

MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN I

This is beginning level, technical work in the performance of a limited number of routine, standardized tests, and/or supervising the daily operational functions of a small (usually one person) medical laboratory. Tests are performed to aid in the diagnosis of disease and treatment of patients and animals. Positions with daily laboratory operational management responsibilities are primarily located in local public health agencies offering a limited variety of medical laboratory tests and services. Positions may also be found in other small laboratories without laboratory management duties where tests performed are routine, limited in variety and less complex than those found at the Technician II level. Employees work with considerable independence in the application of knowledges and techniques to the work area, and are held accountable for quality control and test results. Work may include other related duties as determined by management. Work is supervised by a facility administrator or higher level medical laboratory personnel.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Complexity - The supervision of a small laboratory, which is limited in the variety of tests and services, may include the following duties: testing, selecting and ordering supplies, reagents, kits and equipment; maintaining a laboratory manual; resolving abnormal test results; teaching routine procedures and orienting new staff to laboratory services; maintaining and calibrating less sophisticated equipment; establishing and/or monitoring quality control; maintaining and monitoring records and proficiency testing; and keeping services up to date. These laboratory management duties require working knowledge of laboratory operations and procedures used in the laboratory.

Laboratory procedures are usually performed repetitively under an established procedure and may be performed in more than one medical technological area. Test results are specific and typically do not require clinical application. Examples of tests performed include a variety of the following: hematocrits; urinalysis by dipstick s) and microscopic analysis; blood sugar; pregnancy test (kit); inoculation of media to isolate and identify common fungi and bacteria (i.e. gonococcus, gram negative and positive rods); routine milk and water analysis (tests are not limited to those outlined above).

Guidelines - Program or agency policy manuals generally outline tests and services. The laboratory procedure manual outlines test procedures and normal test parameters. Problem tests, results, and abnormalities are referred to other laboratories. Employees responsible for laboratory supervision will develop and update the laboratory manual. Technical information maybe obtained from laboratory workshops, reference books, other laboratories and local hospitals, and laboratory professionals. Procedures are applicable to most work situations.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Accountability - Employees in small (one-person) laboratories are responsible for accurately performing the procedures assigned, troubleshooting laboratory equipment and procedures and relaying the test results to clinicians. Although these procedures are limited in variety and complexity, the employees do not receive any technical supervision in the performance of these procedures. Employees in other laboratories where technical supervision is available are also responsible for the independent completion and accuracy of procedures performed, but the variety of procedures may be more limited yet more complex.

Consequence of Action - Inaccurate test results could result in an inappropriate or lack of treatment for the patient. The test results can either confirm the clinicians diagnosis or provide information to alter the treatment prescribed by the clinician. If test results and diagnosis are not in concurrence, additional testing may be ordered. Some inaccurate test results could deny clients' certification for a local health program.

Review - Test results are reviewed by the requesting clinician and/or supervisor. Employees function independently in the performance and quality control of these procedures. Employees receive administrative guidance by either a facility administrator or laboratory supervisor. Employees may receive technical advice from available resources in the laboratory, medical community, or from a resource laboratory.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Subject Matter - Employees provide test results to requesting clinicians. Based on the routine nature of these procedures, clinicians are knowledgeable of the significance of these test results. Employees may also provide information concerning the laboratory's testing capabilities and may provide detailed instruction on procedure mechanics to patients and facility staff.

Purpose - Discussions with clinicians concern laboratory procedural capabilities, special information needed in performing procedures, collection of specimens, and reporting tests results. Contacts with other staff members may be to discuss procedure and equipment troubleshooting, or to provide or receive instruction in the performance of procedures.

IV. WORK ENVIRONMENT:

Nature of Working Conditions - Work is performed in a medical laboratory where conditions are generally agreeable.

Nature and Potential of Personal Hazards - Employees may be exposed to infectious organisms, dangerous chemicals, fumes, odors, and electrical equipment.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities - General knowledge of applicable laboratory instrumentation and equipment; general knowledge of the test procedures performed in the laboratory; skill in the use of laboratory equipment and in the performance of procedures; ability to make accurate observations and written reports of test results; ability to understand and follow oral and written instructions.'

Minimum Education and Experience - Completion of a certified laboratory assistant course in medical technology or a comparable course; or high school or General Educational Development diploma and two years of medical laboratory experience; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Minimum Education and Experience for a Trainee Appointment - High school or General Educational Development diploma and one year of general laboratory experience.