

Frozen Section Guidelines

Histopathology Single Point of Contact No. 01622 227468

A planned frozen section service is provided from the Histopathology laboratory between 9:00am and 4:00pm (Monday-Friday excluding bank holidays). A minimum of 2 working days notice is required to ensure the availability of key equipment as well as technical and diagnostic staff. The Histopathology department cannot guarantee the availability of this service without such prior notification. An out of hours frozen sections service is not provided.

It is the responsibility of the surgeon concerned to ensure that the pathologist is made aware of all relevant clinical information via the request form and that the specimens reach the Histopathology laboratory in a suitable condition. Failure to provide adequate clinical information may make an accurate diagnosis more difficult for the reporting pathologist.

The Histopathology Department reserves the right to refuse to perform any frozen section that is not clinical requirement or poses a health and safety risk (e.g. infectious samples).

Elective / Routine Frozen Section protocol

Overall responsibility for arranging and cancelling a frozen section request remains with the surgeon. The laboratory must be informed at the earliest opportunity

1. Frozen section requests must be **booked by telephoning the single point of contact number above** as soon as the possibility (**minimum 2 working days notice**).
2. Unexpected requirements for frozen sections must be requested at the earliest opportunity, See **Rapid Response Protocol** below.
3. On the day of the operation, the surgeon must ensure that the Histopathology single point of contact is informed of the time that the specimen will be ready at least 1 hour before the courier is required to collect the specimen.
4. Histopathology will arrange the courier and inform theatre reception of the collection time.
5. Surgeons should consider placing cases that are likely to need frozen sections first on their surgical lists for that day if possible to facilitate better planning and Pathology resource availability.
6. As with all pathology test requests frozen section specimens must be clearly labelled with the patient's name, hospital number, NHS Numbers and date of birth and be accompanied by a request form with all details completed.
7. The specimen must NOT be placed in formalin but should be placed in an empty Histopathology specimen container.
8. The specimen and fully completed request form must be packaged in accordance with UN3373 regulations, clearly addressed to the Histopathology Lab, Maidstone Hospital, Hermitage Lane, Maidstone, ME16 9QQ and marked **URGENT FROZEN SECTION SPECIMEN**.
9. The package must be made available for collection from the Medway Theatres reception on level 3 by the agreed collection time.
10. The collecting courier must sign the theatre specimens register to acknowledge receipt.
11. The courier must hand the specimen to a member of Maidstone Hospital Histopathology laboratory staff. It must not be left unattended under any circumstances. Specimens must be signed for.
12. It is advisable that couriers deliver to the Histology deliveries door rather than via Microbiology reception as this is a quicker, more direct route
13. Results will be telephoned to the surgeon as soon as a diagnosis is made, usually within 30 minutes of sample receipt within the laboratory. For this to be possible relevant contact details must be included on the request form.

Rapid Response Protocol

There are rare occasions when surgeons have a genuine clinical need for using the frozen section service at short notice. The Histopathology department will attempt to accommodate all frozen section requests but, as stated above, cannot guarantee service availability.

1. The Histopathology department must be informed of the requirements for frozen sections as soon as the need is realised **by the surgeon / theatre team telephoning the single point of contact number above.**
2. The single point of contact will establish whether a consultant, laboratory staff member and equipment are available to undertake a frozen section analysis. The frozen section can only proceed if consultant, technical staff and equipment are all available.
3. If the frozen section request is agreed the Histopathology single point of contact is responsible to arranging the courier and informing the theatre reception of the collection time.
4. As with all pathology test requests frozen section specimens must be clearly labelled with the patient's name, hospital number, NHS Numbers and date of birth and be accompanied by a request form with all details completed.
5. The specimen must NOT be placed in formalin but should be placed in an empty Histopathology specimen container.
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10. It is advisable that couriers deliver to the Histology deliveries door rather than via Microbiology reception as this is a quicker, more direct route
11. The Histopathology consultant will telephone results to the surgeon as soon as a diagnosis is made, usually within 30 minutes of sample receipt within the laboratory. For this to be possible relevant contact details must be included on the request form.

It should be noted that impromptu transfer of technical and consultant staff to the site of surgery to undertake frozen sections is not technically possible or clinically desirable.

For elective / routine frozen section requests, the Histopathology single point of contact will liaise with Consultants from the appropriate Specialty team (e.g. skin team breast team etc) to ensure Consultant availability.