Disposal of Human Bodies and/or Parts Thereof

EXTREMITIES:

All external members of the human body may be disposed of 2 weeks after final report has been signed out. Requests for private disposal must be in writing (Family Disposal Permit) and received within 48 hours from the date and time the specimen was received in the Pathology Department. External member of human body is defined as an arm or 1 or more joints thereof; a hand, a finger, or 1 or more joints thereof; a leg or 1 or more joints thereof; a foot, a toe, or 1 or more joints thereof; an ear, or the greater part thereof; or the nose or a greater part thereof. The Histology staff will be responsible for notification of Housekeeping when such tissues are ready for disposal.

DEAD FETUS:

A dead born fetus is any fetus born without any sign(s) of life such as beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, breathing, or definite movement of voluntary muscles. In such cases, if the fetus is 20 weeks or more gestation or weighs 350 grams or more, the Mississippi State Department of Health requires that the birth be reported.

If an infant is live born (even if the heart only beats a second or it only takes 1 breath) and then dies, the hospital needs to complete a birth certificate and a death certificate on the infant. If the parents do not choose to have a funeral home take the body for burial, the hospital is responsible for completing the entire death certificate. Across the section that the funeral home usually completes, (items 20a through 20c), the hospital should type “Body Release to Family or Hospital Disposal,” whichever is appropriate. Permit signed by parent is required for disposal of any fetus.

If the dead fetus is 20 weeks or greater gestation or weighs 350 grams or more, an autopsy permit is required before the fetus will be examined by a pathologist. If the dead fetus weighs <350 grams and is <20 weeks gestation, it will be held 48 hours before it is examined and/or discarded UNLESS a disposal permit has been signed and the physician requests the specimen be examined. If a live born fetus expires, it will be held 48 hours before disposal, and any examination by a pathologist requires an autopsy permit.