

Veterinary Pathology Diagnostic Services

Guidelines for Submitting Paid Post-Mortems

Veterinary Pathology Diagnostic Services: Paid Post-mortem Service (PM) (by arrangement ONLY)

Veterinary Pathology Diagnostic Services at the University of Sydney offers postmortem examinations to external clients from Monday to Friday during the lab working hours, 9Pm – 5Pm. **The service is available by arrangement only.**

Wherever possible, animals with paperwork, received by **1 Pm**, will have their postmortem examination performed on that day. Bodies received **after 1 Pm** may be examined the following workday. However, we will make every effort to perform the necropsy on the same day when feasible. VPDS pathologists may have to prioritise cases on a day with a heavy case load, so there may be occasions where the postmortem examination will be delayed a day. Further information can be found below.

How much does a postmortem cost?

The following prices are EXCLUSIVE of GST.

Prices for legal cases differ from normal PM procedures. Please call the lab to request further details about legal cases.

Gross and histopathology (brain inclusive)

70100	PM - Gross/Histo - Birds	\$223
70101	PM - Gross/Histo - Lab Animals	\$223
70102	PM - Gross/Histo - Small animals (< 10kg)	\$541
70103	PM - Gross/Histo - Large Animals (>10kg)	\$689
70106	PM - Gross/Histo Additional Spinal Cord	\$234

How do I submit a paid postmortem request?

First, contact VPDS to confirm that the service is available at the time of intended submission.

- Phone +61 2 935 13099/ 17456
- Email: vetsci.vpds@sydney.edu.au / ignacia.meza@sydney.edu.au

Once the service has been confirmed, forms **MUST** be filled out and dropped off with any submissions. These are:

1. The request form (Completed and signed by requesting Vet).
2. The new client request form (if applicable)

These forms are available upon request, and can also be found at <http://sydney.edu.au/vetscience/vpds/forms.shtml>

Bodies are best kept cool, not frozen, in a fridge prior to submission. During working hours (Monday to Friday, 9Am-5Pm) bodies can then be dropped off (either by a staff member, courier, or a member of the public) at the VPDS (meet at the parking lot - See addresses at the end of this document). If bodies are dropped off after hours, it can be taken to the reception of

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the University Veterinary Teaching Hospital in Sydney (UVTHS). See addresses at the end of this document. Bodies will be transferred to a purpose-built postmortem cool room utilised by VPDS. **Please note animals submitted for a postmortem examination must ALWAYS have a primary contact clinician listed on the paperwork; VPDS does not liaise directly with the public and the UVTHS staff will not accept bodies where the owner is the anticipated point of contact.** Please inform VPDS prior to dropping off a postmortem outside working hours so we can let the UVTHS know to expect a drop-off.

When can I expect results?

Postmortem examinations are performed within 2 business days of receipt of the body, with an Interim Gross Report sent out in the between 5-10 business days following. Tissues are then fixed and processed, and the slides are evaluated. The Final Report, which includes histopathology findings, is generally delivered approximately 5-7 weeks following the postmortem examination. Additional time may be required depending on the individual case, prior body storage conditions, current working conditions, and the disease processes involved; however, this information will be provided on a case-by-case basis.

What happens to the animal afterwards?

After the postmortem examination, the body is held until it is established no further samples are required, and only then allowed for release under specified conditions. **Due to biosecurity reasons, animals CANNOT be returned to owners or the submitting veterinarian following post-mortem examination.** Submitting clinicians can opt for routine (no charge) or private (fee involved) cremation, as per the submission form. Unless otherwise specified, animals are routinely cremated. If a private cremation is requested, this needs to be arranged through the submitting clinic/hospital within 2 weeks of the postmortem examination.

When is a postmortem examination warranted?

A postmortem examination can often help owners understand why their animals have passed and be fruitful in terms of diagnosis. Often, they can resolve unanswered questions in the owner's or clinician's mind. In sudden death cases, it's important to note that a postmortem examination will rarely reveal functional disturbances (e.g. cardiac arrhythmias, electrolyte disturbances). Furthermore, changes within an acute period (i.e. less than 24 hours) may not manifest grossly or microscopically. If animals are found dead after an unknown/prolonged period of time and/or in adverse weather conditions (e.g. extreme heat or cold), autolysis may further hamper investigations. Although there are many scenarios where a postmortem examination can help rule out possible causes, owners often need to be made aware of these caveats in order to have realistic expectations. Please provide as much clinical history as possible to address the case.

Who can I contact for more information?

The phone number for Veterinary Pathology Diagnosis Services is **02 9351 7456**. Our email for general enquiries is vetsci.vpds@sydney.edu.au.

Please don't hesitate to contact us with any queries; we are here to help!

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Weekend Post-Mortem Service Notice

Please note that the VPDS post-mortem service is unavailable on weekends. All post-mortem submissions must be reviewed and approved by a VPDS pathologist prior to acceptance, and pathologists are not rostered on weekends. VPDS Technical staff and UVTHS reception Staff are not authorised to accept cases without this mandatory clinical approval.

The UVTHS facility also does not have a cold room to store animals while awaiting pathology review. If your clinic or hospital has the capacity to store the animal appropriately (ideally under refrigeration), you are welcome to resubmit your post-mortem request on Monday during our operating hours. The request will then be evaluated by the pathologist team.

****Address for drop off:**

UVTHS: 65 Parramatta Rd, Camperdown NSW 2050

VPDS: as above – Meet at the parking lot next to UVTHS

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Operating Hours:

Monday–Friday: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Weekends & Public Holidays: Closed

Contact Information:

Email: vetsci.vpds@sydney.edu.au

Phone: 02 9351 7456