

Keele University
Institute for Science and Technology in Medicine
Standard Operating Procedure

SOP Number: HTA-4

Version: 1.0

Title: **Procedure for Handling Broken or Leaking Specimens.**

Purpose: To enable staff to dispose of or recover leaking or broken specimens safely.

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SOP History:

VERSION	AMENDMENT	CURRENT VERSION
1.0	None	1.0

1. Introduction:

Specimens that are leaking or broken upon arrival at ISTM or removal from storage are a hazard to the staff members handling them and must be disposed of safely. Samples consisting of human materials must further be handled and disposed of as per the Human Tissue Act 2004 and, where intended for human application, the Human Tissue (Quality and Safety for Human Application) Regulations 2007.

*If the breakage or leakage is a major spillage refer the procedures detailed in SOP HTA-7 Dealing With Major Spillages.

2. Procedure:

2.1 If a leaking or broken specimen arrives or is removed from storage do not touch it or any others it has leaked on. If the surrounding environment has been contaminated prevent access to the contaminated area, as soon as safely possible contact a senior staff member.

2.2 In the event that it is suspected that leakage may have occurred on route:

- Couriers, if used, must be notified immediately.
- Representatives at the site of origin must be notified.
- If the sample has been delivered by hand from a local laboratory the route of delivery must be retraced and potential leakage sites cleared and decontaminated.

2.3 To minimise contamination of the surrounding environment the leaking sample should be transferred to a plastic tray or beaker. Glass vessels should not be used due to the increased breakage risk.

2.5 Under normal circumstances leaking or broken samples are disposed of immediately, however, if it impracticable or impossible to obtain a repeat recovery may be attempted under the guidance of a senior staff member following the procedure detailed below. During recovery attempts full personal protective equipment should be worn as per the procedures in SOP HTA-2.

2.6 Transfer the sample in its container to a biological safety cabinet.

2.7 Remove the lid or cap from the sample and transfer the remaining part of the specimen to another container.

2.8 Replace the lid or cap and place the soiled container in a plastic bag and leave on the plastic tray/beaker.

2.9 If any documentation associated with the sample is soiled by the sample place in another plastic bag and place on the tray to allow the information to be dictated to another member of staff later. Following dictation contaminated documents should be disposed of in an infected waste container.

2.10 The plastic bag containing the broken sample container should be disposed of appropriately and the tray disinfected. Any contaminated packaging should also be decontaminated and disposed of.

2.11 Full details of the incident must be recorded and retained by the senior investigator and may need to be passed to the Safety Officer.