

ER SOP-01 General Guidelines for Accepting Evidence Submissions

Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro

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A. Purpose: A listing of general considerations when accepting physical evidence submissions at the Division of Scientific Services.

B. Responsibility: Evidence Control Officers (however titled) or designees.

C. Procedure:

1. Evidence submitted to the Division of Scientific Services (DSS) may be accepted from any of the following prosecuting, police and investigative agencies: State and local law enforcement, federal agencies, State's Attorney's Offices, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (Refer to General Statute 29-7b), or out-of-state agencies with *prior* authorization by the Director of the Division of Scientific Services. No evidence will be accepted from private citizens. All evidence received into the DSS should be collected and/or processed according to procedures listed in the most current version of the CT Division of Scientific Services Evidence Submission Guidelines.
2. All representatives from an agency submitting or picking up physical evidence should sign in/out of the Evidence Receiving Log Book.
3. The Division of Scientific Services will not examine evidence previously examined by other agencies or experts, except in instances as approved by the appropriate Deputy Director or the Director of the DSS. If an Evidence Control Officer (ECO) finds that a case has been previously analyzed by a laboratory outside of the Division, they must contact the appropriate Deputy Director. The Deputy Director is responsible for obtaining permission from the Director to accept such a case.
4. Physical evidence submitted to the DSS must be accompanied by a completed "Request for Analysis (RFA)" form (SOP-ER-02:1), except for the following:
 - autopsy samples received from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
 - DUI kits that are received via a third party carrier (i.e. US Postal Service or FedEx, etc). All DUI kits should be accompanied by a completed "Request for Examination of Specimens for Alcohol/Drugs" form (DPS 0009-C).
 - iPrelog cases entered by the submitting agencies

Note: If the submitting agency representative has used a previous version of the Request for Analysis (RFA) form, Request for Examination DPS 009-C Form (RFE) or the RFA Addendum form, the ECO may accept this form or ask them to transfer the information onto the current version of the form.

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5. If expedited testing or special examinations are required for a case, the submitting agency or the appropriate State's Attorney/U.S. Attorney should make such requests to the Director of the DSS via letter/email.
6. In order to prevent sample loss, sample contamination, and deleterious change to a sample, physical evidence submitted to the DSS must be properly packaged and sealed with evidence tape, labels, or by some other tamper-evident method. The seal must be initialed or officer badge number is on the seal. Evidence not properly packaged or sealed may be returned to the submitting agency for appropriate packaging prior to being accepted at the DSS. Minor remediations to packaging may be done during submission to the Evidence Receiving Unit. Corrections if necessary can be made on the RFA and Addendum forms by the ECO. If this occurs, the ECO will initial/date and documentation in LIMS-plus will be entered.
7. All evidence will be handled in a manner that ensures the integrity of the evidence and guards against loss, deterioration or degradation. A refrigerator/freezer is provided for human remains, autopsy specimens, urines, sexual assault kits, bloods and other physical evidence that may need to be kept at a constant temperature until such time as these materials can be transferred to the appropriate section/unit..
8. Evidence is typically submitted through the Evidence Receiving Unit (ERU). With prior approval from the Director of the DSS, some exceptions will be allowed. These exceptions include, but are not limited to, Latent Prints, Computer Crimes, Imprints and Multimedia evidence. Refer to unit specific SOP's regarding evidence submission, when applicable. If evidence is submitted after hours or when an ECO is not available, Deputy Director(s) or other management personnel as assigned by the Director will supervise the entry of the evidence into the DSS.

Evidence may be remotely submitted via a secure drop box. Please refer to ER-SOP 17 "Remote Evidence Drop-offs and Returns" for details.
9. When agencies submit electronic evidence to the ERU that will need analysis by the Computer Crimes Unit, a checklist (QR-CC-1) should be provided along with any other required paperwork. This checklist is located on the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) website (www.ct.gov/despp) and is to be filled out by the submitting agency. A barcode is affixed to this form by the ECO and is added to the submission paperwork.
10. When firearms are submitted to the DSS these firearms will be checked for safety. Personnel from the Firearms Unit are called by the ECO and they will be permitted into the ERU to verify that the weapon(s) are considered safe. They will then apply a "safety check" red stamp (located in ERU) on the outside of the package containing the firearm. Refer to FA SOP-03 for further guidance.

During the entire "safety check" process, the chain of custody of the firearm will be tracked in LIMS-plus.

11. If it is communicated or stated that the submitted material may be a chemical weapon (weapons of mass destruction), may represent a biological threat (suspicious unknown materials), and/or may be a nexus for possible terrorism, the Director or designee must be consulted. The Director or designee will inform the requesting representative that the evidence must be submitted to the CT Department of Public Health, Bioresponse Section (860-920-6550). Upon completion of their analysis, the evidence may be submitted to the DSS for further examination. A CT Department of Public Health report stating that the evidence is **not** a threat must be included with the appropriate submission paperwork required by the Division of Scientific Services.

References:

1. CT General Statute 29-7b (refer to GL 1.2)
2. CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection A & O Manual, 18.02.05
3. CT Division of Scientific Services Evidence Submission Guidelines