

Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro

Purpose: Evidence Procedures

Responsibility: Forensic Science Examiners assigned to the Imprint Unit are responsible to follow the guidance of this procedure.

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 the Imprints Unit, 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 or accompanying documents (eg. search warrants) and photographs.
 - a. Determine the type(s) of examination(s) requested and if they might require special handling of evidence.
 - b. Determine if evidence should be reviewed or examined by another Unit of the Laboratory prior to being assigned to the Imprints Unit (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 Division Unit prior to the Imprints Unit, advise Case Management personnel of the situation.
4. Take custody of the evidence and obtain copies of all paperwork.

B. Secondary Receipt Procedures

1. Verify that the DSS barcode information, including case number, is consistent with the information on the evidence packaging and the request for analysis. This is documented on the worksheet QR-IM1.
2. Open each container and/or package containing evidence and take physical inventory of evidence contained therein.
 - a. Write initials on laboratory barcode.

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- b. If evidence is to be subsequently processed by another Unit of the Division (i.e. Latent Prints Unit), 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 Case Management Unit of the discrepancy.
 - Contact submitting agency and advise them of the discrepancy. Request clarification and/or correction concerning the discrepancy. (This may be done by the Case Management Unit.)
 - Make note for file, and/or in LIMS, including date, time, person spoken to, etc. relative to explanation of missing evidence by submitting agency. (This may be done by the Case Management Unit.)
 - 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 Imprints Unit 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. If the analysis takes more than one day, the worksheet will reflect all dates analysis was conducted.
 - 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.