

*Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro***A. PURPOSE:**

Customer service is of utmost importance to the Division of Scientific Services; as such, requests, contracts and tenders are reviewed to ensure continued compliance with their requirements. The purpose of this procedure is to describe and define the process by which such review occurs.

B. RESPONSIBILITY:

Director: responsible to review contracts annually and ensure that all sections of the Division follow contracts as set forth with customers.

Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors and Laboratory Administrative Manager: ensure that all units within their section follow contracts as set forth with customers. Contracts must be reviewed at least annually to ensure the needs of the customer are being met.

Quality Managers: must ensure that contracts are reviewed as needed, or at a minimum, once annually.

Unit Supervisors/leads (however titled): must ensure that their unit is meeting the requirements set forth by the Division in contracts with Division customers.

Analysts (however titled): must follow SOPs and inform their supervisor/lead as major deviations from defined procedures/contractual agreements are required.

C. PROCEDURE:**1. Contracts/Tenders/Requests:**

- a. As part of the annual Management System Review the customer contract will be reviewed to determine if it still meets the needs of the customers. Each unit is responsible for contractual obligations applicable to that unit, under the general authority and responsibility of the Director.
- b. If there are any specialized contracts, these will be similarly reviewed to ensure the customer's needs are continued to be met.
- c. If contracts for outsourcing of testing (sub-contracting) are obtained, the Quality Section will maintain a list of the acceptable contracted vendors. The contracts will be reviewed annually. This annual review can be performed during the management system review.

2. Evidence Submission to the Laboratories:

- a. When an agency/customer submits evidence to the Division for examination they are given a receipt to sign indicating what was submitted. This receipt has the contract between the Division and the submitting agency printed on it. Each specific unit shall, as a function of the contractual agreement with the customer, specify and use appropriate procedures which

meet the needs of the customer and which are appropriate for the examination/testing required.

- b. The contract between the Division and submitting agency states:

Agencies submitting evidence to the Division of Scientific Services for specific analysis agree to allow the Division to determine the appropriate methodology for the evidence submitted and agree to the use of either handwritten or electronic signatures on Division reports. Descriptions of analyses offered by the Division are detailed on our website. If the Division needs to deviate from standard test methodologies you or your agency will be contacted prior to the analysis being performed. The Division reserves the right to use contract laboratories to perform case analysis as needed. This contract serves to inform you as the client of this potential event. In the event a contract laboratory is used the name and address of the contract laboratory will be stated on the laboratory report to the submitting agency. Any concerns or specific requests about the required testing can be discussed with the section Deputy Director or Director prior to case analysis.

- c. By signing the evidence receipt form the customer accepts the terms of the contract.
- d. When an agency has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the DSS this MOU will supersede the above contract or work in conjunction with that contract based on the details of the MOU.
- i. For these cases, evidence receipts may not be generated, other methods of documenting the evidence transfer from the customer to the laboratory may be acceptable.

3. Deviations/Changes to Contracts (before or after work begins):

- a. When a major deviation to a contract must be made, it must be approved by the customer prior to the work being performed. This approval can be obtained verbally, however the information must be documented in the case file. A major deviation is the use of a non-standard method or anything that causes work to be performed other than that in which the case was originally submitted for.
- i. Example: a case was submitted for drug analysis; the findings indicate that a drug is not present but that an explosive may be present. The customer would be contacted to determine if they wanted the evidence transferred from the Controlled Substance unit to the Arson unit for analysis.
- b. A major deviation does include the Division sending the sample to a reference/contract laboratory for a procedure that is not part of the Division's normal scope of testing.
- c. A major deviation does not include changes such as instrument of choice or solvent of choice as long as the customer's needs are still met by the change.

- d. A major deviation does not include sending the case to a contracted vendor, if the contract vendor is analyzing the case materials for the same type of analysis the evidence was submitted to the Division for.

4. Contact with Customers:

- a. Any employee who is contacted by or contacts a customer concerning changes to a contract of a case (whether verbal or written) must note the following in the case file:
 - i. date of contact
 - ii. the name of the customer
 - iii. contact information
 - iv. brief overview of the discussion
 - v. what was agreed to
- b. These records will be maintained in the case file for the life of the case file. If the change to the contract is documented as a major change, a copy of the information should also be filed in the administrative file with evidence receiving.