A. **PURPOSE**:

The Division of Scientific Services (DSS) utilizes one domain to run and maintain the LIMS (Laboratory Information Management System). The LIMS is JusticeTrax LIMS-plus. The system is used for evidence management from case number assignment to chain of custody tracking and in some disciplines for case reporting.

The LAN (Local Area Network) is used for intranet access, internet access, and access to data storage areas for the DSS. The maintenance of the LAN is overseen by the Scientific Services Administrative Manager with the IT Unit of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP).

B. **RESPONSIBILITY**:

1. Managers: Responsible to provide direction to subordinate staff under their purview as indicated by the organization chart.
2. Supervisors (FSE3): Responsible to provide supervision to subordinate staff under their purview as indicated by the organization chart.
3. Forensic Science Examiner (FSE2): responsible as a working lead to subordinate staff as indicated on the organizational chart.
4. FSE1, Connecticut Career Trainee (CCT), Fusion Center Analyst (FCA) and Lab Assistants: Responsible to adhere to this procedure as it pertains to their Unit.
5. Evidence Control Officer ECO: Responsible to adhere to this procedure as it pertains to their Unit.
6. Support Personnel (however titled): Responsible to adhere to this procedure as it pertains to their Unit.

C. **DEFINITIONS**:

1. Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS): A software system used to manage the chain of custody of evidence, record analytical results and generate final reports.
2. LAN (Local Area Network): Used for intranet access, internet access, and access to data storage areas for the DSS. The LAN is managed by BITS
3. Scientific Services Administrative Manager (SSAM): The Director’s designee responsible for managing the implementation, maintenance and expansion of the LIMS. In addition, the SSAM is responsible for coordinating services with the department’s Information Technology section.
4. Laboratory Information Systems Manager (LISM): The SSAM’s designee responsible for assisting in managing the LIMS operations and Information Technology needs of the laboratory.

5. LIMS Administrator: The Directors designee to manage the daily operations and configurations of the LIMS.
6. System Administrator: DESPP IT designee assigned to oversee the LAN system for the DSS. The system administrator reports to the SSAM.
7. Bureau of Information Technology Solutions (BITS): The Information Technology section under the Division of Administrative Services (DAS) responsible for managing servers and network infrastructure of the LIMS.
8. LIMS-plus: The LIMS software developed by JusticeTrax that is used by the DSS. This may be referred to as LIMS or LIMS-plus.
9. LIMS-plus Portal: Portal permits authorized prosecutors and investigators access to laboratory case information directly from LIMS-plus. It also provides investigators with a means to remotely pre-log evidence submissions to the laboratory.
10. Synopsis: A field located at the case level in LIMS-plus where case notes can be recorded.
11. Agency Case Number (ACN): This is the submitting agency's unique and primary case number and should appear on the DSS final report. This can be recorded in the Local Case # field at the case level in LIMS-plus.
12. Evidence Description: This field should have a brief description of information that is important for identification. All other specific information will be found within case notes. The parent item's description may be a transcribed description from the request for analysis (RFA) form.
13. Evidence Type: A pull down which categorizes the evidence.
14. Request: A request informs the DSS of the type of analysis that is needed on the respective item.
15. Individual: An area at the case level in LIMS-plus where individuals related to the case are documented.
16. Offense: An area at the case level in LIMS-plus to document the offense(s) related to the case. The date and town associated with the offense is documented with each offense entry.
17. Source: An individual whom evidence is directly associated with.
18. Discipline: A discipline is the DSS unit that will perform the analysis.
19. Other ID: A field that can be used to store the agency's item number.
20. Requesting Agency Rep: is typically the Agency's Case Officer requesting forensic related work to be performed. This is the person who will receive the completed DSS final report for the Request.
21. Submitting Agency Rep: Is the delivering officer who submitted the evidence to the laboratory.
22. Entity: Refers to the five categories for data entry in LIMS-plus portal (Evidence, Individual, Offense, Requests and Attachments).

23. Container: This field is located at the item level in LIMS-plus. When a sub-item is created it documents where item originated.
24. Attachments: An area at the case level in LIMS-plus where records/documents can be uploaded.
25. Entity Relationships: Relationships allow the user to relate one record to another record entered in another tab. For example, you can relate a piece of evidence to an individual or an individual to an offense. Once a relationship has been established it will show up in the relationship summary for both entities. Creating a relationship between a Request and Evidence helps the laboratory identify what needs to be processed.
26. Case Activities: LIMS-plus allows work related activities to be tracked. Analysts can use this to account for time not performing case work, such as court testimony, giving or attending lectures, working on proficiency tests, attending a crime scene, or other activities. The notes section can be used to describe the event and the time attended.
27. Crystal Reports: Software used to extract case information in order to produce customizable laboratory reports or statistical reports/spreadsheets.
28. Create Worklist: A function in LIMS-plus that allows for assigning and creating batches.
29. Print Case Report: This function is found on the case info tab. This prints an overall report containing general case information including the demographics, synopsis notes, evidence description, chain of custody for each submission, requests with their status and related notes.
30. Custom Forms: This function allows for worksheets to be created and used as part of an electronic case file/record.
31. Show Electronic Case File:Tthis function is found on the case info tab. When custom forms are used to capture case records this function can be used to identify the related records.

D. **PROCEDURE**:

1. LIMS/LAN General Information:
   a. The LIMS is served by two central server units maintained by the System Administrator and BITS. The room conditions are those to provide proper environmental conditions for the servers.
   b. To protect the overall systems, only the designated System Administrator and specified designees will have authorization and the necessary passwords to work on the server unit or conduct system administrator functions.
   c. To create a new LIMS or LAN Account the employee's supervisor will send the Unit Manager, SSAM and LISM an email with the request.
      i. Security classifications will be issued by the System Administrator on the LAN.

ii. The LIMS Administrator or designee assigns "Roles" to each account in LIMS. The roles designate the areas in LIMS that can be utilized by the employee.

iii. LAN and LIMS security or roles will be commensurate with an individual's responsibilities, as determined by the Director or their designee.

d. To deactivate an account a Manager or supervisor will notify the SSAM or LISM. The SSAM or LISM will send an email to the LIMS Administrator and to the LAN System Administrator.

e. Secure access to the LIMS and LAN systems is via assigned usernames and secure passwords. LAN and LIMS passwords will be issued by the SSAM, LIMS or System Administrator, as appropriate.

i. Usernames are assigned with a generic password; employees must change this password. Passwords must be securely maintained.

ii. Users may be periodically prompted to update system passwords.

iii. PIN (Personal Identification Numbers) are assigned by the LIMS Administrator. These must be changed by each employee and kept secure and must not be shared. PINs in conjunction with user's passwords represent an electronic signature within LIMS.

(a) All evidence transfers (either of complete cases or sub-items) among employees are tracked using a user specific LIMS barcode (or employee number) and PIN. The PIN is the basis for secure transfers. Both persons involved in a person to person transfer will use their PINs. This is to include transfers to or from "In Progress" locations as defined in GL-13.

(b) Evidence transfers from an individual to a storage location require only the individual to enter their username and PIN.

f. Addition, deletion, or modification of any software contained on a networked computer is <u>prohibited</u> without prior authorization from the System Administrator.

i. Note the nature of the work in some areas, such as the Digital Forensic Unit may require specialized software based on case specifications. This is allowed based on guidance in the unit procedures.

g. To protect the records/data within the LIMS, the majority of the files in the system are backed-up electronically (weekly on Friday and incrementally Monday-Thursday) except for report and photograph files. These files are backed up to tapes at the server site (not at lab). Monthly, these tapes are brought off site (to the lab and kept with the IT personnel) and this process is documented in an electronic file on the shared drive. The System Administrator is responsible to maintain this system and the integrity of the data.

h. All problems and questions concerning the LAN and LIMS should be directed to the SSAM, LISM, System Administrator or LIMS Administrator. A '# Request for LIMS Administrator (not edit COC)' workflow will be initiated for requests related to LIMS.

i. Thumb drives, discs or other storage devises must be scanned for viruses if they have been used on a computer not belonging to the DSS before opening any documents or programs.

2. LAN Features: the LAN systems are set up to provide access to employees based on the needs of their job. There are shared drives and private drives allowing employees to create and access documents.

   a. The internet is set up on LAN computers throughout the facility. All employees have usernames and passwords to access these computers.

      i. Internet use is limited to job-related purposes. Employees must follow State of CT 'Acceptable Use of State Systems Policy'.

3. LIMS Features: Each DSS discipline uses the features of LIMS to different extents, to best suit the needs of the unit. All units use the case numbering and evidence transfer features of the system, including those for sub-itemization tracking, as needed. As appropriate units will give guidance in how LIMS is used within the Unit SOPs. All units use the case milestone tracking features.

   a. Case Numbering: Cases received by the DSS are assigned unique case identifiers by the LIMS. This alpha numeric designation is the identifier for the evidence for the time it remains in the DSS. The case number is used to identify paperwork and case files associated with the case. The LIMS numbering system is set up in the following format:

      i. XXX-YY-ZZZZZ

         (a) The first three digits are DSS. The next set of digits (YY) represent the year the case was opened, and the final set of numbers is the sequential designation for a specific case.

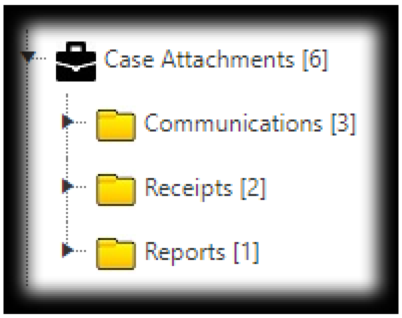
      ii. Other unique identifiers are acceptable for special tracking. DNA Database samples and Breath Alcohol instruments each have unique prefixes allowing for specific tracking. Other unique designators may be used if cases are resubmitted and were part of an old numbering system.

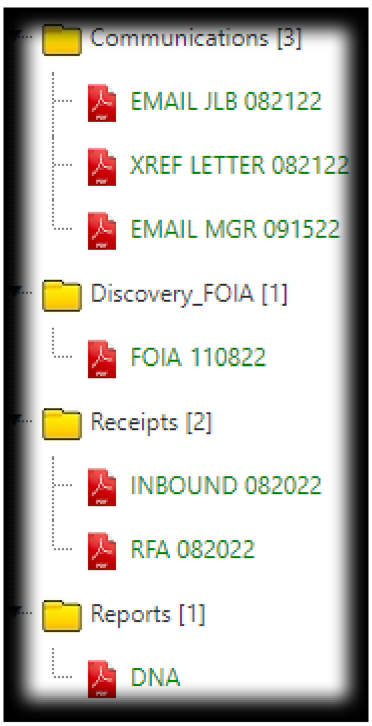
      iii. Once a case number is assigned bar code labels can be generated for the case. These labels are attached to the evidence and can be attached to any paperwork submitted. The electronic attachment will be considered identified to the case by uploading and attaching it to the case level in LIMS-plus.

   b. Attachments: In an effort to reduce the laboratory's dependency on printing paper to hard copy, documents and images should be uploaded at the case level under "Attachments". Note: For the file name do not use commas or other special characters (dashes and underscores are acceptable). Using special characters will prevent the document from downloading. In the event a special character was used, use the view function at the Attachment file level.

c. Custom Forms: Units using custom forms to capture case records do not need to print the records from LIMS. The electronic records combined with the units printed records (if applicable) combine to create the unit's "case file".

d. To assist in locating the documents the following folder structure should be used to upload documents to LIMS for a standard case (i.e., Communications, Receipts and Reports). It is suggested to use a short file name when uploading attachment (see example below).

i. 

ii. 

e. Sub-itemization: a LIMS function allows for sub-itemizing case materials with chain of custody (COC) tracking of those items. In general, if the sub-item is taking a separate path than the parent item it must be sub-itemized within LIMS to allow for the Chain of Custody to be accurately represented. Items that are collected or created and preserved for future testing will be sub-itemized and the chain of custody maintained. This minimally relates to latent print lifts, test-fired ammunition, trace evidence and DNA extracts. This does not relate to substances designated as "Aliquots" (see below).

i. If the sub-item is being returned after testing, with the parent item, the sub-item should be containerized into the parent item.

ii. Once items are separated from a submission and are packaged separately, item number(s)/sub-item numbers must be designated. Entry of the item/sub-item number into LIMS will be performed at the earliest appropriate and convenient time within the day the item is created.

   (a) When possible a barcode label will be attached to the item. It is understood some materials may not be directly labeled.

iii. The item number (or sub-item) will be assigned using the LIMS default sequence. A single item or sub-item will only have 1 designation even when shared between units.

   (a) When a single item is within an evidence bag it should be sub-itemized. Single items must be sub-itemized when traveling between units or when the unit uses crystal report reporting templates that are set up based on such sub-itemization. This will allow for logical sub-itemization for other steps when evidence is shared between disciplines. See example below.

   (b) Sub-items from a single submission can be batched if the items are not to be immediately analyzed or transferred to another unit. Batched items can be given the same item designation.

   (c) Sub-items that are designated as aliquots (example: a small portion of powder substance isolated from a larger portion for analysis in the CS unit) need not be transferred in LIMS if the aliquot remains in the custody of the analyst performing the testing.

   (d) Extractions need not be sub-itemized and tracked in LIMS, <u>if</u> the extract is to be tested in the normal course of analysis (will not be held for supplemental testing). If the extract is to be tested but also to be maintained for possible future testing then a chain of custody must be maintained.

   (e) The sequence of sub-itemization will be defaulted in LIMS to follow the following pattern: Submission number –00X-00X-0X (X being a sequential number). All Units will use this numbering scheme for evidence itemization.

   (f) Reports will be sub-itemized under an administrative submission 'RPT'. A submission number of RPT will be added, the description will be DSS Reports. As sections attach reports, they will attach them to this RPT submission using their Unit designation as the sub-item. The description should be (Unit Designation) report.

      Example:

RPT DSS Reports

RPT-DNA	DNA Report
RPT-FB	FB Report
RPT-CS	CS Report
RPT-TX	TX Report
RPT-CHEM	FD Report
RPT-CHEM	GSR Report
RPT-LP	LP Report
RPT-FA	FA report
RPT-DF	DF Report
RPT-MM	MM Report
RPT-IM	IM Report

(g) For Supplemental reports add a '-S' after the Unit designator and for Amended Reports add a '-A' after the Unit designator. If multiple amended or supplemental reports are needed for a section add a number. (See examples)

(h) When the Item RPT is created it will be transferred to the virtual storage location 'General Laboratory Parent Report'. When adding a unit report the sub-item will be transferred from this storage location to the person creating the report.

(i) Example 1 Single item cases

One submission is delivered it is a sealed plastic evidence bag containing a bottle with a blood like stain. The request is for DNA, Latent Prints and Controlled Substances.

001 is an apparently empty bottle in an evidence bag

001-001 Bottle

001-001-01 Swabbing of BLS on bottle

001-001-02 Swabbing of mouth of bottle

001-001-03 LP Unit Archive disc

001-001-04 Residue from bottle

RPT DSS Reports (Entered by ECO)

RPT-DNA	DNA Report
RPT-LP	LP Report

RPT-CS CS Report

(j) Example 2 of numbering system:

One submission is delivered it is a sealed plastic evidence bag containing a zip-lock bag with 25 pills. The request is for DNA and Controlled Substances.

001 "Bag with Pills " in a sealed evidence bag. (Entered by ECO)

001-001 Bag

001-001-01 Swabbing of Bag (for freezer storage)

001-001-01-1 Extract (for DNA testing and storage)

001-001-01* Swabbing of bag (for DNA testing)

001-002 Twenty-five Pills

001-002-01 one of the 25 pills from 001-002

001-002-02 one of the 25 pills from 001-002

RPT DSS Reports (Entered by ECO)

RPT-DNA DNA Report

RPT-CS CS Report

(k) Example 3 of numbering system:

6th submission is a sealed box containing a firearm with BLS and a separate magazine containing ammunition.

006 "Firearm and one magazine" contained in a sealed box. (This will be as listed on the RFA). The request is for Latent Prints, DNA and Firearms.

006-001 Firearm

006-001-01 Swab of BLS (for Freezer storage)

006-001-01* Swab of BLS (for DNA analysis)

006-001-01*-1 Extract (for DNA analysis and storage)

006-001-02 Lift of Latent Print of value isolated from Barrel of gun

006-001-03 Lift of Latent Print of value isolated from handle of gun

006-002 Magazine with ammunition

006-002-01 Magazine

006-002-02 5 rounds of ammunition

RPT DSS Reports

RPT- LP LP Report

RPT-FA FA Report

RPT- DNA DNA Report

RPT-LP-S LP Supplemental Report

RPT-DNA-A DNA Amended Report

Note: The use of the * is specific to FB/DNA samples to annotate that a portion of a swabbing has been saved for further analysis; this will be added manually in LIMS.

(l) Example 4 of numbering system:

There is 1 submission it is a sealed evidence bag containing a knotted plastic bag containing 70 glassine bags containing a powdery substance. The request is for Latent Prints, DNA and Controlled Substances.

001 “70 bags with powder” contained in a sealed plastic bag. (This will be as listed on the RFA).

001-001 Knotted plastic bag

001-001-01 Swabbing for Freezer storage

001-001-01* Swabbing for DNA analysis

001-001-01*-1 Extract (for DNA analysis and storage)

001-002 Seventy glassine bags containing powder

001-002-01 Swabbing for freezer storage

001-002-01* Swabbing for DNA analysis

001-002-01*-1 Extraction (for DNA analysis and storage)

001-002-02 Powder contained in 1 glassine bag

001-002-03 Powder contained in 1 glassine bag

RPT DSS Reports

RPT- CS CS Report

RPT-LP LP Report

RPT- DNA DNA Report

RPT- CS-A CS Amended Report

RPT- CS-A2 CS Amended Report #2

RPT-DNA-S DNA Supplemental Report

RPT-DNA-S2 DNA Supplemental Report #2

When itemizing the report, ensure that the **PARENT agency** and **representative** are chosen when creating the sub-item. When itemizing, these are the first two boxes in the left corner of the screen. These may auto populate but if they do not, please ensure to add the information. Doing this is very important; it allows the evidence receipt to print for this item.

Note: Designations in case notes may be abbreviated as long as the abbreviation is identifiable to the specific item. Similarly, abbreviations may be used for instrumentation file names when acceptable character lengths are of issue. From example 2 above 001-002-05 could be noted as 1-2-5 the lack of '0' place holders is not of issue as long as it is clearly identifiable.

Note: The above examples are for numbering only, not for the unit specific wording used to describe the sub-item or specifically what is sub-itemized within a unit. As itemization occurs the description in LIMS should be succinct. Unit case notes can give fuller descriptions.

f. Evidence Transfers: Cases entered into the LIMS are transferred from person to person or person to/from storage locations. Each transaction is listed in the Chain of Custody section for the case. This tracks who/where the case came from and at what date and time and to whom/where it went. Any individual involved in a transfer will use their PIN to secure the transfer; an X next to a name on a transfer indicates that a PIN was used. The COC can be printed at any time from LIMS.

   i. LIMS allows for the generation of evidence receipts when a case is first submitted to the DSS and when it is returned to the submitting agency. These receipts are signed by the ECO and the submitting agent. Signatures will be captured electronically. When unavailable a physical signature is acceptable. An electronic copy is the preferred method of providing the receipt to the agency. When unavailable a paper copy can be provided.

      (a) Samples received by mail, left in evidence drop boxes, email or fax (such as DUI Urine samples, Breath Alcohol conversions or Latent Prints) will have a receipt generated, however there will be no signature under the submitting agency.

   ii. Chain of Custody Discrepancies: when an issue is noted for a COC and the evidence has not moved to another Unit or analyst, the individual will use the notes field within the transfer function to clarify the issue.

(a) This is appropriate to document administrative issues such as:

(i) Transferring an item electronically at a time/date later than the physical action occurred.

(ii) Forgetting to sub-itemize an item at the time of occurrence.

(iii) “Picking” the wrong storage location in LIMS.

(iv) “Picking” the wrong agent in LIMS when returning evidence.

(b) The use of the note field will make it clear when the chain of custody is reviewed or printed that there is something outstanding/notable concerning the chain of custody. A ‘Chain of Custody Edit’ workflow is to be initiated in QMS when a COC requires editing.

(c) The “note” box in the Evidence Transfer field is to be used if there is an unusual circumstance associated with the transfer. Generally, this will not be used for commonplace evidence transfers. The note box can only accommodate 30 characters so the note will be “COC Updated” the individual will then add a note to the case synopsis. The use of “COC Updated” will act as a flag to review the case synopsis to determine what was updated. The note in the case synopsis will be in the format of “(Date): COC Updated: (Reason) (Individuals Name)”.

(d) If the issue is caught after the item has been transferred to a subsequent location then the COC Edit workflow in QT should be initiated to address the issue.

(e) Example 1 of when the note function will be used:

An analyst transfers evidence to storage location ‘A’ instead of storage location ‘B’ and recognizes the issue before it is transferred to another analyst/location.

To address this the analyst can transfer the item back to themselves and then to the proper storage location. While performing this step they must add a note, to the note portion of the “From” area of the chain of custody. The note will be “COC Updated”. A note is then added to the synopsis that clearly states what occurred. This would be “(Date): COC Updated: wrong location picked, item never in location “A”. (Name)” When the COC is printed from LIMS it will highlight the step with the notation and the note will print on the COC.

(f) Example 2 of when a COC Edit QMS workflow is used:

An analyst transfers evidence to storage location ‘A’ instead of storage location ‘B’ and does not recognize the issue before it is transferred to another analyst/location .

The workflow is initiated to add the correct sequence of transfers.

(g) Example 3 of when a note function will be used:

There is an error in the chain of custody. An analyst physically moved item 001-001 to ‘refrigerator A’ and forgot to transfer it in LIMS. Another analyst goes to transfer the evidence to themselves and finds its still in the 1st analysts’ custody in LIMS. Prior to the 2nd analyst transferring the item in LIMS the 1st analyst will update the COC.

The 1st analyst will transfer the item(s) to the appropriate location and add the note “COC Updated” during the transfer process. In the synopsis the individual will add,

(date): COC Updated: Item 001-001 was physically transferred to Refrigerator A on (date of transfer) LIMS was not updated at that time. LIMS updated. (1st Analyst’s Name).

g. Case Information Discrepancies: If a component of a case (i.e. case demographics, evidence description, agency case number, etc.) must be edited in LIMS a note must be added to the synopsis area. The note will describe the changes made.

i. When an edit is required to case information beyond a simple typographical type issue that occurred before or during the intake process the analyst/ECO requiring the edit should notify the FSE1 of the ER Unit (or designee). The FSE1 of the ER Unit (or designee) will determine how the edit should be addressed.

ii. If the case is affected globally, the note is to be placed in the case synopsis with the initials of the person making the edit, and date the edit was made.

iii. If only a portion of the case was affected (say one submission only) the note may be added to the notes section on the Evidence tab in LIMS.

iv. In general only the SSAM, LIMS Administrator or designees are authorized to make edits to specific fields in LIMS, edits are approved on a case by case basis. Authorizations in LIMS are defined based on user designations in LIMS. A QMS ‘Request for LIMS Administrator” workflow is used to document the needed edits and approval.

h. Requests:

i. The primary function of creating a case request is to assign the task to a Unit, track the progress and to release a final report to the customer(s) related to that work.

(a) Requests may be used for assignment purposes only, in these cases a report may not be generated. An example of this is in FB for sample collection only. The request is used to assign and track the progress through milestones, but no report is typically issued.

(b) Requests may be used for administrative processes such as FOIA tracking.

ii. Each applicable section will receive a request at the time the evidence is submitted for analysis when requested for their discipline. For example, if a piece of evidence needs latent prints and DNA it will receive a Latent Prints and Forensic Biology request. If a request for that section is open at the time of submission the file should be transferred to the appropriate supervisor to determine if an additional request is needed or if the supplemental items can be added to the original request (please refer to Section 6.1.5 within).

iii. The "Request Date" will reflect the date the request was created in LIMS. This may be the initial date the evidence was received, or subsequent dates as new requests are added. The "Assigned Date" should reflect the date when the analyst is assigned to perform the analysis.

(a) For example, upon creation of the case in LIMS an FB request may be added, once FB performs sample collection the analyst will add the appropriate DNA request these 2 request will have different request dates.

(b) Exception: If a request was missed upon initial receipt to the laboratory and it is added at a later time the date field should be updated to reflect the date of receipt to the laboratory.

(i) Example: A gun is submitted and needs both comparison and operability requests on October 17, 2022. The ECO only adds a comparison request in LIMS. At a later date the Firearms examiner recognizes that the operability request was not initiated in LIMS. The Firearms examiner should add the appropriate request and update the date field to the date of the case receipt.

iv. Under the direction of the Unit Supervisor, a request will be assigned to an analyst based on the operational needs of the Unit. The "Assigned Date" will reflect the date the case is assigned to the analyst.

(a) Note: In the Toxicology Unit where cases are shared the request is assigned to the "Tox Group" for purposes of tracking the request.

v. Once a case is assigned to an analyst in LIMS only that analyst can enter results for the case.

i. Rush Levels can be designated through LIMS. In general rush levels will be annotated in LIMS by a member of Case Management:

i. Rush Level 1: The highest level expedited case. In general, the results may be associated with a public safety issue or a flight risk. These cases are approved by the Division of Scientific Services Director. Based on the needs associated with the case, analysts may need to work outside of normal DSS hours. Typical turn-around time for these cases is less than 48 hours.

ii. Rush Level 2: A case that is approved by the Division of Scientific Services Director to be expedited and prioritized. The priority is based on the specific needs associated with the case. These cases may require the analyst to work a minimal amount of time outside the normal DSS working hours. Typical or expected turn-around time is less than one week.

iii. Rush Level 3: A case that the Division of Scientific Services Director has approved for expedited analysis. There is no perceived public safety issue. These will be assigned and worked into the next set of testing performed. Typical turn-around time is approximately 3 weeks.

iv. Rush – Court Date: Designation used for cases that are needed to meet judicial expectations. Generally given a "JIT" (just in time) priority level.

v. The time frame for rush cases is guidance, it is understood that when case materials must cycle through multiple units this may extend the process. The Deputy Directors are responsible to track this flow to ensure timely analysis.

j. Case Reporting:

i. Some DSS Units use templates which are set within LIMS for case reports. Some Units generate laboratory reports using templates created as word documents.

ii. The current LIMS Crystal Reports are set to download demographics for the case into the report format.

iii. Units using Word reports will save all reports in an electronic read only format in a secure accessible location on the server once the report is administratively reviewed. The case report will be scanned and attached to the case in LIMS, using the 'Attachment' feature. The report should be uploaded to the folder under Attachments labeled "Reports".

iv. Case reports are, in general, sub-itemized in LIMS and a bar code will be generated for the envelope of the report being returned to the submitting agency (see GL-11 for exceptions to this process).

k. Milestones: Allow for the tracking of the progression of a case. When a cases is opened the milestone function can be used to determine the current stage of analysis. The milestones are:

- Unassigned
- Assigned
- Findings entered
- Draft complete
- Technical review (assigned/completed)
- Administrative review (assigned/completed)
- Report Released

i. Milestones are to be updated in real time in LIMS. The Technical and Administrative reviews are assigned in the same manner a case is assigned. Assignment may be by the analyst, the Supervisor or other designee based, on the needs of the Unit.

ii. If an amended report is required a QMS workflow (‘Amended Report Required’) will be initiated for approval. Once approved by the Unit Manager via the QMS workflow, the LIMS Administrator or designee will set the report to “clear report releasable’. This will set back the milestones allowing the analyst to edit the initial report. The analyst or person making the amendment must attach a copy of the original reports within the case in LIMS. The amended report will then go through the normal review process where the milestones are updated appropriately.

(a) Note that when an amended report is required for DNA and Forensic Biology an amended report request will be added in LIMS. A QMS ‘Amended Reported Required’ workflow will also be initiated.

iii. There may be times when the report requiring amendment is older. For this the analyst needs to amend the report based on the report template used at the time. The QMS workflow and process as described above will still be used.

(a) Units using word reports outside of the LIMS can simply amend the report based on the last word document released following the process described above.

(b) For Units using LIMS report templates the original report will be scanned and attached to the attachment section of the case in LIMS. Work with the Unit Manager and LIMS Administrator to determine the best method to obtain the correct report template.

(c) There may be rare events where using a previous revision of a report template will not be appropriate. In these cases, the Unit Manager will be consulted in the best way to proceed.

l. Case Synopsis: Allows for notations to be added to the case. Communications concerning the case should be annotated here. When adding a note in the synopsis the individual will include the date and their initials or name.

m. The Attachment feature should be used to attach communications concerning the case as needed, such as related emails. Communications should be uploaded to the folder under Attachments labeled “Communications”.

n. Activity Tracking: LIMS allows work related activities to be tracked. Analysts can use this to account for time not performing case work, such as court testimony, giving or attending lectures, working on proficiency tests, attending a crime scene, or other activity. The notes section can be used to describe the event and the time attended.

o. Other tools available within LIMS:

i. Crystal Reports can be created to mine statistical case information such as cases received/released and unit backlog tracking. If a specific Crystal Report is required for a Unit a 'Request for LIMS Administrator' QMS workflow should be created.

ii. Notes – There is a note field associated with each item and sub-item. Information specific to that item/sub-item can be added in this location and printed as needed.

iii. Create Worklist – Some units that batch case work are able to create batches, assign the batches and print worklists using this function.

iv. LIMS Portal – This feature allows DSS customers to initiate a case by entering some of the case demographics. Upon initiating a case externally, the ER unit can access the case information in LIM using the Accept Evidence feature. When imported, the case information can be reviewed, edited and if necessary, excluded upon import, allowing the ECO to "fast track" the entry of the case, minimizing the time the customer spends at the DSS. This process can only be used by customers provided with a logon by the DSS. This process does not allow the customer access to secure data maintained in LIMS. Additionally, this feature allows customers to access DSS case reports once they are released for review by the laboratory.

4. Data Archiving:

   a. The System Administrator is responsible to maintain the servers including archiving data as needed. Any files not accessed by a date as designated by the Director, will be copied to the SAN (Storage Area Network) and deleted from the servers. This is done to ensure adequate storage space on the servers.

   b. The SAN is replicated and backed up virtually in increments daily and in full on a weekly basis.

   c. Tapes generated from the back-ups are transferred monthly to off-site storage locations.

   d. To retrieve information from a file prior to 2012 a request should go to the System Administrator through the SSAM.

5. Updates and Patches to the LAN and LIMS

   a. Updates to the LAN and LIMS will be authorized by the Director. The Director has authorized the SSAM to oversee these updates.

   b. The SSAM, in consultation with the LISM and Unit Manager(s) or other applicable section-matter experts, will properly test the new version during BETA testing to ensure the appropriate critical functions are working prior to releasing a new version.

   c. The level of validation will depend on the extent of the update. Refer to GL-22 'Policy on Validation and Performance Checks' for guidance.

   d. Patches are small fixes, within the same version of LIMS. Patches should be scheduled on a regular basis and do not require the same level of validation as an Update.

e. The SSAM will document the validation and maintain the appropriate documentation.

6. LIMS failures/issues:

   a. The LIMS Administrator (or designee) will maintain a log of changes/issues that arise with the use of LIMS.

   b. In the event of a system failure, the LIMS Administer (or designee) will document the issue and corrective measures in the LIMS logbooks. The LIMS Administrator will report the issue to the SSAM and LISM. The SSAM or LISM will inform the Director and other Managers as appropriate.

      i. If appropriate the issue will be documented through a Quality Action Request (CAR or IR).

E. REFERENCES:

a. JusticeTrax- LIMS Users Guide

b. State of Connecticut 'Acceptable Use of State Systems Policy': https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/Fin-General/Policies/Acceptable-Use-of-State-Systems-May-2006

F. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

a. This information is maintained as a guide for older cases that need to be accessed such as cold cases that have additional requests added.

b. Case Numbering: XXX-YY-ZZZZZ

   (i) Cases entered between 2010 and December 31, 2013, were entered into two separate LIMS. For these cases the first two digits are "TX" for the Controlled Substance and Toxicology Units and "ID" for all other units.

   (ii) Controlled Substance and Toxicology cases entered into LIMS (under a separate server) from 1999 to 2010 have "ID" as the two letter designation.

c. Toxicology and Controlled Substances cases prior to 1999 use a sequence of XX-(C or T) – YYYY. Where XX indicated the year, C controlled substances, T, Toxicology and YYYY being a sequential number.

   i. For older cases (1983 to 1998) the case number is represented as IDXXLNNNNDN.

      (a) "ID" for the Forensic Laboratory.

      (b) XX indicates the year the case was submitted.

      (c) L (letter) indicates the month that the case was submitted to the laboratory with (A= January, B= February, C=March, D=April, and so on).

      (d) NNNN is the sequential case number.

(e) D indicates the alphabetic designation of the lab sections as referred in the 2007 Laboratory Quality Manual, section 3, revision 4 (04/2007).

(f) The final N- number represents the submitting agency designation as referred in the 2007 Laboratory Quality Manual, section 3, revision 4 (04/2007).

ii. Cases prior to 1983 used the sequence of ID-XX-YYYY, where XX equaled the year and YYYY is a sequential number.