

The following represents a position statement by the American Association of Pathologists' Assistants regarding Grossing Technicians and Their Duties and Responsibilities

Statement

The utilization of grossing technicians, biopsy technicians, or other personnel with similar titles and training to assist with the macroscopic examination of routine, low-complexity specimens is relatively common and can be valuable in high volume anatomic pathology laboratories. In consideration of workforce shortages, grossing technicians can free up pathologists' assistants to examine more complex specimen types, perform autopsies, and other tasks within their scope of practice. The background and education of non-certified grossing personnel is varied and unregulated leading to nonstandard levels of competency. As a result, the scope of work for grossing technicians in surgical pathology must be limited to the macroscopic examination of routine biopsies and low-complexity specimens that do not require selective sampling. This work must be done under direct supervision by those with formal education and qualifications. For a workload that supports delineation of responsibilities for grossing technicians, the AAPA offers these proposed grossing technician duties and responsibilities as a recommendation.

Proposed Grossing Technician Duties and Responsibilities

Prenalytical Tasks

- Transports specimens from surgery to the anatomic pathology laboratory
- Receives specimens in the anatomic pathology laboratory
- Enters patient information into the laboratory information system, verifying identification
- Accessions specimens and labels specimen containers and requisitions with accession/laboratory numbers
- Labels cassettes with accession/laboratory numbers
- Performs quality control and quality assurance procedures, such as preventive maintenance and temperature checks
- Conducts a daily morgue census and verifies if an autopsy has been requested
- Maintains a clean and well-organized work area
- Performs various clerical duties

Analytical Tasks

- Always maintains strict confidentiality and protects patient information
- Ensures specimen integrity upon receipt and throughout the entire macroscopic examination process
- Performs routine activities involved in the preparation of surgical specimens for histologic processing, according to delineation of privileges, policies, and procedures
- Sets up necessary equipment, supplies, and specimens for macroscopic examination
- Describes gross anatomic features of biopsies or routine, uncomplicated surgical specimens without selective sampling
- Dictates a macroscopic description for routine, uncomplicated surgical specimens without selective sampling, including anatomic site, measurements and dimensions, weight, count, color, and any abnormal findings according to written policies and procedures

- Places tissue in a correctly identified cassette for histologic processing
- Escalates non-routine or complex specimens to the pathologists' assistant or pathologist
- Assists pathologists' assistants and pathologists with postmortem examinations

Postanalytical Tasks

- Loads prepared cassettes into a tissue processor and starts the processor
- Maintains cleanliness of the anatomic pathology suite
- Operates and cleans laboratory equipment, instruments, and workstations
- Maintains wet tissue storage
- Stores, rotates, and disposes of all wet tissues in accordance with departmental procedures
- Disinfects and maintains specimen storage cabinets
- Disposes of hazardous chemical wastes per regulatory guidelines
- Properly labels, stores, handles, and disposes of reagents and hazardous wastes according to local, state, and federal regulations; this may include recycling or reprocessing of reagents used in the department including neutralizing formalin before disposal
- Stocks supplies and assists with clerical duties
- Maintains laboratory equipment and tracks all routine maintenance and quality controls performed
- Files, retrieves, and distributes blocks, slides, and pathology reports
- Adheres to CAP, CLIA, state regulations, HIPAA, safety, and OSHA regulations