FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY

Guidelines For Evidence Submission

In general, physical evidence must be submitted according to the following guidelines. An evidence examination request form (DPS-997C) must be completed. If there are questions or concerns about the submission of a particular item, please call and speak to evidence receiving personnel. (203-639-6468)

A. General Packaging Requirements:

1. All evidence, including firearms, should be submitted in a tamper-evident, *sealed* container or package.

   Manufactured evidence storage bags must have a self-sealing capability with initials placed on the seal(s).
   All other plastic bags, used for packaging, must be heat sealed and initialed over the seal. **Plastic bags, not specially manufactured for evidence storage, will not be accepted if sealed with evidence tape – the seal can be compromised.**

2. A tamper-evident seal must be initialed. Tamper-evident includes:
   a. Heat seal on zip-lock or other plain plastic bags.
   b. Paper bags and envelopes taped end to end, over the opening.
   c. Staples alone are **not** sufficient.
   d. Metal cans taped over the top on opposing sides.
   e. Specially manufactured, evidence storage bags (tyvek, plastic, etc.) must be sealed with tamper evident material.
   f. Tamper-evident tape is evidence tape that will not remain intact upon its removal.

3. Computers, submitted as evidence, should have evidence tape placed over the power supply slot and over disk, CD, DVD, and backup tape slots. Use evidence tape from the back to the sides to insure computer case integrity. Initials shall be placed on the tape and seal(s).

4. All containers must be labeled with:
   a. Police Department case number.
   b. Description of item.
   c. Item number.
   d. Date and time seized.
   e. Name/initials/badge # of seizing officer.
   (A photocopy of the JDCR18 should not be used as a label)

B. Completing the Request for Examination Form (DPS-997C):

Separate request forms are not required for each piece of evidence submitted. Evidence submitted to one laboratory should be placed on one form. Each case must have its own request form. Related cases will be cross-referenced.

1. The form may be typed or neatly handwritten.
2. Fill in or respond to all blank spaces.
3. If evidence from this case was previously submitted to the Laboratory, mark the appropriate box and list the previously assigned Laboratory case number.
4. List the full names and DOB's of all suspects and victims. If additional suspects are developed at a later time, submit the information on an additional Request for Examination of Physical Evidence form.
5. Give a brief summary of the case. Emphasize facts that are relevant to the evidence examination request. If there is a companion case, state that fact in the summary. List each item and a brief description of that item.
6. The listed item numbers must correspond with the exhibit numbers written on the actual evidence containers.
7. List all examinations that you want completed for each piece of evidence. Requests may be general in nature. Laboratory personnel will evaluate the evidence and determine the appropriate type and sequence of testing. List any and all examinations that you desire, for each piece of evidence submitted. Requests may be general in nature. E.g.: Examine for trace evidence, Serology, test fire the weapon and enter into NIBIN
8. Remarks: Include any pertinent information. E.g.: SPBI number of suspects, Evidence previously examined, Evidence exposed to known adverse chemical or environmental factors.
9. Keep the Laboratory informed of any changes in the case. E.g.: New suspects developed, Arrests made, Court disposition, Case closed at the Troop/ P.D.– including how it was closed.

C. Joyce Warrants

1. Clearly identify the submitted evidence that will be examined pursuant to the issuance of a "Joyce" search and seizure warrant.
2. Submit a copy of a valid search and seizure warrant, page 5 of the affidavit, after a Judge signs it.
3. The warrant copy will be date stamped, and supervisory personnel from the Laboratory will sign the warrant. A copy of the stamped and signed warrant will be issued to the submitting agency.
4. Warrants must be submitted at the same time the physical evidence is submitted. If evidence was submitted without a Joyce warrant and subsequently you are advised of the need for a warrant, notify the Laboratory immediately.
5. The submitting Officer is required to file the return on the warrant in compliance with statutory requirements and department guidelines.
6. In compliance with statutory requirements, the examination on evidence submitted under a Joyce warrant will commence within 10 days of submission, but may not be completed within that time period.

THE COLLECTION AND PACKAGING OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

A. Fire Scene Evidence

1. Collect debris or clothing suspected of containing accelerants. Use trained K-9 or Fire Marshal personnel to assist in locating evidence.
2. Place debris or clothing in a clean metal paint can, approximately 2/3 full. Do not use plastic bags. Glass jars can be used for liquid samples.
3. Collect control samples from areas adjacent to the suspected sample area.

B. Sexual Assault Cases

1. Arrange for the victim to proceed to a hospital or medical facility as soon as possible. Instruct the victim to avoid going to the bathroom or cleaning in any capacity.
2. A *Sirchie* CT100 Sexual Assault Evidence Kit is utilized during the physicians examination.
3. Take custody of the sealed and labeled CT100 Kit and corresponding bag of victim's clothing.
4. Refrigerate (do not freeze) the CT100 Kit and arrange for submission to the Laboratory as soon as practicable.
5. In most cases the initial submission of evidence should include only the CT100 Kit and victim's clothing. If circumstances warrant, additional items such as bedding or vehicle seat covers may be submitted. In all cases, potential evidence should be seized and maintained even if it is not included in the initial submission.
6. If a suspect is developed the Laboratory may need known blood and hair samples. A sexual assault offender kit is available. The kit contains materials for other samples and clothing if a suspect is developed soon after the incident.
7. A summary of the case should include information such as use of condom, ejaculation, etc.

C. Blood Samples – Body Fluids – DNA Samples

1. Liquid Samples: Collect on a clean cotton swatch and air dry before packaging.
2. Known Blood Samples: Obtain one purple top tube of blood.
3. Dried Bloodstains: Photograph and document the pattern prior to collecting. The preferred method is to send the article containing the stain to the lab. A second option is to scrape the stain into a druggist fold or use a sterile swab moistened with distilled H_2O. Air-dry the swab prior to packaging.
4. Bloodstained clothing and articles: air dry and wrap in paper.
5. Clothing or articles containing other body fluids: air dry and package in paper. (Wrap flat, protecting the stained area.)

D. Bombs and Explosives

1. Have the device inspected and deactivated by Emergency Services personnel. Whenever possible photograph the device before submitting it to the Laboratory. **DO NOT SUBMIT UNEXPLODED DEVICES!**
2. Submit the explosive material for analysis.
3. This laboratory does not routinely examine the actual mechanism.
4. Collect residue from a bomb scene and package in cans, glass jars or druggist folds. Remember: the device itself is as important as the explosive material used.

E. Gun Shot Residue

1. Use a GSR collection kit. If the kit has components for both SEM samples and AA samples use the SEM discs first.
2. Obtain the samples as soon as possible and before the individual is fingerprinted or allowed to wash his/her hands.
3. GSR collection kits can be used to collect GSR samples from vehicle interiors or other surfaces suspected of containing GSR.
    a. GSR samples are not analyzed in routine suicide cases.
4. Clothing may also be examined for the presence of gunshot residue.

F. Distance Determination

1. To preserve gunpowder patterns on clothing, package items flat and when possible on a hard surface, i.e. cardboard and wrapped in brown paper.
2. The actual weapon must be submitted in order to conduct distance testing.

G. Paint Samples

Paint samples are commonly encountered in motor vehicle accidents and burglaries with forced entries.

1. Smears: Seize the entire object containing the smear. Otherwise, scrape off the smear and place in druggist fold. Ideally, chip off the smear area, thus collecting samples of the underlying paint. Do not use tape lift method of collection.
2. Chips: Handle with care. It is possible to physically match chips with the damaged area of the paint origin.
3. Known paint samples: Collect as chips, including every layer of paint. Collect samples as near to the area of damage as possible.
4. Paint samples should be placed in druggist folds and placed in a secondary container i.e. envelope.
5. The case summary should include a description of vehicles involved. Not veh. #1 vs. veh. #2.

H. Hairs – Fibers & Trace in General

1. Collect with forceps. Vacuum sweepings are discouraged.
2. Package in druggist folds, and place the folds into envelopes.
   DO NOT PLACE HAIRS OR FIBERS DIRECTLY INTO PLASTIC BAGS.
3. Separate collection areas: i.e. front passenger floor.
4. When collecting known hair samples pull approximately 20-40 hairs from the desired body region. With head hair samples, collect at least 10 hairs from both sides, the front and the back (Total 40 hairs).
5. Known head hairs should be packaged separately from any questioned samples.

I. Firearms

NO LOADED firearms will be accepted without prior approval.

1. Unload all firearms prior to submission. As you unload the weapon record the exact state in which the weapon was found, such as the chamber position.
2. With pistols, leave the magazine out of the weapon and ensure there are no live rounds in the chamber.
3. Submit shell casings and projectiles in separate sealed envelopes.
4. Any weapon legally in police custody should be submitted to the laboratory for entry into NIBIN (formally known as Drugfire). Exception: Any weapon held for safekeeping or pursuant to a protective order will not be accepted at the laboratory.

J. Latent Prints

1. Generally, packaging should be conducted in such a manner as to minimize contact between the object with possible prints and the surface of the packaging material.
2. After dusting an object, collect the developed print with a lifter. If you are unable to lift the developed print you must cover the print with lifting tape or firmly secure the dusted object within a box.
3. Any item with a porous surface, such as paper, can be placed in an envelope and forwarded to the laboratory for chemical processing.
4. Narcotics packaging can be processed for latent prints. Remove the narcotics and submit the packaging for processing. An alternative method is to bring the packaging (narcotics still enclosed) to the laboratory. You must call ahead and schedule an appointment because the examination will be conducted while you wait.
5. Elimination Prints should be submitted whenever possible.

K. Questioned Documents

1. Questioned document examinations are conducted on printed, written or typed materials when the origin is unknown or the authenticity is in doubt.
2. If applicable, request a latent print examination in addition to questioned document examination.
3. Originals for questioned and known items should be submitted. No faxed copies will be accepted.
4. Known standards must be collected. Known standards can be obtained through requested writings or from a genuine handwriting sample. Known standards must be packaged separately from questioned samples.
5. If more than one set of standards are submitted, each set must be packaged separately.
6. Many typewriters contain records on the enclosed ribbon.
7. Ink, papers, and typewriters can be examined.
8. Additionally, serology – DNA tests can be conducted on envelope seals.
9. For information concerning what exemplars are needed, please call the document section of the lab. (203-639-6400)

L. Imprint and Impression Evidence

1. Footwear patterns and tire tracks are the commonly encountered examples.
2. Photograph with scale, prior to collection, at a 90° angle.
3. If possible, seize the article on which the print is located.
4. Lifting methods can collect some types of imprints.
5. Casting with dental stone can collect impressions in dirt.
6. Suspect samples should be seized as soon as possible to minimize any additional wear, which can affect the individual characteristics.
7. Known samples should be collected.