


Approved



---

TITLE: MICROBIOLOGY

---

**Policy:** The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) is assured adequate supporting services, equipment and facilities to perform autopsy examinations pursuant to DC Code § 5-1403 and 1409.

**Purpose:** To ensure proper post-mortem examination procedures in accordance with the mission of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

**Scope:** The following procedures are to assist Medical Examiner physicians to perform proper post-mortem examinations in a safe and secure environment.

**1. Microbiology**

1.1. All cultures for bacterial, viral or fungal organisms are sent out to DC Public Health Laboratory.

1.1.1. Microbiology/specimen handling forms (available in each autopsy suite) are filled out for each specimen itemizing the specimens sent and test requested.

1.2. Microbiology testing is at the discretion of the attending pathologist

1.2.1. Microbiology testing must be performed on all Sudden Unexplained Infant Deaths

**2. Specimen collection**

2.1. Blood

2.1.1. Blood is the most common specimen cultured and should be obtained immediately following removal of the chest plate and before there is any manipulation of the bowel


2.1.2. Cerebral Spinal

2.1.2.0. Cerebral spinal fluid may be obtained by needle puncture into the lumbar spinal canal or into the basal cistern at the base of the skull.

2.1.3. Tissue

2.1.3.0. The lungs are the most common site for tissue cultures. Tissues are to be collected as aseptically as possible utilizing fresh sterile scalpel blades.

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. L. Smith", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

2.1.4. Viral Testing

2.1.4.0. Nasopharyngeal sampling using a sterile swab kit is used for viral testing.

**3. DC Public Health Laboratory**

- 3.1. DC Public Health Laboratory (PHL) has a defined list of diseases and conditions that must be reported.
- 3.2. PHL can supply the appropriate collection technique, and sampling handling requirements. Any questions regarding the above should be directed to PHL.