
Procedure for Evidence Submissions

- 1.0 Purpose** – To establish procedures to be followed for the submission of evidence to the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory (Laboratory) through the Evidence Control Section (ECS).
- 2.0 Scope** – This procedure applies to ECS employees and employees performing duties related to Evidence Control.
- 3.0 Definitions**
- **Biological Evidence** – Any evidence that has the potential to be contaminated with body fluid, such as blood, semen or saliva.
 - **Case Record** – The body of work for one examination in a Case.
 - **Forensic Advantage (FA)** – The Laboratory’s electronic information management system.
 - **Lockbox** – Secured container(s) utilized to transport evidence between laboratories.
 - **Object Repository** – The module within FA into which all documents, data and other files are uploaded. FA has Section, Case, Case Record and Item Repositories.
- 4.0 Procedure**
- 4.1 Evidence Management**
- 4.1.1** Laboratory-wide procedures regarding the submission, receipt, protection, accountability, marking, transfer, destruction and return of evidence are contained in the Laboratory Procedure for Evidence Management.
- 4.2 Forensic Advantage (FA)**
- 4.2.1** Laboratory-wide procedures regarding the use of FA are contained in the Laboratory Procedure for the Use of Forensic Advantage.
- 4.3 Agency Log-In**
- 4.3.1** Agency Log-In, or Prelog, is data entry performed by the submitting agency prior to a case submission to the Laboratory. The submitting officer or agency is responsible for entering all submission information into the Laboratory’s prelog website, FA Web.
- 4.3.2** Cases must be prelogged prior to submission at the Laboratory.
- 4.3.3** In order to import the submission data, the agency must provide the Confirmation Receipt or RFLE number that was generated when the prelog was completed.
- 4.4 Hand-to-Hand Submissions**
- 4.4.1** The Evidence Technician receiving the case shall review the Request for Examination of Physical Evidence Form to ensure completeness and acceptability for submission.

- 4.4.1.1** Any changes or corrections to the submission paperwork must be made and initialed by the submitting officer or agency.
 - 4.4.1.2** A corrected copy of the Request for Examination of Physical Evidence Form shall be imported in the RFLE in FA. ECS personnel shall provide a copy of the corrected form to the submitting officer.
 - 4.4.2** All evidence received must be packaged and sealed in accordance with the Laboratory Procedure for Evidence Management.
 - 4.4.2.1** Improperly packaged evidence shall not be accepted by the ECS until properly repackaged by the submitting officer.
 - 4.4.2.2** Evidence without proper seal shall not be accepted by the ECS until remediated by the submitting officer according to the Laboratory Procedure for Evidence Management.
 - 4.4.2.3** If the evidence is too large (e.g., tires and doors) or cannot be sealed, it must be tagged for identification by the submitting officer.
 - 4.4.3** Once evidence is inventoried, identified, and correctly sealed, the receiving technician shall scan the barcode or manually type in the number beneath the barcode from the Confirmation Receipt. Once submitted, a copy of the Confirmation Receipt shall be saved automatically in the RFLE.
 - 4.4.4** The representative of the submitting agency must sign the electronic signature pad for each case submitted. An evidence receipt will be printed for each case for the submitting agency's records at the same time as one is placed in the case object repository.
 - 4.4.5** Forensic Scientists may receive evidence directly from the submitting officer. The Forensic Scientist shall be responsible for ensuring the subsequent case submission and data entry is completed.
- 4.5 Evidence Submitted by Other Methods**
 - 4.5.1** At the Raleigh and Western Labs, Evidence Technicians shall transport evidence between the U.S. Post Office and ECS. Evidence from UPS and the State Courier service will be delivered directly to each lab.
 - 4.5.2** When evidence is received via mail, courier, or UPS, the date and initials of the Evidence Technician receiving the evidence shall be placed on the outer-most evidence package except for toxicology samples with outer packaging that is removed.
 - 4.5.2.1** Toxicology samples received in an envelope or larger outer box shall have the outer packaging removed. The receiving technician shall place a comment (e.g. "Outer packaging removed for placement in storage.") on the transfer screen in FA while placing item in storage. The packaging may be discarded except for agencies that request toxicology samples be returned.

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- 4.5.3** All evidence received shall be in accordance with the Laboratory Procedure for Evidence Management.
- 4.5.3.1** Improperly-packaged evidence received via mail or courier shall be repackaged by the receiving Evidence Technician according to the Laboratory Procedure for Evidence Management. This action shall be recorded in FA in the Case Details tab comment section.
- 4.5.3.2** Any seals without initials must be immediately remediated according to the Laboratory Procedure for Evidence Management, and areas of minor wear-and-tear shall be secured, initialed and dated.
- 4.5.4** Evidence received in an unsealed state (due to damage to packaging) shall be opened by an Evidence Technician with another Laboratory employee as witness in order to inventory the package.
- 4.5.5** Discrepancies noted between the package and the Request for Examination of Physical Evidence Form shall be documented in FA using a verification review or the Evidence Control Verification Review form. The verification must contain the names of both the receiving technician as well as the witness.
- 4.5.5.1** The submitting officer shall be notified of the discrepancy.
- 4.5.5.2** If the discrepancy cannot be rectified, the Supervisor/FSM shall be notified. If the discrepancy cannot be resolved by Supervisor/FSM, the Laboratory Procedure for Corrective Actions shall be followed.
- 4.5.6 Refused Submissions**
- 4.5.6.1** Evidence submissions received via mail or courier may require return to the submitting agency (e.g., the Request for Examination of Physical Evidence Form was not attached to the outer packaging, submission does not meet case acceptance guidelines, request for an examination not performed by the Laboratory).
- 4.5.6.2** If the submission requires return to the submitting agency, the receiving technician must identify the outer packaging with his/her initials and the date.
- 4.5.6.3** After notifying the submitting agency, the case will be processed as a stop work following the Laboratory Procedure for Stop Work Orders.
- 4.5.6.4** The evidence will be held for return to the submitting agency until corrections or additional information can be obtained.

4.6 Evidence Transferred from other Laboratories

- 4.6.1** Evidence from one of the regional Laboratories shall be submitted either by mail, hand to hand or by lockbox transfer. See the ECS Procedure for Evidence Transfers regarding lockbox transfers.

4.7 Technical Field Assistance (TFA)

- 4.7.1** If a Technical Field Assistance form is submitted along with items of evidence, it shall serve as the evidence submission form.
- 4.7.2** When a Technical Field Assistance form is submitted, the Laboratory Forensic Scientist shall be listed as the submitting officer. Information shall be added to include the following: Agency file number, Forensic Scientist, Forensic Scientist Manager, Agency Officers, Agency Supervisors and Agency Records listed under the Submission tab.
- 4.7.3** A TFA Item will be created with a separate case record to document the crime scene. It must be “received” by Forensic Analyst and “transferred out” to end the chain of custody.
- 4.7.4** Any additional agencies that submit evidence in the same case shall be considered a second submission to the case and use the same Laboratory case number.

5.0 Safety

5.1 Biological Evidence

- 5.1.1** Evidence containing suspected human blood or body fluids, or evidence confiscated from a body shall be considered contaminated. Tubes of blood or other liquid body fluids shall not be opened by ECS technicians.
- 5.1.2** Request for Examination of Physical Evidence Forms or other documents shall be separated from contaminated evidence. Documents which appear to exhibit possible contamination shall be replaced by the technician by making a copy or by obtaining a new version from the requesting officer or agency. The technician shall disinfect the copier after the copy is made, and shall destroy the original contaminated document.
- 5.1.3** Packages containing biohazard evidence being packaged by evidence technicians shall be identified by the technician with “Biohazard” labels prior to mailing or returning.
- 5.1.4** In the event of a biohazard spill, the receiving evidence technician shall use the biohazard spill kit to contain the spill. Every effort shall be made to preserve the evidentiary value of the material and the evidence container. The Forensic Scientist Manager of the discipline for which analysis is requested shall be contacted immediately for further assistance regarding disposal.

5.2 Firearms

- 5.2.1** Evidence Technicians shall receive Firearm Safety Training prior to performing firearm safety checks. This training shall be delivered by a Forensic Scientist assigned to the Firearms Unit of the Physical Evidence Section. This training shall be documented in each technician's training record.
- 5.2.2** Firearm safety checks shall be conducted by the receiving technician on all firearms submitted as evidence to ensure they are unloaded and safe. All firearms shall be handled as if they are loaded even after they have been declared safe.
- 5.2.3** A notation of the safety check shall be made on the evidence package by the technician performing the test, along with the date and his/her initials.
- 5.2.4** If the Evidence Technician is unable to secure the firearm, a Forensic Scientist within the Firearms Unit of the Physical Evidence Section shall be contacted for assistance. The Forensic Scientist may take custody of the firearm at that time if deemed necessary.

5.3 Tasers/Stun Guns and other Weapons

- 5.3.1** Tasers and stun-guns shall be handled with care.
- 5.3.2** The battery pack shall remain in the unit at all times in order to preserve the data. The device shall be transferred to an employee of the Digital Evidence Section as soon as possible.
- 5.3.3** Sharp evidence (e.g., knives or needles) shall be handled with extreme caution. These items shall be packaged to protect the evidence from deleterious effects during transfer and to protect any handler of the evidence from injury. If the evidence is not properly packaged, it must be re-packaged by the submitting officer before submission to the Laboratory.

6.0 References – N/A

7.0 Records

- Request for Examination of Physical Evidence Form
- Refused Evidence Log
- Evidence Control Verification Review form

8.0 Attachments – N/A

Revision History		
Effective Date	Version Number	Reason
09/17/2012	1	Original ISO Document
10/16/2013	2	Made procedures applicable to all 3 labs; 4.6.1 - clarified Submission Methods; added 4.6.2 and 4.6.4 toxicology sample documentation update; deleted reference to SBI forms; added issuing authority to header
09/05/2014	3	4.3.1 - changed 3 to 4; 4.4.3 - RFLE automatically saved; 5.2.1, 5.2.4 - updated Section name; Request for Examination of Physical Evidence Form throughout document
02/27/2015	4	4.6.4 example for statement; 4.6.6.3 added refusal for guidelines
01/25/2019	5	Updated references to Evidence Control Unit/ECU to Section/ECS in header and throughout document; Changed pre-log to prelog throughout document; Removed original 4.3; Added prelog requirement to 4.4; Added requirement for officer making corrections to 4.4; Combined and reorganized 4.4 and 4.5 to reflect prelog cases; Removed U.S. Post Office transport in 4.6.1; Added courier and UPS to 4.5.2, 4.5.3.1 and 4.5.6.1; Moved 4.6.4 to 4.5.2.1; 4.6.5 technician to Laboratory employee; Broke out 4.5.5 into 4.5.5.1 and 4.5.5.2, added Evidence Control Verification Review form; 4.5.6 - Changed to Refused Submission, removed 4.6.6.2 and 4.6.6.3, added Stop Work procedure; Removed original 5.3; Removed Latent from 5.3.2; Added Evidence Control Verification Review form to 7.0