

Handling Leaking or Broken Specimen Containers

Definition

The following specimen types are particularly susceptible to leaking and/or breakage:

- urine containers
 - blood specimens
 - glass tubes and vials
 - frozen specimens stored in glass containers
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Rule: Protective Clothing

Always wear gloves and a lab coat when handling specimens of any type. Depending on your task, you may need additional protective clothing, such as goggles or a face shield.

Rule: Broken Glass

- Always sweep up broken glass with a broom and dustpan.
 - Never pick up broken glass with your hands.
 - Bring a Sharps-designated biohazard container to the broken glass; don't carry the dustpan across the room.
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Procedure: Leaking Specimens

If you encounter a leaking specimen container, complete the following steps:

1. Take the specimen and requisition, while still in the specimen bag, to the biohazard area.
 2. Disinfect the leaking container and replace the lid. Replace the entire container if it is defective.
 3. If the requisition has been contaminated, make a photocopy of it.
 4. Change gloves, and then re-bag the specimen and requisition photocopy.
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Rule: Log Update

Any time there is a leaking or broken specimen container in the lab, you must make an entry in the Daily Laboratory Log detailing the following:

- Original requisition number
 - Replacement requisition number, if applicable
 - Originating lab
 - Loss of specimen, if applicable
 - Chain of custody information
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