

**New York State Dept of Health
Bacteriology Proficiency Testing Program
Instruction Sheet – Gram Stains**

April 30, 2012

The Gram stain category is applicable to laboratories that prepare and examine gram-stained smears for the presence of bacteria. There are 3 proficiency tests annually in this category. A minimum score of 80% is required to pass each test event. Failure to achieve a score of 80% on two of three consecutive testing events is considered unsuccessful performance.

Protect yourself by proper handling. If any of the specimens are damaged in transit autoclave the entire set and inform our office at once. If there is any problem with the specimens, you **MUST** inform our office before close of business on **May 8, 2012** by calling (518) 474-4177.

Instructions

- This test event consists of five slides. Each slide contains 3 sample areas. The circle closest to the labeled end of the slide contains the proficiency test specimen. The two remaining circles are empty and are available for quality control use. A Gram-positive control (e.g., *Staphylococcus aureus*) and a Gram-negative control (e.g., *Escherichia coli*) can be placed in each of these circles. **The use of the two empty circles for quality control is left to the sole discretion of each laboratory and is not part of the testing event.**
- Stain the proficiency test slides according to your laboratory's Gram stain procedure.
- Examine the stained proficiency slides under the microscope at 100X magnification (oil immersion).
- Report the Gram stain characteristics and morphology of the microorganism(s) detected.

Submission of results

- The deadline for submission of results is **May 14, 2012**.
- Results must be submitted electronically unless prior approval has been obtained from the Clinical Laboratory Evaluation Program.
- **Electronic reporting: Do not submit paper results.** Specific questions regarding electronic reporting should be addressed to the Clinical Laboratory Evaluation Program at **(518) 485-5378** or by emailing clepeptrs@health.state.ny.us

If you have any questions regarding the Bacteriology Proficiency Testing Program, please contact Dr. Wendy Archinal at **(518) 474-4177** or bacti@wadsworth.org.