

A. Purpose:

Proper evidence storage and maintenance of chain of custody is essential to protect the integrity of all evidence in the Division. The following describes the documentation of and procedures for retrieving, storing, and returning evidence in the Firearm and Toolmark Unit and the documentation/maintenance of the chain of custody in JusticeTrax (LIMS).

B. Responsibility:

Assigned Unit personnel

C. Procedure:

1. The chain of custody will be maintained at all times to document the location of the evidence.
 - a. Person-to-person transfers require the use of Personal Identification Numbers (PINs) from both parties and will be documented in LIMS.
 - b. Person-to-storage location transfers require the analyst's PIN and will be documented in JusticeTrax.
2. Evidence transfers shall be documented at the time they occur.
3. Upon transfer of the evidence to the analyst, the evidence barcode information will be compared to the Request for Analysis form. The Unit Quality Records have a location to note that the information is correct. If a discrepancy is noted, a notation should be included next to this area on the Quality Records. If the discrepancy is an administrative error in-house, the issue should be corrected. If the discrepancy is from external, the discrepancy should be addressed in the report.
4. Analysts assigned to the Firearm and Toolmark Unit shall retrieve items from the Evidence Receiving Unit as soon as possible upon notification.
 - a. When an analyst in the Firearms Unit is called to the Evidence Receiving Unit to render a firearm safe, the evidence shall be transferred to the analyst conducting the safety check.
5. Evidence retrieved from the Evidence Receiving Unit, or from a member of another laboratory unit, shall be transferred to the appropriate storage location in the Firearms Unit.
6. In-progress case work shall be secured in an evidence locker assigned to the analyst or in Firearms Evidence Storage 1. If evidence is stored in Firearms Storage 1, the chain of custody will be appropriately updated to reflect a transfer.
7. When evidence is transferred to another analyst for the purpose of verification, the chain of custody will be updated in LIMS. The analyst upon completion of verification will transfer the evidence back to the original analyst and update the milestone request for the verification.

Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro

8. After all examinations of evidence are complete, the items shall be stored in a secure location.
9. After the case file has been technically and administratively reviewed, the evidence can be returned to the Evidence Receiving Unit. The chain of custody is updated and the evidence is stored in Evidence Receiving Unit until it is picked up by the submitting agency.

D. References:

1. GL-13 General Evidence Handling