

A. PURPOSE:

General laboratory training: used to introduce new analytical employees to the general operating procedures of the DSS Laboratories. The goal is to have new analysts introduced to the general operating procedures of the division prior to their intensive section specific training.

Retraining: used to re-introduce analysts to section specific training. This may be due to many reasons, from a failure of a proficiency test, to return to work after an extended absence.

B. SCOPE:

Besides training newly hired personnel, the DSS labs offer training opportunities for continuing education beyond the required in-house training and competency testing. Outside training opportunities include, but are not limited to, courses, seminars and professional meetings which provide a means to remain current and/or increase expertise in a particular field.

All analysts (however titled) and contract employees must show competency in their given discipline prior to assuming independent case work. This is demonstrated by the use of competency tests in the assigned section. This procedure is for general laboratory guidance to introduce the trainee to the Division and its general practices. All components in this GL must be met. If Sections choose to go above and beyond these requirements, specifics will be found in the Section or Unit SOPs.

NOTE: The length and duration of the training will be dependent upon the knowledge, skills and abilities that a new employee brings to their position. All training steps must be addressed as appropriate for the trainee, based on their knowledge, skill and experience. The length of time necessary to complete the training process will vary depending again on the knowledge skill and experience of the trainee. Any modifications to a training program will be documented. The Units specific training manual will always be used. If modifications are approved, then the training manual will reflect those changes in writing, in the manual. Regardless of past experience, all trainees must successfully complete a full competency test as indicated in the respective training manual. There is to be no modifications allowed to competency tests.

C. RESPONSIBILITY:

Trainees: are responsible to follow the guidance of the trainer to ask questions when they do not understand a policy or procedure and to understand their importance and the importance of the laboratory in criminal justice system.

Trainers: are responsible to train employees based on laboratory policy. General Laboratory training will be performed by the Quality Section, or designee as appointed by the Director.

Section Supervisor/Lead: responsible to work with the Quality Section to ensure that the General Laboratory training is scheduled in a timely manner for new employees.

Deputy Director (DD) Assistant Director (AD) and Laboratory Administrative Manager (LAM): responsible for ensuring the adequate supervision for the training of new employees in their sections.

Director: directs and approves laboratory policies and procedures that support adequate training to provide employees expertise in their discipline.

D. PROCEDURE: New employee – Analyst (however titled)

A member of the Quality Section or a designee will perform General Laboratory training of new employees. The Section Manager must inform the Quality Section when a new hire is starting so that the training can be scheduled. The trainer will utilize the "General Laboratory Training Checklist" (GL-14.1) as a guide in performing the training. Contract employees are trained in the same manner as a new employee.

1. All new employees must know the significance of the Division Mission Statement, and read and understand the General Laboratory SOPs.

Division of Scientific Services Mission Statement:

It is the on-going policy of the Division of Scientific Services to provide services that meet our specifications and comply with the ASCLD/LAB International, ISO/IEC 17025, and the FBI DNA QAS requirements while meeting or exceeding the expectations of the criminal justice community.

2. All aspects of the training relating to the required knowledge, skills and abilities including moot court shall be addressed in unit specific training SOPs. This includes the use of competency tests that includes practical examination(s) that cover the spectrum of anticipated tasks related to the testing. Competency tests should also include, written tests or oral examinations as appropriate. The competency test's intended results shall be achieved prior to performing the tasks on evidence. All training and competency tests must be documented in the trainees training file. Additional or subsequent in-house training must be documented in the training manuals and included in the employee's professional development file either in the Quality Section or in Qualtrax.
3. General Training will include:
 - a. Introduction to the general structure of the DSS.
 - b. Introduction to safety issues, such as fire alarms, evacuation routes, the active shooter response plan and other general laboratory wide topics. Specific safety instructions will be given during unit specific training. (See SOP GL-2 Safety).
 - c. Introduction to the DSS laboratory system including the roll the laboratory plays in the criminal justice system
 - d. Introduction to ethics in the forensic laboratory and the Guiding Principles (See SOP GL-5).

- e. Introduction to the General Laboratory SOPs through Qualtrax.
 - f. Introduction to the use of Qualtrax.
 - g. GL-3 Security as pertains to the building systems.
 - h. GL-9 Quality Action Requests; specifically the availability of this resource to individual employees.
 - i. GL-15 Professional Development; specifically the availability of outside training, and membership in professional organizations.
 - j. Note that other general laboratory SOPs will be introduced as appropriate during Unit specific training.
 - k. New hires to non-analytical laboratory support positions will be given an abbreviated general training based on the needs of the position; this will be determined by the Quality Section with the Director. For example an individual hired as a secretary may be introduced to GL SOPs 1-6, but not necessarily GL-7 to GL-20 which relate more to case work and evidence handling.
4. There will be no testing for the General training section since this only acts to introduce the trainee to the Division.
- a. This will be documented using General Training Checklist form GL-14.1.
 - b. Note: that as use of Qualtrax software is implemented documentation of this training may be maintained by using Qualtrax instead of the form listed above.
5. The Training Program for personnel who perform testing and can influence results, to the extent necessary based on job function, shall include:
- a. General Forensic Training, this will include a brief introduction to various forensic science disciplines. This may be achieved by attending a course given by a laboratory employee or through training in Qualtrax, or other appropriate (pre-approved) manner.
 - b. Knowledge, skills and abilities, individuals will demonstrate these topics throughout the training program and competency test.
 - c. Legal Issues, this will cover general topics that affect this laboratory including information of some legal precedents (Frye, Daubert, etc.). This training may be given by a guest speaker, by a laboratory employee, through on-line training or other pre-approved training manner.
 - i. Note: individual sections will cover issues, and laws that impact the section.
 - d. Ethics, the application of ethical practices in forensic science.
 - e. Criteria for acceptable performance, will be included in the Units' training manuals. Feedback on training worksheets and pass/fail results on tests will be included.

6. Interns: interns are used at different levels within the Division. All interns will be required to be introduced to the Ethics SOP and the state Ethics policy. Training checklist GL-14.2 is to be completed for each intern.
 - a. Note: Rarely, interns will be brought in for a limited time period (a week or less), in these cases the need for ethics training will be at the discretion of the Director and/or Laboratory Administrative Manager.
7. Re-Assignment:
 - a. When an employee is transferred to a new unit or is being cross trained in another unit, it is expected that the training within the unit will be followed but may be modified.
 - i. The Unit Lead should work with the Section DD, AD or LAM to determine what general topics need not be repeated. For the DNA unit the Technical Leader will accept the modified plan. The Unit Manager and Lead will review the unit training SOP to determine what the trainee has already been trained in within the DSS. A notation on the training manual or checklist can document the modified training plan.
 - b. It is expected that unit specific training would follow the normal training path but may be modified based on the experience level of the trainee and level of training required.
 - i. It is acceptable for a unit to train individuals on specific tasks and not the complete unit procedures based on the needs of the DSS. In these cases the full training checklist may not be used.
 - ii. Demonstration of competency will be documented based on normal unit procedure and as described above.

E. PROCEDURE: Retraining

1. Provisions for retraining, will be included in each unit's training program. When it is determined by a manager in the respective unit that significant retraining is necessary, the examiner will be de-authorized (in writing) temporarily from the method(s) until the retraining has successfully been completed. Retraining will end with a competency test and a re-authorization by the Director.
2. In the event that an examiner requires retraining in any aspect of his/her job performance, pertinent sections of the training manual can be used and documented as done in the initial training process.
3. The need for training/retraining of personnel is expected to be identified as a function of the routine quality control/quality assurance program of the laboratory, including case technical reviews, and evaluation of proficiency testing programs, as well as the annual audit program.

4. Leads that feel re-training is required must consult with the Assistant Director and/or Deputy Director to develop a plan for the re-training based on the issue at hand. The Quality Section will be updated when the need for retraining is identified. Based on the cause of the need for the retraining a QAR may be required. If retraining is required for a DNA analyst the DNA technical leader will be involved and give approval of the plan.
5. The need for retraining may arise due to multiple circumstances including but not limited to:
 - a. Prolonged absence from the laboratory, the definition of prolonged absence will be section dependent (i.e. an employee newly deemed competent absent for two months may require re-training were a seasoned section member absent for three months may not require re-training). This will be decided on a case by case basis.
 - b. Failure of a proficiency
 - c. Poor court monitoring reviews
 - d. Problems identified during case technical reviews
 - e. Other case examination deficiencies as observed by the Unit Lead
 - i. Note that the extent of re-training will be dependent on the reason for the need of the re-training.
 - f. Documentation of Re-Training will be in the form of a memo to the individuals Training/ Professional Development File or through the completion of a QAR. The documentation will be completed and forwarded to the Quality Section no longer than 2 weeks from the completion of the re-training. The following must be detailed:
 - i. Name of person being re-trained
 - ii. Reason for re-training
 - iii. Date of start and end of re-training
 - iv. Documentation of de-authorization and re-authorization (if applicable)
 - v. Topics addressed in retraining and how the topics were addressed (simple discussion, re-analysis of case work, competency challenge etc....).
 - vi. Determination of satisfactory completion of re-training
 - vii. Name of person who performed the training
 - viii. Sign-off by section Lead with a review by the Deputy or Assistant Director or Quality Section. For the DNA section the Technical Lead will also approve the training.

F. REFERENCES:

1. Unit training manuals
2. Professional development SOP GL-1
3. State Employee Ethics Guide
http://www.ct.gov/ethics/lib/ethics/guides/public_officials_guide_10.pdf
4. Ethics SOP GL-5
5. Security SOP GL-3
6. Quality Action Request SOP GL-9
7. In-house training records

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