

## **BREAST PATHOLOGY GROSSING GUIDELINES**

### **THINGS TO CONSIDER:**

- A. Please review ALL imaging and previous biopsies PRIOR to grossing any breast case.
  - a. It may be helpful to draw out your own guide of prior biopsy site and/or procedure locations. This will be useful when grossing.
- B. Faxitron your breast to look for clips and calcs. Make sure the clip location(s) correlates with imaging.
  - a. Place mastectomies into Faxitron with POSTERIOR surface down
- C. After sectioning your breast into levels, when evaluating the mass size, make sure the dimensions correlate with clinical findings (do not calculate the mass size based off the presence of a mass in certain levels, as this may give you an incorrect and overestimated size).
- D. If you receive a mastectomy with multifocal lesions, measure and document the distance between the lesions in your gross.
- E. Be descriptive in your cassette summary as this is useful when reviewing your slides the following day.
  - a. Document level and location of your sections:
    - i. Level 1- superior OR level 1- upper inner quadrant
    - ii. Level 13- parenchyma between lesion #1 and lesion #2
    - iii. Level 4- lesion #1 at closest approach to posterior margin
    - iv. Level 2- lesion #1 in relation to superior margin

### **FORMALIN FIXATION**

Specimen collection time: The OR nurses record the collection time of all breast specimens in Beaker. This time indicates when the breast specimen has been removed from the patient. The OR staff will contact SurgPath personnel to pick up every breast lumpectomy and mastectomy to try and ensure the ischemic time is within the appropriate limits.

Ischemic time: Breast excisions/re-excisions/lumpectomies/partial mastectomies and all mastectomies (including prophylactic ones) are to be **immediately** (within 1 hour) weighed and placed in 10% neutral buffered formalin (NBF) once received or picked up from the OR. Ideally, this task will be performed by the personnel/technician prior to accessioning the case. The time the specimen was placed in 10% NBF will be written on the specimen container and documented in Case Notes in Beaker. The collection time and the time the specimen has been placed in 10% NBF will be used to calculate ischemic time:

(Time tissue placed in formalin) – (Collection time) = Ischemic Time

Due to CAP-recommended guidelines for ER, PR, and HER2/neu (including FISH) testing, as much as possible, specimens should be placed in formalin within one hour after surgery. Furthermore, the breast tissue should be in contact with formalin for 6-48

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hours, not to exceed 72 hours. Therefore, when a specimen comes in late on Friday, gross the specimen such that you identify the tumor and submit sections of the tumor for the Friday late processor. If the specimen is still very fresh, then please submit the remaining sections (including lymph nodes) during the weekend such that they'll run on the Sunday processor.

When a specimen comes in on the weekend (occasionally on Saturdays), then please gross the entire specimen and submit sections for the Sunday processor. For such Saturday specimens, waiting until Monday to submit sections for the Monday processor will result in suboptimal testing conditions for breast biomarkers, since this will exceed the recommended 48-hour ideal formalin fixation time frame.

As always, RECORD THE ISCHEMIC TIME **AND** THE FORMALIN FIXATION TIME

**Note:** The exception to this is when the requisition states 'Rule out Lymphoma' or a prior core needle biopsy diagnosis was reported as lymphoma. In these cases, call for a lymphoma work-up and DO NOT fix the breast tissue in 10% NBF.

### Calculating formalin fixation times (Westwood):

Monday – Thursday	calculate fixation time until 3am
Friday	calculate fixation time until 2am
Saturday - Sunday	calculate fixation time until 8pm on Sunday
Holiday weekends	contact histology to ensure cassettes are transferred from formalin and placed into alcohol so as not to exceed the formalin fixation time (6-72 hours). The tissue is in formalin for 2 hours on the processor, so please be mindful of accounting for this when calculating fixation times!

### Calculating formalin fixation times (Santa Monica):

Monday – Thursday	<b>6:30 pm VIP load:</b> calculate fixation time until 8:30pm <b>Late load:</b> calculate fixation time until 3am
Friday	calculate fixation time until 2am
Saturday - Sunday	calculate fixation time until 8pm on Sunday

### Calculating formalin fixation times of **Breast Biopsies** (Westwood and Santa Monica):

Routine breast core →	calculate fixation time until 10pm
Late breast core (bx placed in formalin after 4 pm) →	calculate time to 1:30am

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### **SURGICAL PATHOLOGY SPECIMEN RADIOGRAPHY: FAXITRON**

Faxitron image(s) must be obtained and uploaded into Beaker for the following specimen types:

- 1) All excisional biopsy/lumpectomy/partial mastectomy specimens in order to verify microclip(s) and/or microcalcifications
- 2) All mastectomy specimens
- 3) Consider Faxitron imaging paraffin blocks of needle core biopsies as needed for microcalcifications (when initial 3 H&E sections do not show calcs and specimen radiography showed calcs)

When an image is taken, an annotation of the patient's name and surgical case number must be included in each image. Any additional annotations that are relevant to the particular case should also be included, for instance, measurement(s) and relationships of specific anatomic locations to lesion(s), size of tumor, area of calcifications, location of suspicious area(s), summary of sections, etc.

Image(s) should be uploaded into the case in Beaker; this must be noted in the gross description for billing purposes. (i.e., "A Faxitron image was taken of the specimen.")

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**Specimen Type:** MARGIN RE-EXCISION

**Procedure:**

- A. Oriented margin
  - 1. Measure
  - 2. Ink **new margin** black and **remaining surface** blue
  - 3. Section perpendicular to new margin and longest dimension
  - 4. Describe cut surface and any grossly identifiable masses
- B. Un-oriented margin
  - 1. If fragmented- aggregate weight, measurement- embed uninked
  - 2. If intact- weigh, measure
    - a. ink external surface
    - b. section perpendicular to longest dimension
    - c. describe cut surface and grossly identifiable masses

**Gross Template:**

**MMODAL COMMAND:** "INSERT BREAST MARGIN"

It consists of an oriented portion of fibroadipose tissue with a [*suture/clip*\*\*\*] designating [*describe orientation*\*\*\*]. The specimen measures [*measure in three dimensions*\*\*\*] cm in greatest overall dimensions. Sectioning reveals [*yellow-tan cut surface/lesion*\*\*\*]. The specimen is entirely and sequentially submitted in cassettes [*describe cassette submission*\*\*\*].

**INK KEY:**

Black    New margin  
Blue    Remaining surface

**Cassette Submission:** All tissue submitted. You can place up to 3 levels into one cassette. If additional margin is very large, consult with attending.