

**A. PURPOSE:**

The Evidence Receiving and Case Management Units collaborate as the organizing body for the receipt and distribution of evidence in the Division of Scientific Services (DSS). Evidence Receiving is responsible for the in-take of cases, proper temporary storage of evidence, distribution of all evidence and long term storage of evidence related to sexual assaults. Case Management vets cases and prioritizes the assignments based on customer needs. This procedure outlines in general terms the flow of evidence to the DSS, within the DSS and back to the submitting agency.

Part of the responsibility of the Evidence Receiving Unit is to take in drug evidence. Due to the nature of drug evidence special handling is required. Appendix A addresses the intake of drug evidence.

**B. DEFINITIONS:**

1. ECO (however titled): Evidence Control Officer; ECO is used in this document to mean an employee with the state title of Evidence Control Officer, or anyone assigned to work in the Evidence Receiving Unit or assigned to assist the Unit temporarily.
2. ER: Evidence Receiving
3. CM: Case Management
4. PIN: Personal Identification Number
5. JT: JusticeTrax Computer System
6. COC: Chain of Custody
7. RFA: Request for Analysis form
8. CS: Controlled Substances Unit
9. SAR: Submitting Agency Representative

**C. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Director: responsible to provide direction to the Assistant Director of the State Forensic Science Laboratory.
2. Deputy Directors (DD): responsible to work with the ECO (or designees) as needed to ensure the appropriate flow of cases to and from the Units.
3. Assistant Director of the State Forensic Science Laboratory (ADFL): responsible to manage the Evidence Receiving and Case Management Units. Additionally works with the CM and ER Unit staff to resolve evidence intake issues.
4. Assistant Director (AD): responsible to work with the ECO (or designees) as needed to ensure the appropriate flow of cases to and from the Units.
5. Quality Section (QS): responsible to assist the ADFL and ECO as needed in matters related to the Quality System.

6. ECO (however titled): responsible to ensure that evidence received by the DSS meets the guidelines of the DSS.
7. Analysts (however titled): responsible to follow the guidance of this document as appropriate to their Unit.

**D. PROCEDURE:**

1. Evidence brought into the DSS will be designated for one, or multiple Units of the DSS.
2. The DSS accepts evidence from any State or local police department, Federal law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies, State's Attorney's Offices, and other authorized State agencies e.g. Consumer Protection and Corrections (Refer to General Statute 29-7b). Other agencies may submit evidence with *prior* authorization by the Director of the Division of Scientific Services.

Evidence previously analyzed by another laboratory, or other forensic expert outside of the DSS will not be accepted without prior approval of the Director (or Deputy Director in the Director's absence).

Evidence previously analyzed by the DSS that is resubmitted for the same analysis must be approved by the Director or their designee prior to reanalysis.
3. Evidence may be personally delivered to the ERU, left in drop boxes, delivered by mail or delivered electronically. Refer to Evidence Receiving SOPs for complete guidance on evidence intake.
  - a. Personal delivery to the ECU is during DSS core hours, in general this will be as needed only.
  - b. Drop boxes are located in the lobby and/or foyer outside Evidence Receiving. Agencies using these boxes place the evidence and paperwork into the available boxes and where applicable provide the key to the ER staff.

Note: Acceptable "Drop boxes" may be locked cabinets, bins or carts designated by ER for evidence, this is to allow for secure limited contact evidence transfer.
  - c. Delivery by mail is rare and generally only occurs with Toxicology cases and outsourced casework.
  - d. Electronic delivery generally occurs with Latent Print cases but may include other Units where the evidence best lends itself to an electronic state. In Units where this is used, the Unit SOPs provide guidance on acceptance.
4. Evidence brought to the DSS is expected to be properly sealed and labeled with the submitting agency's case and item number, whenever possible. All associated paperwork submitted with the case will also have the submitting agency case number identifier. In general, a 'Request for Analysis' form will be submitted with the evidence.
  - a. I-Prelog may be used by submitting agencies to submit evidence without having to use a Request for Analysis form. Please refer to Evidence Receiving Unit SOPs for further details.

5. When evidence is submitted to ER that is not properly sealed the ECO may require the submitting agency representative (SAR) to properly seal the evidence or the ECO may properly seal the evidence themselves. The ECO will make a notation in the synopsis section of JusticeTrax for that case, that the evidence was sealed at the DSS. All employees are expected to handle and store evidence in a manner that maintains the integrity of the evidence, specifically documenting each step of the COC and handling the evidence in a manner which prevents contamination or deleterious change. (See SOP GL-13, General Evidence Handling).
6. For evidence containing drugs: the evidence items containing drugs will be handled by ER as listed in appendix A. When the evidence is purely drug residue, such as “empty” drug bags, pipes or other paraphernalia it can be transferred directly to the needed Unit for storage/analysis. Cases containing solid dose drugs will be stored in the Controlled Substance Unit prior to and after analysis. When analysis will take multiple days the evidence will be returned to the CS Unit each night, unless the Director gives approval for limited overnight storage in another Unit. If approval is obtained this will be noted in the case documentation.
  - a. When the evidence is ready to be examined, the CS analyst will transfer evidence to the analyst requesting the item(s).
  - b. If suspected drugs (excluding items such as drug paraphernalia and empty bags) are found on evidence during analysis (such as in a pocket of a piece of clothing) the analyst will immediately alert the Unit Lead or Supervisor.
    - i. The item(s) will be documented with photographs and/or case notes and sub-itemized in JusticeTrax. The items should be transferred to the Controlled Substance Unit for storage.
    - ii. The analyst, Lead, Supervisor or Case Management will contact the submitting agency to determine if they require the items to be tested. This information will be communicated to all needed Units.
  - c. Upon completing needed analysis, the Unit performing the case analysis is responsible to inform the CS Unit that the work is complete and that the evidence can be returned to the Evidence Receiving Unit.
7. The following is a generalized description of the evidence flow throughout the DSS from the time it is accepted into the DSS Evidence Receiving Unit, to analysis and return to the submitting agency. There are exceptions to this which are documented within the Evidence Receiving SOPs and Unit specific SOPs.
  - a. Evidence is brought in by a submitting agency (hand delivered, put in a drop box, electronically submitted or through the mail).
  - b. Evidence is accepted by an ECO (or designee). The ECO checks for proper case seal and identification; comparing the agency case number on the submitted paperwork (Request for Analysis Form) to the agency case number on the evidence itself.
  - c. The evidence is logged into and assigned a DSS case number using the JusticeTrax computer system. (Refer to SOP GL-4 LIMS)

- i. The chain of custody for the case items starts at the point of entry into JusticeTrax.
  - (a) For evidence personally delivered the COC starts with the SAR.
  - (b) When submitted by mail, the COC will start with U.S. Mail (or similar).
  - (c) When drop boxes are used the COC will start with 'Evidence Secure Dropbox'.
  - (d) When submitted electronically, the COC starts with the date of the email.
- d. The ECO (or designee) places JT generated bar code labels with the case number printed on them on the paperwork and evidence as appropriate. The bar code label is the mechanism for evidence transfer within the DSS from this point forward.
- e. An evidence receipt is generated and signed by the SAR and the ECO. When the SAR is not present only the ECO will sign.
- f. An administrative case file is made containing all paperwork submitted and the evidence receipt.
- g. The evidence is electronically and physically transferred to the proper storage location within Evidence Receiving, based on the type of evidence.
- h. Case Management vets cases for most Units to determine the best path of analysis when multiple Units are involved and to flag those that are expedited.
- i. Evidence examiners retrieve the evidence and associated paperwork from the Evidence Receiving area. This is done on a daily basis for some Units and as needed by other Units. All transfers are documented electronically in the JusticeTrax system. To ensure that the transfer is secure when the transfer is person to person, both the ECO and the analyst will use their unique PIN for the transfer.
- j. Once the transfer is complete the analyst transports the evidence to their Unit.
- k. Within the Unit the analyst transfers the evidence to the proper storage location. The evidence will remain there until analysis is required. Alternatively the analysts keep possession of the evidence assigned to themselves and they store the evidence in their individual evidence storage locker.
- l. A case file will be made for active cases, this will contain copies of the administrative case paperwork. This may be performed by the assigned Unit or the Case Management Unit.
- m. When evidence is assigned to an analyst, it is transferred to their possession when needed for analysis.
- n. The analyst will maintain the integrity of the evidence by maintaining proper storage of the items as specific in Unit SOPs.
- o. The analyst will perform appropriate analysis.
- p. When analysis is complete on a case, the case report is generated, reviewed and signed.

- q. Once the case is complete and the final report is signed, the analyst retrieves the evidence from the storage location (tracking the transfer in JT), and physically brings the evidence and case reports to Evidence Receiving. In some cases, if additional testing is required by other disciplines, the evidence is transferred to the next Unit for analysis.
  - i. The Toxicology Unit, in general, does not return evidence to the submitting agency (See Toxicology Unit specific SOPs).
  - ii. Forensic Biology sample prep cases can be returned to ER without a report.
- r. The evidence and report is transferred from the analyst to the ECO via JT; both will use their PINs during the transfer.
- s. The ECO transfers the evidence to a storage location for pick up by the submitting agency or for long term storage.
- t. The submitting agency may be contacted that evidence is ready for pick-up.

For OCME cases that are submitted and related to another agency's case, the OCME evidence will be transferred to the parent agency not to the OCME; unless the OCME requests that the item(s) be returned to them.
- u. When the submitting agency comes to pick up a case the ECO transfers the evidence and sub-itemized report from the storage location to themselves and finally to the submitting agency, or evidence drop box.
  - i. Evidence for sexual assault cases is generally not returned to the submitting agency.
  - ii. Long term storage of evidence related to sexual assaults is maintained by the Evidence Receiving Unit.
- v. An outgoing evidence receipt is generated and signed by both the ECO and SAR.
- w. The SAR is given the appropriate copies of the case report and the evidence or retrieves them from the evidence drop box.

**Appendix A:****Intake of Evidence Containing Drugs**

The following is for evidence submitted specifically for the Controlled Substance Unit and for evidence submitted for other Units that are reported to contain drugs.

For newly received cases: lock boxes are provided that remain unlocked until evidence is placed in the box. The ECO will have another DSS employee or the SAR act as witness to the evidence being placed in the lock box and sealed. The Controlled Substance Unit maintains control of the keys to those boxes. Once a box is locked the ECO and the CS representative will unlock the box as each other's witness.

For cases returned from CS or to the submitting agency: a two lock storage cabinet is maintained for drug evidence. No ECO will ever have control of both keys. When an analyst returns evidence, 2 ECOs immediately lock the evidence into the 2 lock cabinet. To retrieve evidence from the 2 lock cabinet, 2 ECOs open the locker, remove the needed items and immediately relock the cabinet.

1. The ECO reviews the paperwork and evidence packaging to ensure the agency case number on the evidence matches the agency case number on the evidence submission form, per Unit SOPs.
2. The ECO will enter the case into LIMS, create labels and label the individual evidence bags as normal (see Unit SOPs for guidance).
3. The ECO will place the evidence in a lock box with the submitting agent or another DSS employee as the witness to this act. The key to the lock box is controlled by the Controlled Substance Unit. Multiple cases from a single submitting agency can be placed in a single box (based on case size).
4. The paperwork will be completed as per Unit SOP. If present, the submitting agent will sign the evidence receipt and will be asked to initial the evidence receipt that they witnessed the evidence being placed in the lock box and the box sealed. When the case has been delivered via a drop box, the ECO will have a 2<sup>nd</sup> DSS employee witness that the evidence was locked into a lock box.
5. Drug cases should be picked-up from Evidence Receiving Daily.
6. When the evidence is to be transferred to the CS analyst the analyst will bring the lock box keys.
  - a. The lock box will be opened (with both the ECO and CS analyst present), the items will be transferred to the CS analyst in JT per normal procedure.
  - b. Evidence submissions may be placed in a convenience container and sealed. When convenience containers are used, bar code labels will be placed on the convenience container.

*Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro*

7. For cases that cannot be stored in a lock box, the ECO will call the CS Supervisor, Assistant Director or Deputy Director to arrange for immediate transfer to the CS storage location.

In the rare case that the above cannot be performed the method to ensure patency will be at the discretion of the Deputy Director or their designee.

8. When evidence is returned from CS to ER, the evidence will be transferred and the evidence will be locked into the drug cabinet by the ECO. The evidence will stay locked in the 2 lock drug cabinet until it is to be picked up by the submitting agency, at that time 2 ECOs (or 1 ECO and one Management Designee) will unlock the cabinet, remove the needed items and transfer the evidence.

At no time will the 2 lock drug cabinet be left with either lock unlocked.

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