

# SOP 002 – Test Assignment

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## SOP 002 – Test Assignment

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North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Toxicology Laboratory	<b>Revision:</b>	<b>Revision Date/Initials:</b>
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## SOP 002 – Test Assignment

### 1. Principle

- 1.1. This SOP describes the test assignment procedure for specimens and physical evidence received by the NC OCME Toxicology Laboratory. Test assignments are only made by designated laboratory staff and take into account the probable cause of death, specimens available, and analyses requested.

### 2. Materials

- 2.1. Networked PC
- 2.2. Ballpoint pen (preferably colored)
- 2.3. Highlighter (preferably pink)
- 2.4. Paperclips

### 3. Procedure for Test Assignment

- 3.1. The evidence technician (or proxy) gives the Request for Toxicological Analysis form(s) (TRF) (DHHS form #1167) to the designated laboratory staff member for test assignment.
- 3.2. The test assigner ensures that there is a probable cause of death, pertinent history, and analysis request given.
- 3.3. The test assigner will read the probable cause of death, history, and analyses requested and assign appropriate drug screens or tests as necessary.
  - 3.3.1. Turn to the back side of the TRF.
  - 3.3.2. On the left-hand side of the specimen number barcode in which tests are to be assigned write the abbreviation for the desired test:
    - 3.3.2.1. “OB” for organic bases screen
    - 3.3.2.2. “LC” for LC/MS screen
    - 3.3.2.3. “CO” for carbon monoxide (see 3.5)
    - 3.3.2.4. “AN” for acids/neutrals screen
    - 3.3.2.5. “Salicylates” for salicylates
    - 3.3.2.6. “EG” for ethylene glycol
    - 3.3.2.7. “EtOH” for volatiles
    - 3.3.2.8. “Helium” for helium
    - 3.3.2.9. “GHB” for GHB
    - 3.3.2.10. The specific analyte of interest for a direct quantitation
    - 3.3.2.11. “ID” for identification of physical evidence
    - 3.3.2.12. “Count” for counting prescription medication(s)

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- 3.3.3. Assign tests to antemortem specimens if available and of sufficient amount. Consider use of antemortem urine, postmortem urine or postmortem blood depending on circumstances surrounding the death, suspected agents and survival time.
- 3.3.4. Screens are typically assigned to the central blood specimen.
- 3.3.5. When in doubt or unsure about what tests to assign, or which specimens to use, see the Chief Toxicologist, Deputy Chief Toxicologist, or Toxicology Supervisor.
- 3.4. When STAT Carbon Monoxide testing is requested – bring to a Toxicologist’s attention, immediately.
- 3.5. When Non-STAT Carbon Monoxide testing is requested:
  - 3.5.1. Only CO and volatiles tests shall be assigned via Toxlog, regardless of what other tests were requested by the pathologist/ME.
  - 3.5.2. Positive CO Result: The CO and volatiles results shall be reviewed and the Toxicology folder certified. Additional testing may be added (e.g. OB Screen, LC Screen) after 48 hours, to allow reports to be disseminated to ME/pathologist for review (see Toxicologist/Pathologist).
  - 3.5.3. Negative CO Result: Additional testing may be added as requested (e.g. OB Screen, LC Screen).
- 3.6. Return Toxicology request Forms to the Evidence Technician or other qualified personnel for entering tests into the computer database (section 4).
- 3.7. In the event of incomplete information on the TRF, the completed case may not be signed out until the missing information is added.
  - 3.7.1. If there is no probable cause of death or history listed:
    - 3.7.1.1. One may be written in, initialed, and dated, if it is described in the cause of death or history sections.
    - 3.7.1.2. If the cause of death or history cannot be ascertained, highlight the title of the missing information, paperclip a pink addendum sheet (P-013 – Addendum to Toxicology Request Form) to the TRF and give back to the accessioner to enter the assigned tests.
      - 3.7.1.2.1. For drug toxicology cases the accessioner will give the folder to the designated staff member to obtain the required information.

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3.7.1.2.1.1. Once the required information is obtained, the folder will be returned to the pending drawer.

3.7.1.2.2. For volatiles only cases the certifying toxicologist will not sign out the case and will give the folder to the designated staff member to obtain the required information.

3.7.1.2.2.1. Once the required information is obtained, the folder is returned to the certifying toxicologist for case approval.

3.7.2. If there is no analyses requested listed:

3.7.2.1. Volatiles may be added, initialed, and dated, if the probable cause of death suggests that no further drug toxicology is required (e.g. cardiac deaths, MVA, self-inflicted gunshot wounds, etc.)

3.7.2.2. If from the history and cause of death drug toxicology is warranted, the test assigner may assign the appropriate tests.

3.7.2.3. If the analyses requested are unclear from the cause of death and history, highlight the title of the missing information, paperclip a pink addendum sheet (P-013 – Addendum to Toxicology Request Form) to the tox request form and give back to the accessioner to enter the volatiles assay for analysis.

3.7.2.3.1. Upon completion of the volatile assay the certifying toxicologist will not sign out the case and will give the folder to the designated staff member to obtain the requested tests (if any).

3.7.2.3.1.1. If only volatiles is requested, then the folder is returned to the certifying toxicologist for case approval.

3.7.2.3.1.2. If drug toxicology is requested, the appropriate tests will be added and the folder placed in the pending drawer.

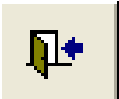
### 4. Procedure for Entering Tests into Computer Database (Tox Log)

4.1. Open Toxlog

4.2. From the “Main Switchboard” screen, select “Add/Edit Tests – Initial Review by Specimen\_id”.

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- 4.3. Scan or enter the Specimen ID (S#) of the specimen to which a test it to be added into the “Specimen\_id” field.
- 4.4. In a blank row under the “assay” column, enter the assay name to add the test.
- 4.5. To add a specific analyte to be tested for (not always applicable), enter the analyte name in the “test\_id analyte” column.
- 4.6. Repeat steps 4.3 – 4.5 for the remaining cases.

- 4.7. Select  to close and return to the previous screen.