



Breast - Scope of RLN Surgery and Related Data Items

I. Axillary RLN - 2 types

- 1. Sentinel Axillary
- 2. Non-Sentinel Axillary (may be documented in record as just “axillary”)

II. Breast RLN Procedures - Review and Clarification

(Important: Procedure is KEY. The RLN procedure performed determines the SCOPE of RLN SURGERY code. The procedures performed are documented in the OP Report.)

- \* FNA (axillary RLN) or Core Bx
- \* SLN Bx (sentinel axillary node Bx)\*
- \* ALND (non-sentinel axillary node dissection)
- \* Combined SLN Bx and ALND (Note if performed on the same or a different date.)

\*Note: A SLN Bx differs from a Core Bx. A SLN Bx removes the mapped sentinel nodes.

- ◆ During clinical work-up, note if the PE and/or imaging prompted a RLN FNA or Core Bx.
- ◆ In the Op Report note which RLN procedure(s) were performed. An ALND may also be done on the same or a different date than a SLN Bx. The procedure dates affect both the Scope of RLN Surgery and SLN Bx Positive codes.
- ◆ Code all related RLN fields based on procedures performed per the Op report and path results. Related RLN fields are as follows: Scope of RLN Surgery, applicable AJCC node suffixes, SLN Positive and Examined, SLN Bx Date, RLN Positive and Examined, RLND Date, EOD Regional Nodes, and SSDI – LNs Axillary Level I-III.

III. Scope of RLN Surgery

- ◆ Code the cumulative RLN procedure(s) performed in the Scope of RLN Surgery field.
  - A. Positive FNA procedure or Core Bx procedure (code 1)
  - B. SLN procedure Scenarios
    - ◇ Only SLN removed (code 2)
    - ◇ Both sentinel and some non-sentinel ALN - not an ALND procedure (code 2)

When SLN Bx procedure Planned, but SLN Mapping Failed:

- ◇ No Nodes removed or found in specimen (code 2 - SLN Bx attempted)

Note: Surgeon may then remove some non-sentinel ALN or perform an ALND.

- ◇ Only some non-sentinel ALN removed - not an ALND procedure (code 2)
- ◇ Only ALND procedure instead (code 6 - SLN Bx was attempted also.)

- C. ALND Procedure Only (code 5)
- D. Combination SLN Bx & ALND Procedures
  - ◆ Same Date (code 6 and SLN+ code 97)
  - ◆ Different Dates (code 7 and code the number of SLN+)

IV. AJCC Staging Node Suffix fields

- A. FNA - cN Suffix field: (f) for example, cN1(f), or (sn)
- B. Only SLN Bx – pN Suffix field (sn) / ypN Suffix field (sn), if neoadjuvant tx was administered

V. Sentinel LN fields

|              |              |             |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| SLN Positive | SLN Examined | SLN Bx Date |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|

Note: Code only SLN in the above fields. Code the number of any non-sentinel ALN removed during a SLN Bx procedure in the RLN Examined field—not in the SLN Examined field. See the “RLN Scenario Coding Examples” section below.

Breast - Scope of RLN Surgery and Related Data Items - 2

VI. Regional LN fields

|              |              |           |
|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| RLN Positive | RLN Examined | RLND Date |
|--------------|--------------|-----------|

Regional LN fields are cumulative.

VII. EOD - Regional Nodes

VIII. SSDI - Lymph Nodes Axillary Level I-II

**Note:** This SSDI field captures microscopically examined Level I-II axillary lymph nodes, both sentinel and non-sentinel.

RLN Scenario Coding Examples

☒ SLN Bx Planned, Attempted & Mapping Failed

SLN Bx Procedure Attempted - No Nodes removed

OP Report: "Attempted left axillary SLN biopsy (tracer did not map), given pathology of DCIS, axillary lymph node dissection was not performed."  
Path Report: No nodes found.

SLN+ 98 SLN Examined 00 Date: Blank SCOPE 2 (SLN Bx attempted)  
RLN+ 98 RLN Examined 00 Date: Blank pNX (suffix Blank) / EOD Reg Nodes 000 / SSDI - Lymph Nodes Axillary Level I-II X.9

SLN Bx Procedure Attempted - Only Non-sentinel nodes removed

OP Report: "6/05/25 Right Lumpectomy. Attempted left axillary SLN biopsy (tracer did not map), excised 2 non-sentinel axillary nodes."  
Path Report: 0/2 ALN

SLN+ 98 SLN Examined 00 Date: 06-05-2025 SCOPE 2 (SLN Bx attempted)  
RLN+ 00 RLN Examined 02 Date: Blank  
pN0 (suffix sn) / EOD Reg Nodes 070 / SSDI - Lymph Nodes Axillary Level I-II 00

☒ Only SLN Bx Procedure performed w/ both SLN and some Non-sentinel Axillary RLN removed

OP Report: "02/23/25 Left Total Mastectomy w/SLN Bx"  
Path Report: 1/3 SLN and 0/2 non-sentinel ALN

SLN+ 01 SLN Examined 03 Date: 02-23-2025 SCOPE 2  
RLN+ 01 RLN Examined 05 Date: Blank  
pN1 (suffix sn) / EOD Reg Nodes 200 / SSDI - Lymph Nodes Axillary Level I-II 01

☒ Only ALND performed

OP Report: "04/22/25 Right Modified Radical Mastectomy w/ALND"  
Path Report: 5/11 ALN

SLN+ 98 SLN Examined 00 Date: Blank SCOPE 5  
RLN+ 05 RLN Examined 11 Date: 04-25-2025  
pN2 (suffix Blank) / EOD Reg Nodes 200 / SSDI - Lymph Nodes Axillary Level I-II 05

☒ Combined SLN Bx & ALND Procedure

**SAME** Date  
Op Report: "8/17/2025 Right breast Lumpectomy w/SLN Bx and ALND"  
Path Report: 2/3 SLNs, 1/11 (non-sentinel) ALN

SLN+ 97 SLN Examined 03 Date: 08-07-2025 SCOPE 6  
RLN+ 03 RLN Examined 14 Date: 08-07-2025  
pN1 (suffix Blank) / EOD Reg Nodes 200 / SSDI - Lymph Nodes Axillary Level I-II 03

**DIFFERENT** Date  
Op Report 8/12/25 FNA ALN. 8/17/2025 Left breast Lumpectomy w/SLN Bx 9/07/2025 ALND  
Path Report: ALN FNA: 0/1; 2/3 SLNs; 3/10 (non-sentinel) ALN.

SLN+ 02 SLN Examined 03 Date: 08-17-2025 SCOPE 7  
RLN+ 05 RLN Examined 13 Date: 09-07-2025  
pN2 (suffix Blank) / EOD Reg Nodes 200 / SSDI - Lymph Nodes Axillary Level I-II 05

Breast - Scope of RLN Surgery and Related Data Items - 3

☒ Positive FNA with Subsequent Negative ALND After Neo-Adjuvant Tx

Op Report 8/12/25 FNA ALN. 02/01/26 Right Total Mx w/ALND  
Chemotherapy: 8/16/25 – 10/30/25 Neadjuvant Carboplatin/Paclitaxel fol-  
lowed by 11/15/25 – 12/30/25 Adriamycin/Cytosan  
Path Report: ALN FNA: 1/1; 0/10 (non-sentinel) ALN

SLN+ 98 SLN Examined 00 Date: Blank SCOPE 5  
RLN+ 95 RLN Examined 10 Date: 02-01-2026  
cN1 (suffix f) / ypN0 (suffix Blank) / EOD Reg Nodes 150 / SSDI - Lymph  
Nodes Axillary Level I-II X.6

References

- SEER Program Coding and Staging Manual 2025  
  
Scope RLN Surgery, p. 188  
Coding Descriptions, p. 188  
Coding Instructions, p. 188  
Date of Sentinel lymph node biopsy (SLNBx), breast primary C50-C509, p. 190-191  
Sentinel Lymph Nodes Examined, p. 193  
Sentinel Lymph Nodes Positive, pp. 194-195  
Date of Regional Lymph Node Dissection, p.196  
Regional Lymph Nodes Positive, pp. 197-199  
Regional Lymph Nodes Examined, pp. 200-202
- [Site-Specific Data Items Manual \(SSDI\), v3.2](#), Breast, 3882: LN Positive Axillary Level I-II, pp. 198-200

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