

## **College of American Pathologists (CAP) Retention of Laboratory Records and Materials**

The College of American Pathologists makes the following recommendations for the minimum requirements for the retention of laboratory records and materials. They meet or exceed the regulatory requirements specified in the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988 (CLIA 88). It may be appropriate for laboratories to retain records and/or materials for a longer period of time when required for patient care, education, quality improvement, or other needs. Some state regulations as well as other federal mandates may require retention of records and/or materials for a longer time period than that specified in the CLIA 88 regulations; therefore any applicable state or federal laws should be reviewed carefully when individual laboratories develop their record retention policies.

<b>Material/Record</b>	<b>Period of Retention</b>
<b><i>General Laboratory</i></b>	
Accession log	2 years
Maintenance/instrument maintenance records	2 years
Quality control records	2 years
<b><i>Surgical Pathology (including bone marrows)</i></b>	
Wet tissue	2 weeks after final report
Paraffin blocks	10 years
Slides	10 years
Reports	10 years
<b><i>Cytology</i></b>	
Slides (negative-unsatisfactory)	5 years
Slides (suspicious-positive)	5 years
Fine needle aspiration slides	10 years
Reports	10 years
<b><i>Non-Forensic Autopsy</i></b>	
Wet tissue	3 months after final
Paraffin blocks	10 years
Slides	10 years
Reports	10 years

### ***Forensic Autopsy***

Wet stock tissue	1 year
Paraffin blocks	Indefinitely
Reports	Indefinitely
Slides	Indefinitely
Gross photographs/negatives	Indefinitely
Accession log	Indefinitely
Body fluids and tissues for toxicology	1 year
Representative tissue suitable for DNA Analysis	Indefinitely

### ***Clinical Pathology***

Patient test records	2 years
Serum/heparinized or EDTA plasma/CSF/Body fluids (except urine)	48 hours
Urine	24 hours*

*\*Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the laboratory director*

Peripheral blood smears/body fluid smears	7 days
Permanently stained slides – microbiology (gram, trichrome, etc)	7 days

### ***Cytogenetics***

Permanently stained slides	3 years
Fluorochrome stained slides	At the discretion of the laboratory director
Wet specimen/tissue	Until adequate metaphase cells are obtained
Fixed cell pellet	2 weeks after final report
Final reports	20 years
Diagnostic images (digitized, prints or negatives)	20 years

### ***Flow Cytometry***

Gated dot plots and histograms	10 years
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### ***Blood Bank***

Donor and recipient records	10 years
Patient records	10 years
Records of employee signatures, initials, and identification codes	10 years
Quality control records	5 years
Records of indefinitely deferred donors, permanently deferred donors, or donors placed under surveillance for the recipient's protection (e.g., those donors that are hepatitis B core positive once, donors implicated in a hepatitis positive recipient)	Indefinitely
Specimens from blood donors units and recipients	7 days post-transfusion

### **Revision History**

Adopted August 1995  
Revised September 1995  
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