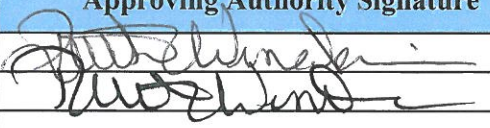
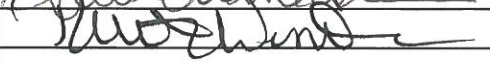


<b>Policy Name:</b>		<b>Policy #:</b>
<b>Biological Sample Retention</b>		<b>TOX-P18</b>
North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Toxicology Laboratory	<b>Revision:</b>	<b>Revision Date/Initials:</b>
	Delete "A"	8/1.11.17
<b>Approving Authority Name</b>	<b>Approving Authority Signature</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>
Ruth E. Winecker, Ph.D.		8/22/16
		1/11/17

**Purpose:**

This document defines the biological specimen storage and retention policy for the toxicology laboratory.

**Policy:**

Pathologists and Medical Examiners submit biological specimens for analysis to the toxicology laboratory. These specimens may include but are not limited to blood, serum, vitreous, bile, bloody fluid, urine, hair, nails, and portions of solid organ (liver, kidney, brain, etc.). These specimens are accessioned according to SOP-001. When the specimens enter the laboratory typically, the blood, vitreous, and urine specimens are accessioned into the refrigerator and the solid organ specimens are placed in the freezer. Nails and hair are stored at room temperature in the evidence storage room (Z3) (see TOX-P19). When refrigerator space is limited, the evidence technician performs a specimen move, transferring the oldest refrigerated specimens to the long-term frozen storage. The move transaction will be reflected on the chain of custody. **Specimens are retained for at least two years from the date of receipt.** They may be retained longer if space permits. Follow SOP-007 for complete instructions for Disposal of Specimens.

**Exceptions:**

Items submitted for analysis may be retained for more than two years if the laboratory receives a written notice from a party requesting an exception to the retention policy prior to the discard date. This will allow the specimen to be held *five years total* from the date of receipt. After a request is made, the interested party should receive a Five Year Hold Response Receipt in return, which provides the requestor with a discard date. *There will be no extensions placed on a specimen after the five year mark.* The laboratory maintains the right to discard *any* specimen being held past five years and specimens will be discarded without notice to the requesting party. Law enforcement and interested parties from the NC Court System may request a transfer of specimens to a storage location of their choice if specimens are needed past the five year hold. The request should be made well in advance of the discard date provided on the Five Year Hold Response Receipt.

**Procedures and/or Forms:**

**Five Year Hold Response Receipt**  
**SOP-001 Accessioning of Specimens**

Uncontrolled Copy