

July 7, 2020

Documentation of Laboratory Testing

Documentation of laboratory testing by Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs) is the process of creating a legal record of a laboratory test for the purposes of communication with other healthcare providers. Testing personnel are individuals responsible for performing laboratory tests or portions thereof and/or reporting of the laboratory test results. For some tests this may involve a single MLT/health provider while for other tests with several steps, this may involve different MLTs/health providers. The record may be electronic or paper and identifies the patient and the MLTs/health providers responsible for all or part of the laboratory test.

MLTs are regulated by Saskatchewan Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists (SSMLT). SSMLT Regulatory Bylaws require MLTs to adhere to the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice adopted by the Council. MLTs must use their essential competencies, knowledge, skills, abilities and clinical judgement in their professional practice and are accountable for their actions.

A Medical Laboratory Technologist shall:

- recognize the relationship between test results, diagnoses, clinical information, and test requirements by assessing the information/data based on:
 - expected vs. unexpected results
 - understanding of method limitations
 - the patient's clinical condition
 - other laboratory findings when applicable
- recognize the quality control requirements to be met prior to releasing test results.
- recognize critical values and take appropriate action.
- recognize public health reportable requirements and take appropriate action.
- assess results, identify sources of interference and initiate corrective action.
- meet the legal and ethical requirements of practice and protects the patient's right to a reasonable standard of care.
- identify, document and report deficiencies that may affect the quality of testing.
- use their scientific knowledge and skills to interpret, document and report laboratory test results.
- ensure documentation is accurate, timely, and encompasses the components of the testing they participated in.
- consult with the laboratory medical director or designate when appropriate.

Distribution List

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Saskatchewan Health Authority -Pathology & Laboratory Medicine

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Test Scenarios

Laboratory tests may require one or more testing personnel to complete testing steps. Each healthcare provider is accountable for their own actions.

Example: Blood Grouping, Antibody Screen and Crossmatch

- a single MLT may conduct all three steps indicated above and submit the report with a single report/document/signature and be accountable for the entire process; or
- alternatively, one MLT may perform the blood group and antibody screen and a different MLT may perform the crossmatch should it be necessary; each MLT is accountable for and must document and/or sign the portion of the testing they have performed.

Laboratory Test documentation formats

Documentation may be in different forms to provide professional accountability, including the following:

- test worksheets/records either electronic or paper that identify the testing personnel responsible for each step of the test;
- electronic signature or identification within a Laboratory Information System (LIS) that captures the testing personnel that conducted each portion/step of the test;
- paper report that identifies all the testing personnel responsible for the testing and/or the portion/step of the test each performed;
- any other form that documents who has performed each step of the test.

Guidelines to Documentation of Laboratory Testing

- A MLT shall not complete laboratory test documentation and take sole responsibility for laboratory testing that someone else has conducted.
- A MLT shall ensure laboratory test documentation is in place for the portions/steps of the test for which they are responsible and for any portions/steps performed by others, including those who are not members of any regulated health profession.
- MLTs may be assigned tasks by the employer, but the employer cannot require the MLT to take responsibility for portions/steps of a laboratory test completed by another MLT or by persons who are not members of any regulated health profession.