 Department of Health Government of Nunavut		NURSING POLICY, PROCEDURE AND PROTOCOLS	
		Community Health Nursing	
TITLE:		SECTION:	POLICY NUMBER:
Post Mortem Samples		Diagnostics	08-004-00
EFFECTIVE DATE:	REVIEW DUE:	REPLACES NUMBER:	NUMBER OF PAGES:
February 10, 2018	February 2021		4
APPLIES TO:			
Community Health Nurses			

POLICY:

Collecting post mortem samples is the responsibility of the Coroner. However, in accordance with the *Coroners Act* and the *Coroners Forms Regulations*, the Coroner may authorize the Registered Nurse to collect post mortem samples. The Coroner will use Form 11 of the schedule to authorize the nurse to obtain the samples.

PRINCIPLES:

Collecting post mortem samples is the responsibility of the Coroner's office and not Health and Social Services. Therefore, if the nurse does not feel comfortable or confident in obtaining post mortem samples, he/she will not be compelled to do so.

RELATED POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND LEGISLATION:

Policy 05-007-00	Nursing Practice - Employee Responsibilities
Guideline 08-004-01	Guidelines for obtaining post mortem samples
Reference Sheet 08-004-02	Coroner's Protocol for Obtaining Post Mortem Samples

REFERENCES:

Consolidation of Coroners Act R.S.N.W.T. 1988, c.C-20, as amended by Nunavut Statutes s.Nu.2007, c.15, s.177

Consolidation of Coroners Forms Regulations R.R.N.W.T. 1990, c.C-19, as amended by R-092-92.

Government of Nunavut. *Community Health Centre Laboratory Manual*.

GUIDELINES 08-004-01

Collecting Post Mortem Samples:

1. It is the usual protocol of the Nunavut Chief Coroner's Office to request fluid samples be taken in cases where an autopsy will not be performed.
2. The coroner may request the assistance of a registered nurse to obtain samples. Authorization to take the samples will be given to the registered nurse by the coroner in the form of an "Authorization to Take Sample of Bodily Fluids" document. This document (*Consolidation of Coroners Forms Regulations* R.R.N.W.T. 1990, c.C-19, as amended by R-092-92, Form 11) is signed and dated by the coroner.
3. Fluid samples are taken as per the Office of the Chief Coroner Protocol *Body Fluid Collection* using standard precautions.
4. Equipment used should reflect the site and amount of body fluids needed according to the Office of the Chief Coroner Protocol *Body Fluid Collection*.
5. The body fluid samples are forwarded to the appropriate examination laboratory as per the direction of the coroner.
6. The registered nurse shall ensure the coroner has provided an "Authorization to Examine Sample of Bodily Fluids" (*Consolidation of Coroners Forms Regulations* R.R.N.W.T. 1990, c.C-19, as amended by R-092-92, Form 12) which shall accompany the samples to the appropriate examination laboratory. This completed form authorizes the toxicologist to perform the required tests.

RELATED POLICES, GUIDELINES AND LEGISLATION:

Policy 05-007-00	Nursing Practice - Employee Responsibilities
Policy 08-004-00	Post Mortem Samples
Reference Sheet 08-004-02	Coroner's Protocol for Collecting Body Fluids Post Mortem

REFERENCES:

Consolidation of Coroners Act R.S.N.W.T. 1988, c.C-20, as amended by Nunavut Statutes s.Nu.2007, c.15, s.177

Consolidation of Coroners Forms Regulations R.R.N.W.T. 1990, c.C-19, as amended by R-092-92.
Dynacare Kasper Medical Laboratories. (2004). *Directory of Services*. Edmonton, AB.

Office of the Chief Coroner (n.d.). *Body Fluid Collection*.



Coroners Protocol for Fluid Collection Post Mortem

Body Fluid Collection Post Mortem

Blood Collection:

1. Do NOT swab area with alcohol.
2. Use the 16 gauge, 1 ½ inch needle for neck region
3. Can also be performed in femoral vein. (Use 16 gauge, 1 ½ inch needle)
4. Extract minimum of 10 ml of blood (50 ml is the preferred amount).
5. Provide samples in at least one (1) gray and/or plain red stopper tubes.
6. Do NOT separate blood phases.

Urine Collection:

1. Do NOT swab with alcohol.
2. Use 15 gauge, 3 ½ inch needle to puncture the bladder.
3. Extract sufficient amount to fill at least 1 gray stopper tube.
4. Place remainder of urine in sterile urine container.
(Obtaining a urine sample may also be attempted with the use of a catheter if desired)

Vitreous Collection:

1. Do NOT swab with alcohol.
2. Use 16 gauge, 1 ½ inch needle.
3. Insert through the lateral surface of the globe near the outside corner of the eye.
4. Extract the clear vitreous fluid, approximately 2-3 cc per eye
5. Place in a plain red stopper tube. If no red top tubes available, then may use grey

Toxicology Testing:

1. Blood samples are used primarily for the testing of ethanol.
2. Drug use is difficult to detect in blood samples.
3. Urine and/or vitreous samples must be taken to test for common recreational drug use and medications.
4. Ethanol can also be detected in urine and vitreous fluid
5. If you wish to test for a specific drug or medication, you must identify the substance to be tested for.

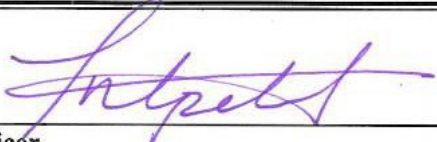

All toxicology samples are to be sent to:

Dynacare Kasper Medical Laboratories
#200, 10150-102 St.
Edmonton, AB
T5J 5E2
Phone: 1-800-661-9876
Fax: (780) 452-8488

Note: A completed copy of the "Authorization to Examine Sample of Bodily Fluids" must accompany the samples to Dynacare Kasper.

REFERENCES:

Office of the Chief Coroner (n.d.). *Body Fluid Collection*.

Approved by:		11 FEB 2011
Chief Nursing Officer		Date
	February 11, 2011	Date
Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services		Date
Effective Date:		April 1, 2011

