



Industrial Strike Action Notice

Community Laboratory Services

As you may be aware, **industrial strike action** by APEX union members, which includes Pathlab’s laboratory workers in your area, is **scheduled for Wednesday 5th and Friday 7th February**. The action 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 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.

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 remains available and to minimise disruption to the community.

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.

Regions & Services Impacted by the Industrial Action

Microbiology – all regions

- From 6am Monday, 3rd February, all Microbiology services—including urine, faeces, swabs, sputum, and other samples—will be limited to Life Preserving Services (LPS) only across all regions. This restriction is necessary due to the processing time required for culture samples.
- Microbiology specimens may be sent to the laboratory after the industrial action providing that they are stored under appropriate conditions and reach the laboratory in the stated timeframe:

Specimen	Storage conditions	Maximum time from collection to laboratory receipt
Bacterial 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

Industrial Strike Action

Tauranga & Western Bay of Plenty

- Business as usual with **all** collection rooms open, and couriers running.
- **Microbiology testing to operate on a strict LPS basis.**

Whakatane & Eastern Bay of Plenty

- **All** Pathlab collection rooms closed.
- **Only Urgent 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.
- Samples will be sent to Tauranga laboratories resulting in a delay in turnaround times.
- **Microbiology testing to operate on a strict LPS basis.**

Waikato

- Pathlab Tristram Street, Hamilton collection room only open (patients will be triaged as per Urgent Test list).
- **All** other Pathlab collection rooms in the Waikato/Hauraki/Coromandel region closed.
- **Only Urgent 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 testing to operate on a strict LPS basis.**

Rotorua

- **All** Pathlab collection rooms closed
- All Pathlab couriers will be running to GP practises as usual.
- **Only Urgent samples**, (as outlined below) are to be collected at the practice.
- Samples will be sent via 3 Pathlab couriers between Rotorua and Tauranga laboratories resulting in a delay in turnaround times.
- **Microbiology testing to operate on a strict LPS basis.**

Taupo

- **All** Pathlab collection rooms closed
- Turangi & Mangakino couriers as per usual.
- **Only Urgent 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 testing to operate on a strict LPS basis.**

Urgent Test List

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

- | | |
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| • 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 lab. 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 [Contact Us page](#) which is monitored between 7.30am and 5.00pm.

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