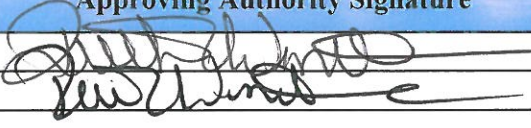



Policy Name:		Policy #:
Outside Testing Drugs/DNA		TOX-P16
North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Toxicology Laboratory	Revision:	Revision Date/Initials:
Approving Authority Name	Approving Authority Signature	Approval Date
Ruth E. Winecker, Ph.D.		

Purpose:

This policy defines the requirements for releasing a specimen for additional testing outside the NC-OCME toxicology lab. This includes outside drug testing for civil proceedings, drug testing prompted by family members at their own expense, and outside DNA analysis.

Policy:

All incoming phone calls regarding additional outside testing must be handled in a similar manner. The report status of the case should first be verified in MEIS. Next, the location of the specimen should be determined (storage or discard) in the Toxlog system. The NC-OCME toxicology letter with corresponding documents for outside testing must be mailed or sent via fax/email to the requestor. Finally, a Toxicology Lab Telephone Contact Sheet should be completed (see TOX-P6) and filed with the toxicology folder.

Toxicology testing unrelated to the cause and manner of death will not be performed at the expense of the OCME (with the exception of homicides or police involved shootings as defined in TOX-P14). Additional testing for toxicology or DNA may be performed at the family's expense, or pursuant to a court order at the attorney's expense (such as in a civil law proceeding), at an outside laboratory of their choice. Permission from the legal next of kin and/or the executor of the decedent's estate must be obtained before release of the specimen can occur. For purposes of this policy, a decedent's legal next of kin is limited to the decedent's spouse, child, parent, or sibling. If permission for release cannot be obtained from the legal next of kin or the executor of the decedent's estate, then a court order is necessary for release of the specimen. The lab will accept a court order from any local, state or federal court. Requests for release of a specimen to crime laboratories are rare. If the request is from local or state law enforcement, district attorney or public defender's office and the decedent was involved in a homicide as suspect or victim, then permission from the legal next of kin or the decedent's estate to release the specimen is not required and the specimen may be released with the completion of a "Release to Outside Agency Chain of Custody" form (see TOX-P12).

Procedures and/or Forms:

**TOX-P6 (Telephone Answering), Toxicology Lab Telephone Contact Sheet
NC-OCME Form and Letter DNA/Outside Testing
TOX-P14 (Test Assignment) and TOX-P12 (Chain of Custody)**