



Medical Board Guidelines
Adopted on 29 May 2006

Acknowledgement

The Board thanks the NSW Medical Board for permission to adopt their Statement.

Notwithstanding the very best of all involved, pathology and imaging reports will, from time to time be generated after hours; occasionally quite late at night.

Pathologists and Radiologists have an ethical obligation to act on a result that indicates an immediate threat to the life or wellbeing of the patient concerned. It is a source of much frustration that some referring doctors fail to provide an after-hours contact number at time of requesting the pathology or radiology investigation, sometimes leaving no alternative to involving the policy in contact the patient.

You should be aware that the Board's Code of Professional Conduct: Good Medical Practice states that:

You should be satisfied that when you are off duty, suitable arrangements are made for your patients' medical care. These arrangements should include effective handover procedures and clear communication between doctors.

The provisions of the code are relevant considerations in determining what constitutes proper and ethical conduct by a registered medical practitioner. Of course, it is desirable that the problem is avoided rather than investigated as a result of an adverse patient outcome.

You are strongly advised to review this aspect of your practice to ensure that you are not exposing yourself or your patients to unnecessary risk.