Page:** | | Page 1 of 2 |
| **Coroner Signature:** | |  | **NAME Reference:** | | C6j,C6m,C6n,C7b, C7c,C7j,E4a,E4f | |
| **Approved/Revised Date:** | | **02-20-2024** | **IACME Reference:** | | A6l,C5d,C5e,C5k, C5t,C5u,D2c | |



**POLICY**:

The Ada County Coroner’s Office (ACCO) collects, submits, and retains biological specimens as standard practice in accordance with statutory obligations and the mission of the ACCO. Specimens collected at the discretion of the forensic pathologist, or received post examination, may be submitted for DNA analysis, for testing, or held within a designated and secure area at the ACCO, pursuant to ACCO standard operating procedures, College of American Pathologists (CAP) standards, and Forensic Autopsy Performance Standards.

**PROCEDURE**:

1. **General**
   1. Specimens and samples shall be collected during the postmortem examination to the extent allowed by the condition of the remains, and with consideration given to the length of hospitalization in applicable cases.
   2. All specimen containers shall be labeled in accordance with standard operating procedures.
   3. Notations shall be made in the ACCO case management system detailing the specimens collected, retained, submitted for testing, and those that have undergone biohazardous disposal.
   4. Chain of custody shall be followed for specimen collection and release.
   5. Specimens will be retained for the periods outlined in standard operating procedures and then will undergo biohazard disposal at the next available opportunity based on available staff and current caseload.
2. **Collection**
   1. Specimens shall be collected under the supervision and at the request of the forensic pathologist.
   2. Blood, with preference given to peripheral, vitreous fluid, and urine shall be collected when available.
      1. The appropriate color topped containers shall be used for blood specimens.
      2. Containers without preservative media shall be used for urine and vitreous specimens.
      3. Frozen tissue specimens shall be collected in containers without preservative media.
   3. When viable fluid is unavailable, representative samples shall be collected for potential analysis as directed by the forensic pathologist.
   4. Additional specimens may be collected as directed by the forensic pathologist.
   5. Representative tissue sections collected by the forensic pathologist during the postmortem examination shall be placed in formalin-filled containers.
3. **Storage and Disposal**
   1. Specimen disposal will follow established guidelines from the College of American Pathologists, ACCO standard operating procedures, and at the discretion of the Ada County Coroner and forensic pathologist.
   2. Any specimen collected from a death classified as either homicide or undetermined shall be retained indefinitely.
   3. A specimen, for the purpose of DNA analysis, shall be retained for every postmortem examination.
4. **Notification**
   1. Within the Policy Statement and Request to Release Body and Organs document, the legal next-of-kin, or person authorized by law to receive the remains, shall be informed that:
      1. One or more whole organs may be retained for an extended period of time to complete examination and testing.
      2. Specimen may be kept as evidence in determining cause and manner of death for any related criminal case.
      3. Upon written request from an attorney, the ACCO may retain specimen as evidence in a related civil case.
      4. Upon completion of the postmortem examination, and any related criminal and/or civil case, the next-of-kin, or person authorized by law to receive the remains, will be permitted to obtain the specimen within six (6) months, or it will be disposed of in accordance with policy set by the Ada County Coroner.