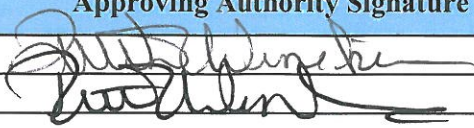


Policy Name:		Policy #:
Telephone Answering Protocol		TOX-P6
North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Toxicology Laboratory	Revision:	Revision Date/Initials:
Approving Authority Name	Approving Authority Signature	Approval Date
Ruth E. Winecker, Ph.D.		2/22/16 1/11/15

Purpose:

To define guidelines for answering the phone.

Policy/Procedure:

The general toxicology phone number (919-743-9011) should be answered during the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily Monday-Friday. **The goal of our laboratory is to answer the phone within three rings.** Typically, the phones are covered by the Forensic Document Specialist and the Evidence Technician when they are available at their desks. However, if the need arises, anyone in the laboratory should answer the phone after the third ring. A short greeting, such as "Toxicology Laboratory, this is _____." or "Toxicology Lab, how may I help you?" is sufficient to answer the phone. If the call is in regards to a specific case, the toxicology report status should be identified in MEIS (Medical Examiner Information System). Whenever possible, the certifying scientist or toxicologist who certified the report should be transferred the call. The toxicological results are only to be interpreted by a Toxicologist or Senior Staff Member with report certification privileges.

By properly answering the phones, we provide a helpful service to citizens. The impression we give when we answer the telephone is of paramount importance, and how we deal with a citizen's inquiry will affect their perception of the North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. It is also important to understand that callers may be grieving due to the loss of a loved one.

Be prepared to deal with telephone calls by.....

- having a pen and paper on hand to make notes regarding who the caller is, how they relate to the decedent, and obtaining a suitable call back number.
- **referring all calls from the media to the Public Affairs Office at 919-855-4840.**
- looking up the case in MEIS to determine the report status before transferring a call to the Toxicologist or certifying Chemist (if applicable).
- looking up the case in Toxlog to determine the location of the specimen (storage or discard) if further testing is requested for DNA or drugs (if applicable).
- filling out a Toxicology Lab Telephone Contact Sheet after the conclusion of the phone call if necessary.

Procedures and/or Forms:

Toxicology Lab Telephone Contact Sheet