


	<p align="center">Quality Manual</p> <p align="center">Pitt County Sheriff's Office Forensic Services Unit</p> <p align="center"><i>Issued by the Quality Manager</i></p>	<p>Effective Date:</p> <p align="center">2019/11/18</p>	<p>Ver.:</p> <p align="center">1</p>
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4.1 Impartiality

4.1.1 Undue Pressure

Policy:

Management and personnel are to be free from any undue internal and external commercial, financial and other pressures that may adversely affect the quality of their work. The integrity of test results is the responsibility of all personnel. All personnel shall review annually (in January) the Code of Ethics and The Guiding Principles, as stated in section 1 of the Quality Manual. This Review will be documented and stored on the Document Management System (DM) by the Quality Manager.


Details:

The following list provides some guidelines on how employees avoid conflict of interest situations. Employees shall not:

- falsify records, prepare fraudulent reports, or make false claims
- seek or use privileged or confidential information, or data from any client, for any purpose beyond the scope of employment
- conduct non-laboratory business on laboratory time, or use laboratory facilities or equipment to conduct outside interests or business, unless prior approval has been obtained
- be employed by, or affiliated with, organizations whose products, services or purpose compete with laboratory products, services or purpose
- have employment that negatively affects or interferes with their performance of laboratory duties
- allow associations, family, or friends to influence decisions to their benefit - decisions must be made on a strictly business and legal basis, always in the best interest of the laboratory, its clients and the pursuit of justice
- make any decision that provides gains or benefits to the employee and/or others
- have personal financial dealings with an individual or company that does business with the laboratory which might influence decisions made on the laboratory's behalf
- engage in activities that may diminish confidence in the laboratories competence, impartiality, judgment, or operation integrity

Firm adherence to this code of values forms the foundation of our credibility. Personnel involved in dishonest activities are subject to a range of disciplinary action including dismissal.

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4.1.2 Operational Integrity

Policy:

The laboratory will avoid involvement in any activities that would diminish confidence in its competence, impartiality, judgment, or operational integrity.

Details and Procedures:

To ensure confidence in laboratory operations a formal quality assurance program is implemented. Technical competence is ensured through proficiency testing programs and other measurable competency tools, such as competency tests, court testimony review, etc. Impartiality and operational integrity are reviewed by management according to [OSP 4-15-1, Management Review](#) to ensure continued suitability and effectiveness of laboratory policies and procedures. Any issue involving operations or impartiality is acted on immediately through the control of nonconforming work or the corrective action procedures.

4.1.3 Potential Conflicts of Interest


The laboratory reports to the Sheriff of Pitt County. The Laboratory Director serves as the Forensic Services Unit's central operating officer and authorizes policy and procedures. Adverse influence against the laboratory's ability to operate in an independent manner is continually monitored by independent checks and/or audits from all appropriate Quality Assurance measures.

The Pitt County Forensic Services Lab Director and staff personnel have responsibilities and authorities that are maintained and defined in the current personnel job descriptions. The Director organizes the Divisions to maximize operational effectiveness through proper delegation and authority.

The responsibilities of the Laboratory Director include:

- developing, managing, and guiding the larger organizations policies and procedures
- serving as a member of the executive committee which organizes and administers the relationship between the organization and the laboratory
- providing focus and coordinating functions regarding overall policy changes
- participating in all senior-level administrative functions/committees of the organization as appointed by the Sheriff of Pitt County

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- creating an atmosphere in which all personnel are free from undue internal or external pressures and influences which may negatively impact the quality of work performed. Laboratory personnel shall be responsible for ensuring the integrity of the analytical process
- providing guidance concerning any situations that could diminish confidence in laboratory competence, impartiality, judgment, or operational integrity. Work shall be performed in an environment free from undue pressure that might influence technical judgment

4.2 Confidentiality

4.2.1 Client Confidentiality

Policy:

It is the policy of our laboratory to protect the confidential information and rights of our client including the electronic storage and transmission of results.

Details and Procedures:


All employees sign a FORM# 4-1-5-F2, [Confidentiality Agreement](#). The signed agreement is retained in Pitt County Sheriff's Office Standards Division Personnel Records.

Client, as referred to by these policies, procedures and documents, shall be defined as the submitting person/agency, relevant Attorney for prosecutorial district or other legally authorized party.


Test results are only released to the client. Release of test results to someone other than the client requires the express permission of the client, except when the situation contravenes State or Federal Legislation and the results must be provided to the appropriate agency. The release of test results to anyone other than the client requires the permission of the Laboratory Director and/or Quality Manager.

All information about customer obtained from outside sources (e.g. complainant, other laboratories, regulators) shall be confidential between the customer and the laboratory. The source of this information shall be confidential to the laboratory and shall not be shared with the customer, unless agreed by the source.

Personnel, including any outside committee members, contractors, personnel of external bodies, or individuals acting on the laboratory's behalf, shall keep confidential all

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information obtained or created during the performance of laboratory activities, except as required by law.

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4.3 Revision History

REVISION HISTORY		
CURRENT VERSION	EFFECTIVE DATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
1	2019/11/18	Original version

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