

INSTITUTIONAL ANATOMICAL OVERSIGHT REVIEW COMMITTEE

IAORC Chairman: Catherine G. Ambrose, Associate Professor, Department Of Orthopedic Surgery
MSB 6.154 - Phone: 713-500-7007 - Catherine.G.Ambrose@uth.tmc.edu

FACULTY GUIDELINES

There are two main principles that faculty members need to understand:

1. Cadavers and anatomical specimens used in education and research must be treated with dignity and respect. Policies and procedures define the standards for these terms.
2. The Human Structure Facility must be informed of all projects using anatomical specimens.

What are anatomical specimens?

According to UTHSC policy, anatomical specimens are parts of human remains, including bones and viscera. Anatomical specimens may be obtained from deceased human bodies donated to the Willed Body Program, or specimens obtained from a clinical setting (e.g. hospital surgery or morgue). Specific exemptions have been made for teeth obtained from oral surgical procedures, and for tissue taken for pathological analysis.

How do I obtain anatomical specimens?

Anatomical specimens taken from human cadavers must be obtained from the Human Structure Facility, please complete a [Request for Use of Human Anatomical Specimens](#). University policy does not allow individual investigators to obtain cadaveric specimens on their own from outside sources. This policy insures that specimens are obtained from legitimate, ethical sources.

In order to use specimens recovered from clinical settings, such as surgeries or morgues, investigators must have a plan for transporting and disposing of the specimens approved in advance by the Oversight Committee.

What is an acceptable method of transporting specimens?

Specimens to be transferred through public thoroughfares must be transported according to the rules of the Anatomical Board. In general, this means that licensed funeral directors will supervise the transfer. Both members of the Human Structure Facility staff are licensed funeral directors. Institution employees may transfer specimens, but only in approved vehicles. Personal vehicles cannot be used.

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If transport through a public thoroughfare is not required (e.g. from an attached hospital building), the investigator must provide a plan for transport and disposal to be approved by the Oversight Committee. The investigator should demonstrate that the specimens will be obtained with permission, that transport will not expose the public to the specimens, and that the specimens will be stored in an approved location.

What is an approved location?

Cadaveric specimens must be stored and used in rooms approved by the Anatomical Board. The main considerations are adequate ventilation, protection of public access, and protection from commingling with animal tissue. Similar standards will apply for specimens obtained from clinical settings.

How do I dispose of human remains?

Human remains will be cremated in the Human Structure Facility. Therefore, it is imperative that human specimens be kept separate from other waste, including animal tissue. Cremains will be returned to the family, if requested, or scattered at sea. Tissue specimens that are digested as part of an experimental procedure may not be suitable for cremation. Contact Kurt Clark to have tissue removed for cremation.

Individual investigators may not under any circumstances transfer anatomical specimens outside of the University. All such transfers must be approved and arranged by the Human Structure Facility, regardless of the source of the specimens.

Do I have to keep records?

The Human Structure Facility is charged with monitoring the location of all anatomical specimens. For cadaveric specimens, this will be accomplished by the HSF as part of the normal transport procedure. For clinical specimens, investigators will be required to maintain a log containing a unique identifier for each specimen that can be traced back to the medical record. Other required information is the date of transfer to the University, the storage location, the project or course, and the date of disposal. Changes in location should be recorded as well. This information should be communicated to the HSF at regular intervals.

Direct Questions to: Human Structure Facility:
Phone: 713.500.6154 - Fax: 713.500.0621
E-Mail Address: HSF@uth.tmc.edu