

17 February 2022

██████████
Email: ██████████

Dear ██████████

Official Information Act Request

Thank you for your request pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982 which was received as a transfer from the Ministry of Health on 11 February 2022. You have requested the following information:

“Official guidance documents we use in New Zealand to cover the handling and transportation of microbiology samples from provincial hospitals to centralized testing laboratories. I expect that official guidance would cover aspects such as reported by Miller et al. [1] including transport media, temperature and time from specimen extraction from patient until the analysis is completed at the centralized laboratory.”

Waikato DHB laboratories are IANZ accredited New Zealand medical laboratories and are assessed against ISO:15189 standard “Medical Laboratories – Requirements for quality and competence” which states the following requirements:

5.4.5 Sample transportation

The laboratory’s instructions for post-collection activities shall include packaging of samples for transportation.

The laboratory shall have a documented procedure for monitoring the transportations of samples to ensure they are transported:

- a) within a time frame appropriate to the nature of the requested examinations and the laboratory discipline concerned;
- b) within a temperature interval specified for sample collection and handling and with the designated preservatives to ensure the integrity of samples;

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ISO 15189:2012(E)

- c) in a manner that ensures the integrity of the sample and the safety for the carrier, the general public and the receiving laboratory, in compliance with established requirements.

NOTE A laboratory which is not involved in primary sample collection and transportation is considered to have satisfied clause 5.4.5 c) above when, upon receipt of a sample whose integrity was compromised or which could have jeopardized the safety of the carrier or the general public, the sender is contacted immediately and informed about measures to be taken to eliminate recurrence.

We trust this information covers your request.

Waikato DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community understanding of how we are delivering publically funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine Lowry', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christine Lowry
Executive Director – Hospital and Community Services
Waikato District Health Board