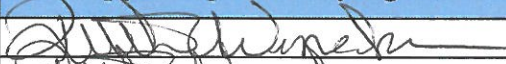
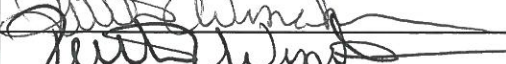
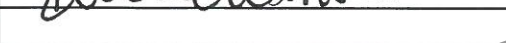


Policy Name:		Policy #:
Dissemination, Interpretation, Confidentiality of Results		TOX-P20
North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Toxicology Laboratory	Revision:	Revision Date/Initials:
Approving Authority Name	Approving Authority Signature	Approval Date
Ruth E. Winecker, Ph.D.		3/23/15
		3/23/16
		1/11/17

Purpose:

This policy helps define how, when and who is able to disseminate and interpret toxicological results. Confidentiality of results is also addressed.

Policy:

As of 9/9/13, all **media inquiries** must be immediately directed to the NC DHHS Public Affairs Office at 919-855-4840 news@dhhs.nc.gov.

The final toxicology report is issued upon completion of all necessary testing and multilevel data Review. A Toxicologist or trained Senior Staff member can approve Toxicology Reports (certain staff have privileges to sign out volatiles cases only). Once the toxicology report is certified through the Medical Examiner Information System (MEIS), the reports are electronically emailed to the medical examiner and/or pathologist on the case. However, a case is not considered complete until an OCME pathologist has reviewed and certified the death. **Only after final death certification by the OCME (not toxicology report completion) can information be disseminated and discussed publicly.** After final death certification, a copy of the toxicological results goes out either electronically via email or by USPS (through Case Management) to all of the individuals on the request list (according to MEIS).

Inquiries regarding requests for records can be transferred to NC-OCME Case Management. Litigation packages are provided to respective attorneys upon written request, subject to authorization from the Chief Toxicologist.

Any staff member directing telephone toxicology questions should verify the case is complete through MEIS. Under most circumstances it is crucial that the caller have a copy of the toxicology report in front of them if they desire interpretation. When an interested party calls the toxicology laboratory, the call should be transferred to the Toxicologist or Senior Chemist who certified the toxicology report whenever possible (See Telephone Policy TOX-P6 for detailed information). If the individual is not available, the call should be transferred to a Toxicologist.

Preliminary toxicology results/information (by telephone or electronically) may only be reported to the pathologist with authorization by the Chief or Deputy Chief Toxicologist.

Any complaints against the Forensic Toxicology Laboratory regarding reporting or confidentiality should be referred to the Chief Toxicologist (see TOX-P8).

On the occasion that an error or deficiency was uncovered that results in a toxicology report change, the toxicology report will be corrected along with a statement of the previously reported result (e.g. previously reported as...). The new reports generated will automatically be sent to the request list (according to MEIS) at the time of new report certification. Accrediting bodies will be notified at the same time only if the error would cause a significant change in the interpretation of the cause of death.

Procedures and/or Forms:

<https://meis.ocme.dhhs.nc.gov/meis/servlet/MeisLogin> Medical Examiner Information System

TOX-P6 Telephone Policy

TOX-P8 Resolution of Complaints

Case Management (919) 743-9012

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