

IM SOP-3 Evidence Procedures

Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro

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Purpose: Evidence Procedures

Responsibility: Imprint Examiners

Safety: All proper personal protection equipment will be used as appropriate.

Procedure:

A. Taking Custody of Evidence

1. Review the Submitting Agency's request for analysis and the Laboratory's evidence receipt paperwork and the evidence containers (packages) at the Evidence Receiving Office. Verify that the number and description of items listed on both the forms, for examination by Imprint Section, are present and accounted for.
2. Review the Submitting Agency's request for analysis and/or any other form of request such as a letter of request.
 - a. Determine the type(s) of examination(s) requested and if they might require special handling of evidence.
 - b. Determine if evidence should to be reviewed or examined by another Unit of the Laboratory prior to being assigned to Imprint Section (i.e. trace, forensic biology, etc.).
3. If problem exists with evidence (i.e. all evidence listed as being submitted to Laboratory is not accounted for) or if evidence should be assigned to another Laboratory Unit prior to Imprint Section, advise Evidence Receiving personnel of the situation.
4. Take custody of the evidence and obtain copies of all paperwork.

B. Secondary Receipt Procedures

1. Verify that the Laboratory barcode information, including case number, is consistent with the information on the evidence packaging and the paperwork.
2. Open each container and/or package containing evidence and take physical inventory of evidence contained therein.
 - a. Write date, case number, submission number and initials on outside of evidence container and/or package.

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- b. If evidence is to be subsequently processed by another Section of the Laboratory (i.e. Latent Prints), ensure proper procedures are followed so as not to destroy or contaminate evidence.
 - c. After opening a container or package, appropriately identify and initial each piece of evidence received.
 - d. If any evidence listed on "Evidence Receipt" form is not received (i.e. receipt lists "One taped envelope containing four (4) impression lifts"; however, when the envelope is opened it is found to contain only three (3) lifts).
 - Notify Evidence Receiving Unit of discrepancy.
 - Contact submitting agency and advise them of the discrepancy. Request clarification and/or correction concerning the discrepancy.
 - Make note for file, including date, time, person spoken to, etc. relative to explanation of missing evidence by submitting agency.
 - If discrepancy cannot be corrected, reseal evidence in its original container(s) and/or package(s) and return it to the Evidence Receiving Unit for return to the submitting agency.
3. Initiate Imprint Section case file on new case.
- a. Write Laboratory's case number, town of origin and submitting agency's case number on tab of a file folder or place JusticeTrax label on tab of file folder.
 - b. Initial and date copies of all paperwork and place it into the file folder.
 - c. Initiate filling out an "Imprints/Impressions Examination Worksheet" (QR-IM1). This worksheet and any additional notes will contain the case number, examiner's initials and date.
 - d. Any clerical errors that are made on any items of written documentation will be stricken through with a single line and initialed.

C. Documentation of Evidence

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1. Generate an image of the "Evidence" labels, stickers or markings on evidence package(s) and/or container(s) which will serve as a documentation of the contents. Initial the image and place it in the case file.
2. Photographs of evidence will be taken as deemed necessary and appropriate by the examiner.

D. Securing and Control of Evidence

All imprint evidence will be properly secured in the approved evidence storage cabinets or areas. Evidence may be left unattended for a short period of time during the examination process only when it is secured in a locked approved examination area. At no time will any evidence submitted for examination be left unsecured and/or unattended outside of the Imprints Laboratory or evidence storage areas.

Sources of Error: N/A

Quality Assurance: N/A

References: See bibliography.