

**SUNY Downstate Medical Center -University Hospital  
of Brooklyn Network  
Department of Pathology Policy and Procedure**



**Subject: LAB 25 MORGUE REFRIGERATOR BACKUP**

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Supporting Documents:

Approval Workgroup: Laboratory Administration  
Approval Group

Revision: 3

**I. PURPOSE:**

To ensure the proper storage of deceased remains in the event the morgue refrigerator overflow or malfunctions.

**II. POLICY:**

The Pathology Department will use the Anatomy Department refrigerator (B-491), as a satellite refrigerator, to manage morgue refrigerator overflow and/or malfunction. A labeled key to the Anatomy refrigerator is kept in the morgue, in the Surgical Pathology office, and in the Laboratory Administration office. Public Safety also has been given a key to access the Anatomy refrigerator.

**III. DEFINITION(s)**

None.

**IV. RESPONSIBLE:**

Pathology, Public Safety, Nursing Staff, Anatomy Department, Administrator on Duty (AOD), Transporters, Admitting.

**V. PROCEDURE/GUIDELINES:**

**A. Monday through Friday – Tour II**

1. The morgue attendant is responsible for the daily operations of the morgue. The morgue attendant will notify his supervisor of an overflow and/or morgue refrigerator malfunction. Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The morgue attendant will monitor storage and retrieval of remains to and from the morgue and Anatomy refrigerators. In the event of a malfunction, the morgue attendant and/or department supervisor will call the Control Room at ext. 2810 and/or the Refrigerator Department at ext. 2378 to report the malfunction.
2. The Morgue attendant will notify the Anatomy and Admitting Departments as well as Public Safety of the overflow and/or malfunction. The morgue attendant will supply the names of the deceased that will move to the Anatomy refrigerator to Public Safety and the Admitting Department.
3. The morgue attendant will make notations in the Morgue Log of the transfer of the deceased to the Anatomy refrigerator. In addition, a list of these deceased will be posted on the morgue door as a further reminder.
4. The remains will be clearly labeled by the morgue attendant as belonging to the Morgue/Pathology Department not to be confused with the Anatomy Department's cadavers.
5. The morgue attendant will then transfer the remains to an available space in the Anatomy refrigerator.
6. On the next workday, the morgue attendant will review the Morgue Log for new and existing entries.
7. The morgue attendant will continue communicating with Anatomy, Admitting and Public Safety Departments as to the status of the situation.
8. The morgue attendant will assess the existing situation, and, as soon as space is available, he will retrieve the remains for storage in the morgue refrigerator.
9. Personnel involved in the moves will notify the Admitting Department and Public Safety of any and all changes in storage areas.

10. If the remains are released for burial from the Anatomy refrigerator, personnel involved in that transaction must complete the Morgue Log so that a complete record can be maintained. This record is maintained in the main morgue.

**B. Overflow in Off Hours: Tour I, Tour III, Weekends and Holidays**

1. Public Safety and Nursing staff will accompany the remains to the morgue in the usual manner. The remains are logged in the Morgue Log.
2. In the event the morgue refrigerator is filled to capacity, the Nursing Supervisor and Administrator and/or the (AOD) will then make the decision whether to call in the morgue attendant on call, if necessary. The Nursing Supervisor and/or the AOD will also notify the Admitting and Public Safety Departments of the change or storage space.
3. Personnel escorting the remains will indicate in the Morgue Log that the remains are to be stored in "other," writing in "Anatomy refrigerator". A list of these deceased will be hung on the morgue refrigerator door as a further reminder.
4. The remains will be clearly labeled by the accompanying personnel as belonging to the Morgue/Pathology Department, not to be confused with the Anatomy refrigerator.
5. The remains will then be transferred to an available space in the Anatomy refrigerator.
6. On the next workday, the morgue attendant will review Morgue Log for new and existing entries.
7. The Morgue attendant will notify the Anatomy Department and UHB Morgue remains are being stored in the Anatomy Refrigerator.
8. The morgue attendant will continue communicating with the Anatomy, Admitting and Public Safety Departments as to the status of the situation.
9. The morgue attendant will assess the existing situation, and, as soon as space is available, he will retrieve the remains for storage in the morgue refrigerator.
10. Personnel involved in the moves must notify the Admitting Department and Public Safety of any and all changes in storage areas.
11. If the remains are released for burial from the Anatomy refrigerator, personnel involved in that transaction must complete the Morgue Log so that a complete record can be maintained. The record is maintained in the main morgue.

**C. Off Hours: Morgue Refrigerator Malfunction:**

1. Public Safety and Nursing staff will accompany the remains to the morgue in the usual manner. The remains are logged in the Morgue Log.
2. In the event the morgue refrigerator temperature is warm, the Nursing Supervisor and Administrator on Duty (AOD) must be notified. The Nursing Supervisor and/or the AOD will then make the decision whether to call in the morgue attendant on call, if necessary. The Nursing Supervisor and/or the AOD will also notify the Admitting and Public Safety Departments of the change of storage space.
3. The Nursing Supervisor and/or the AOD will call the Control Room at ext. 2810 and/or the Refrigeration Department at ext. 2378 to report the malfunction.
4. Personnel escorting the remains will indicate in the Morgue Log that the remains are to be stored in "other," writing in "Anatomy refrigerator." A list of deceased will be hung on the morgue refrigerator door as a further reminder.

5. The remains will be clearly labeled by the accompanying personnel as belonging to the Morgue/Pathology Department, not to be confused with the Anatomy Department's cadavers.
6. The remains will then be transferred to an available space in the Anatomy refrigerator.
7. On the next workday, the morgue attendant will review the Morgue Log for new and existing entries.
8. The morgue attendant will notify the Anatomy Department that UHB Morgue remains are being stored in the Anatomy refrigerator.
9. The morgue attendant will continue communicating with the Anatomy, Admitting and Public Safety Departments as to the status of the situation.
10. The morgue attendant will assess the existing situation, and, as soon as the refrigerator is repaired, he will retrieve the remains for storage in the morgue refrigerator.
11. Personnel involved in the move must notify the Admitting Department and Public Safety of any and all changes in storage areas.
12. If the remains are released for burial from the Anatomy refrigerator, personnel involved in that transaction must complete the Morgue Log so that a full record can be maintained. This record is maintained in the morgue.

#### **D. Remote Temperature Monitoring Device (SensaPhone) Notification**

In the event that the morgue refrigerator malfunctions and its temperature exceeds acceptable ranges, the following procedure is to be followed:

The SensaPhone will notify the personnel listed below. If the first person/area listed does not acknowledge the receipt of the notification, the SensaPhone will call the next in line by default.

- a. Control Room 1-718-270-2810
- b. Public Safety 1-718-270-2626
- c. Lab Specimen Accessioning Area 1-718-270-2815
- d. Anatomic Pathology Supervisor 1-718-270-1623 (pager)

#### **SensaPhone Call to Location:**

Upon hearing the message, the responder is prompted to enter an acknowledgement code. The acknowledgement code for this site is (555). Enter the code and follow subsequent instruction given by the SensaPhone. If this is not done, the SensaPhone will continue the notification process, calling the others on this list.

#### **SensaPhone Call to Pager:**

1. Upon receiving a pager notification, the responder must dial 1-718-270-1762 (dial all numbers even in-house +9). To acknowledge the SensaPhone notification and follow the instruction given by the SensaPhone. Enter the Acknowledge Code (555).
2. The responder will then notify the Control Room at x2810 and/or the Refrigeration Department at x2378 and AOD (call operator to locate), unless the control is the responder. The staff of the Control Room will then take appropriate measures to correct the malfunction.
3. The AOD will decide whether to remove cadaver(s) from the Refrigerator Room (ALL1-507) if corrective action is possible within 2 hrs.

4. If Control Room staff and/or Refrigerator Department staff cannot correct the malfunction within 2 hrs, the AOD will instruct to transfer all cadaver(s) from the Refrigerator Room (ALL1-507) to the Anatomy cadaver refrigerator (B-491).
5. The supervisor of Anatomic Pathology, Jaik Koo, will be notified of the malfunction and its correction on the next available work day to document the incident, along with the corrective action.

**E. Contingency Procedure when Cadaver Refrigerator is full or during electrical power failure:**

1. Attach "DO NOT TOUCH" warning pink sheet on to the top of the cadaver(s).
2. Relocate cadaver(s) to the Anatomy Cadaver Refrigerator.
3. Filled out cadaver log sheet with all fields completed and signed by the person who removed the cadaver(s).
4. Add note to Cadaver Log indicating site of cadaver(s).
5. In case of electrical power failure, **immediately** notify to the Control Room at x2810 and the Refrigeration Department at x2378.

**VI. ATTACHMENTS:**

None.

**VII. REFERENCES:**

None.