

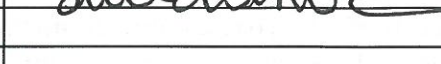


<b>Policy Name:</b>		<b>Policy #:</b>
<b>Staff Training</b>		<b>TOX-P5</b>
North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Toxicology Laboratory	<b>Revision:</b>	<b>Revision Date/Initials:</b>
<b>Approving Authority Name</b>	<b>Approving Authority Signature</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>
Ruth E. Winecker, Ph.D.		3/23/15
		3/23/16
		1/11/17

**Purpose:**

To establish guidelines to describe the Training Program in the toxicology laboratory at the North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. A combination of initial training, monthly staff meetings and continuing education (CE) will establish a minimum standard of professional competency for all members of the laboratory.

**Policy:**

Before hiring a new toxicology laboratory employee, it is the responsibility of the State of North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to verify the authenticity of academic or other required qualifications.

Upon hire, staff are orientated to the laboratory and trained in their specific tasks. Using the NC-OCME Toxicology Training Manual (*pending completion as of 1/1/14*), the designated training coordinator will guide the new employee through initial training. This includes the required DHHS New Employee Orientation. The manual is organized in modules, and each module outlines the objectives, time expected to complete training in a specific topic, methods of instruction, modes of evaluation, and study questions. The training program covers theory and methodology of instrumentation, analytical techniques, handling of evidence, interpretation of analytical results, and court room testimony. The Chief Toxicologist should be board certified and will have the authority to train the other Toxicologist(s) in analytical review and case certification for full toxicological deaths. In the instance of volatile only deaths, Senior Chemists may also be trained in certification of those specific reports after completing a combination of in-house training and Robert F. Borkenstein Alcohol Training (~40 hours or equivalent).

Laboratory Staff Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month and are usually chaired by either the Deputy Chief Toxicologist or Toxicology Supervisor. An agenda is written and maintained electronically on the Shared Drive in the "Monthly Meetings" folder (S:\Toxicology\Administrative Documents\Monthly Meetings). Each attendee is required to sign an attendance record. This form will also serve as the meeting minutes and will be maintained electronically at the conclusion of the meeting on the shared drive for all employees to use as a reference. Materials covered in the meetings include, but are not limited to, policy changes, SOP manual changes, in-service trainings and safety matters. Any critical changes to laboratory practices that cannot wait for the next meeting will be communicated through DHHS email



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([ocme.tox@lists.ncmail.net](mailto:ocme.tox@lists.ncmail.net)) or personal communication. Manual updates following changes (if applicable) will be taken care of by the Chief Toxicologist or designee, with the appropriate dates and initials. **All absent employees are responsible for reading the agenda and meeting minutes the next working day upon their return.**

Intra-laboratory continuing education is provided on the third Tuesday of the month and is usually organized by the Deputy Chief Toxicologist or designee. Monthly topics will be chosen and disseminated in the form of either hand-outs or a formal meeting with a presentation. All laboratory personnel are welcome to present journal reviews, posters and slides of research, or theory of laboratory techniques and instrumentation. A record of all laboratory continuing education will be kept on the Shared Drive in a folder marked "OCME Continuing Education" (S:\Toxicology\Administrative Documents\Monthly Meetings). **All absent employees are responsible for the CE materials the next working day upon their return if a formal meeting was conducted.**

A record of all individual continuing education will be kept on the Shared Drive in a folder marked "Individual Continuing Education" (S:\Toxicology\Administrative Documents\Personnel Data). Each employee is responsible for keeping an electronic copy of their individual continuing education (certificates, itineraries, etc.) in the folder marked with their last name. A paper training file for each employee which will include a curriculum vitae, a courtroom testifying log sheet (see below), and all hard copies of continuing education certificates will be kept in a file drawer in the cubical area marked for this purpose. The employee is also responsible for the upkeep of this file.

In addition, employees are supplied with scientific journal articles and literature for their review, postings of upcoming scientific meetings, and time to attend local seminars on laboratory instrumentation and techniques. Staff members are encouraged to attend and present data at national scientific meetings and are supported based on the resources of the office to attend these meetings when presenting a paper. Various journal articles are available "free" on-line. NC-OCME staff that are also students or faculty affiliated with UNC (and have a current Onyen account) can assist employees with subscription literature available through the UNC Health Sciences Library. A variety of toxicology books are located in the offices of both the Chief and Deputy Chief Toxicologist. Employees are encouraged to become familiar with the commonly used forensic toxicology texts (e.g. *Disposition of Toxic Drugs and Chemicals in Man* (Baselt), *Clarke's Analysis of Drugs and Poisons*, *The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics* (Goodman & Gilman)).

After court testimony, a record of the date and case number must be maintained as part of a general training record of professional experience. To assist with the recordkeeping for the NC-OCME additional information should be included such as time on the stand, total time out of the office and miles traveled to the destination and back. This information is outlined on the Courtroom Testimony Log Sheet and will be maintained in the training file for each employee. Courtroom training will be addressed as part of New Employee Training. Additional training can be given between receipt of the subpoena and the date of the testimony on an as needed basis by the employee's supervisor or a qualified senior staff member. At a minimum, the employee should consult the Chemist or Toxicologist who certified the report prior to appearing in court.

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#### **Procedures and/or Forms:**

NC-OCME Toxicology Training Manual  
New Employee Training Checklist (including DHHS Orientation)  
NC-OCME Meeting Agenda Template  
NC-OCME Meeting Minutes Template  
Courtroom Testimony Log sheet  
Testimony Training Handouts

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