

MEMORANDUM
from the
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF TISSUE BANKS

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Date: *May 18, 2017*
To: *Healthcare Professionals in the United States*
From: *Jason LoVerdi, VP of Accreditation*
Subject: *Best Practice to Confirm Current AATB Accreditation (Rev. 3)*

This memorandum serves as notice it is best practice to confirm a tissue bank's current accreditation status by accessing the AATB website to perform a relevant, real-time, accredited tissue bank search.

Personnel at healthcare facilities and from authorities periodically have a desire to confirm whether a tissue bank's AATB accreditation is current and valid. **The best method to confirm accreditation is to access the AATB website homepage (www.aatb.org) and perform individual searches using the "Accredited Bank Search" function.** Search results are printable for your files and the printout contains the AATB Accredited Institution logo, the date of the search/printout, the tissue banking functions for which it is accredited, the tissue bank's accreditation number, as well as the accreditation expiration date.

The "Accredited Bank Search" is not compatible with Internet Explorer versions 8 - 11. A free upgrade with Microsoft Edge is available at: (<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/search/result.aspx?q=microsoft+edge&form=MSHOME>). If you experience **technical issues** with the AATB "Accredited Bank Search", please contact Jamien Payne, Director of IT and Membership, at (paynej@aatb.org). The "Accredited Bank Search" is compatible with Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, and Firefox. If you have any question regarding an AATB Accredited Institution, please contact Jenny Chatman, Accreditation Manager, at (chatmanj@aatb.org).

Common practice has evolved that includes obtaining a copy of a tissue bank's accreditation certificate either from staff at the AATB Executive Office or from personnel at the tissue bank. An alternative method to obtain a certificate copy has been to access the website of tissue banks that provide it as a .pdf version. **The practice of obtaining a copy of an AATB accreditation certificate should not be relied upon due to the following reasons:**

- 1) An AATB accredited institution could have its accreditation withdrawn or suspended, but the accreditation certificate in your file, or one that is available by Internet, may indicate further dates of accreditation that no longer exist. The AATB re-accreditation cycle occurs every 3 years but a suspension or withdrawal of accreditation can occur at any time;
- 2) When a tissue bank's accreditation is suspended or withdrawn by AATB, its name is immediately removed from the database used by the search function on

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- 3) There are times when the re-accreditation process requires an extension to the expiration date; and
- 4) Forged AATB accreditation certificates have been discovered which additionally questions the practice of their use to confirm accreditation status.

Concerning a related issue, there is often confusion in regard to expectations of The Joint Commission at the following Standard and Element of Performance (EP) from the "Transplant Safety Chapter" of applicable Comprehensive Accreditation Manuals:

III. Transplanting Tissues

A. Standardized Procedures to Acquire, Receive, Store, and Issue Tissue (TS.03.01.01)

TS.03.01.01

The hospital uses standardized procedures for managing tissue.

Elements of Performance for TS.03.01.01

(relevant part only)

3. The organization confirms that tissue suppliers are registered with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a tissue establishment and maintains a state license when required.[†]

Note: This element of performance does not apply to autologous tissue or cellular-based products considered tissue for the purposes of these standards but classified as medical devices by the FDA.

[†] For U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) registration, the supplier registration status may also be checked annually by using the FDA's online database: <http://www.fda.gov/cber/tissue/tissregdata.htm>

This EP requires that a tissue supplier's registration to be confirmed is with FDA, and confirmation of licensure is from a state (when required by the state). This Joint Commission's EP does not require that "accreditation" certificates be maintained or that accreditation must be confirmed. Requiring accreditation of a tissue supplier can be desirable because tissue establishments that seek and obtain AATB accreditation do so voluntarily and this indicates they have passed a rigorous inspection and professional accreditation process. Instead of obtaining a copy of an AATB accreditation certificate, the AATB website's "Accredited Bank Search" function and print capability is recommended to periodically confirm the accreditation status of a tissue establishment.

Depending where a tissue bank is located, or where it distributes tissue, a state license, permit, certification, or state registration could be required. The AATB recommends contacting the appropriate state authorities for specific requirements.

If you have any questions contact Jason LoVerdi (JLoVerdi@aatb.org)