



Industrial Strike Action Notice

Community Laboratory Service

We have today been advised of further **industrial strike action** by APEX union members, which includes Pathlab's laboratory workers in your area. The action is **scheduled for Monday 24th to Wednesday 26th March**, and only involves staff who are members of the APEX union, so the impact will vary across regions depending on the mix and number of APEX staff. Below is an overview of how our services will be affected to help you plan accordingly.

Room closure information for your patient reference will be updated daily on our [LOCATIONS page](#) on our website from Monday 17th March.

Context and Our Approach

This industrial action stems from pay discrepancies between private and public sector laboratory staff, following the previous government's pay equity settlements. We understand and acknowledge the concerns raised by APEX members and remain committed to working constructively with officials to address these issues.

We are working closely with the union, hospitals, and health professionals to ensure essential, life-preserving testing (LPS) remains available.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation during this challenging time. Please take these restrictions into account when interacting with your patients and defer non-urgent tests where possible.

Post Industrial Action

Please note that on the days following industrial action the demand for laboratory services is greater than usual meaning patients may experience extended wait times at Pathlab collection rooms, and results may take longer to be reported. We would ask that you instruct patients to delay attending our rooms for non-urgent blood tests until a week or two after the industrial action.

Regions & Services Impacted by the Industrial Action

Microbiology Service – all regions

- **All Microbiology specimens** (including urines, faeces, swabs, sputum, seminal fluids) **will NOT be processed, a recollect request will be issued.**
- Microbiology specimens may be sent to the laboratory after the industrial action providing they are stored under appropriate conditions and reach the laboratory in the stated timeframe:

Specimen	Storage conditions	Maximum time collection to laboratory receipt
Bacterial culture swab, white cap eSwab*	Fridge temperature	4 days*
STI swabs & urines, green & yellow cap molecular tubes	Fridge temperature	21 days
HSV/VZV swabs, purple cap molecular tube	Fridge temperature	7 days
HPV swabs, pink cap molecular tube	Fridge temperature	15 days
SurePath vial	Room temperature	28 days
Urine for microbiology	Fridge temperature	1 day
Faeces for microbiology	Fridge temperature	3 days

*Excluding bacterial culture swabs for gonorrhoea that has a maximum storage time of 1 day at fridge temperature.

Please ensure all members of your institution receive a copy of this important notice.

All notices are on the Clinician page on our website. www.pathlab.co.nz

Industrial Strike Action

Tauranga & Western Bay of Plenty

- Business as usual for blood specimens, with **all** collection rooms open, and couriers running.
- **Microbiology specimens will NOT be processed, a recollect request will be issued.**

Whakatane & Eastern Bay of Plenty

- **All** Pathlab collection rooms **CLOSED**.
- **Only Urgent blood samples**, (as outlined below) are to be collected at the practice.
- The Doctors Phoenix will be the central location for all community practices to deliver urgent samples to. **Pathlab courier pickup times from here will be 11am, 2pm, 5pm.**
- Samples will be sent to Tauranga laboratories resulting in a delay in turnaround times.
- **Microbiology specimens will NOT be processed, a recollect request will be issued.**

Waikato

- Pathlab Tristram Street, Hamilton only collection room open **8am – 5pm** (patients will be triaged as per Urgent Test list).
- **All** other Pathlab collection rooms in the Waikato/Hauraki/Coromandel region closed.
- **Only Urgent blood samples**, (as outlined below) are to be collected at the practice.
- Usual phlebotomy service to Braemar & Southern Cross (Hamilton) hospitals.
- All Pathlab internal couriers will be running to GP practises as usual.
- **Microbiology specimens will NOT be processed, a recollect request will be issued.**

Rotorua

- **All** Pathlab collection rooms **CLOSED**.
- All Pathlab couriers will be running to GP practises as usual.
- **Only Urgent blood samples**, (as outlined below) are to be collected at the practice.
- Samples will be sent to Tauranga laboratories resulting in a delay in turnaround times.
- **Microbiology specimens will NOT be processed, a recollect request will be issued.**

Taupo

- **All** Pathlab collection rooms **CLOSED**.
- Turangi & Mangakino couriers as per usual.
- **Only Urgent blood samples**, (as outlined below) are to be collected at the practice.
- Taupo GP practises to deliver specimens to Taupo hospital laboratory.
- Samples will be sent to Tauranga laboratories resulting in a delay in turnaround times.
- **Microbiology specimens will NOT be processed, a recollect request will be issued.**

Urgent Test List

All request forms to state URGENT investigation. All appropriate clinical information MUST be provided. An indicative list as below:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Troponin | • B-HCG serum for ? Ectopic pregnancy / foetal viability |
| • Oncology Patients - pre-Chemo | • CBC |
| • Clozapine | • Coagulation studies |
| • INR - urgent due to instability | • Time critical investigations e.g. CRP / ESR for GCA |
| • D-dimer for VTE Care pathway | |
| • Electrolytes etc for urgent / critical care | |

During the strike action there will be a longer delay in transporting samples to the testing laboratory. We suggest that time critical tests such as Potassium are collected as close to the courier pickup time as possible, to minimise possibility of sample degradation.

If you have any urgent concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us via our website [Contact Us page](#) which is monitored between 7.30am and 5.00pm.

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