

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Lab Sample Intake Procedure

Objective

To ensure that lab samples dropped off by clients are received correctly, labeled accurately, and handled safely in a professional, courteous manner that maintains a high standard of client service and biosecurity.

Scope

This SOP applies to all Client Service Representatives (CSRs) and any staff accepting diagnostic samples from clients at the veterinary hospital.

Responsibilities

- CSRs: Receive and log the sample, ensure proper labeling and storage, and notify the veterinary or technical team.
 - Veterinary Technicians/Assistants: Collect samples from CSR as needed and prepare for processing or shipping.
 - Hospital Manager: Ensure all staff are trained and the SOP is followed.
-

Procedure

Greet the Client Professionally

- Smile and greet the client as they arrive. Refer to SOP regarding Client Greeting.
- Use the client and pet's name if known.

Confirm Sample Type and Information

- Politely confirm the type of sample (urine, fecal, etc.) and the reason for submission.
- Ask if the sample was collected as instructed (e.g., within the timeframe, clean container, refrigerated if required).

Properly label the sample

- Ensure the container is clearly labeled with: Pets name; Client's Name.

Confirm Appointment or Request

- Verify if the sample is for a scheduled appointment, follow-up, or lab testing only.
- Verify that client and patient are current patients and all client/patient information is entered and correct.
- Confirm the reason for test submission and log all communication in the MR. If submitting due to medical concerns, collect a detailed history that warrants sample submission.
 - Ex - Submitting a fecal sample due to recent diarrhea: How long has this been occurring; is patient on monthly preventions; any changes in diet or environment; any history of parasites with this patient or other pets in home; any other symptoms; etc
 - Ex - Submitting urine sample due to suspected UTI: How long has this been occurring; any inappropriate urination (outside of litter box, in the home); any sign of incontinence (inability to hold it); any straining to urinate with little to no output; any blood noted in voided urine; any pain or discomfort noted; is urinating more frequently than normal.

Invoice the lab item and accept payment at dropoff.

- If a client is waiting in the hospital for the results they may be checked out once the results are received. This can be beneficial when medications may be necessary and are expected. Please ensure medical/lab team members are aware.
- If a client is not waiting in the hospital for results, payment should be completed prior to test submission and note entered into the MR.

Enter the lab request on the daily schedule.

- Create appointment (type TAHO Lab) on the daily schedule to allow medical professionals access to the client/patient information to enter results and review records.

Provide Confirmation and Warm Farewell

- Let the client know the sample has been accepted and what to expect next (e.g., turnaround time for results): “Thanks! We’ll get this over to the lab team and someone will contact you with results later today.” Clients should be instructed/asked to submit all samples prior to 5pm to ensure the lab has time to complete. Lab samples should still be accepted after 5pm, this instruction just assists in reducing last-minute samples.
- End with a warm and friendly goodbye.

Store the Sample Appropriately

- Place the properly labeled sample in the designated holding area (e.g., lab refrigerator) following hospital protocol.
- Ensure the container is sealed and stored upright if needed.

Notify the Appropriate Team Member

- Inform the veterinary technician or doctor that the sample has been received.

Notes

- Always wear gloves if handling unsealed or questionable samples.
- Never accept leaking, unlabeled, or improperly stored samples without informing a supervisor.
- Maintain a calm and polite tone, even if the client is rushed or flustered.

Quality Assurance

- Periodic review during staff meetings.
 - Ongoing training to reinforce protocol and professional behavior.
-

Approval:

This template provides clarity on the greeting and lab intake expectations, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a high standard of customer and patient care.