

A. Purpose: To ensure that evidence is submitted correctly to the Evidence Receiving Unit.

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

C. Procedure:

1. If Evidence Receiving (ER) personnel are unsure if evidence meets the criteria for submission or have a question regarding the integrity of the evidence, the appropriate Section Manager/designee must be consulted.
2. Evidence is also submitted through the remote secure drop-box. Please refer to ER SOP-17 "Remote Evidence Drop-off and Returns".
3. When an unusual or special case (high profile, poisoning, etc.) is brought in for submission to the Evidence Receiving Unit (ERU), the appropriate Section Manager or designee will be notified for further instructions.
4. When evidence is submitted to the Division of Scientific Services (DSS), the Evidence Control Officer (ECO) or designee will:
 - a. Review the "Request for Analysis" (RFA) form (SOP-ER-02:1), OCME Manifest or Electronic Submission to ensure that essential information is provided. If necessary, obtain additional information from the submitting agency.
 - If information on the RFA is edited the ECO or designee making the edit must initial and date next to the edit. If the submitting agency representative is making the edit they should initial and date next to the edit.
 - b. Review all submissions to ensure that packages are properly labeled, sealed in a tamper proof manner and initials or badge number are added to the seals. Compare evidence labels to the descriptions and item numbers listed on the RFA form.
 - If the evidence is not properly sealed, ER personnel shall determine if the problem can be corrected at the time of submission or if the item must be returned to the submitting agency for appropriate action. If needed, notify the appropriate Deputy Director (DD), Assistant Director (AD) or designee for guidance. Some packaging materials are available in the ERU that can be used to ensure the integrity of most commonly submitted items (envelopes, plastic bags, boxes, etc.).
 - If any major discrepancy is noted between items listed on the RFA form and the evidence being submitted, the submitting agency shall resolve the inconsistencies or the ECO or designee may resolve the issue defaulting to what is written on the evidence label. A

- phone call or email will be made to the submitting agency to confirm. Minor general labeling variances are allowed.
- Example #1- The label placed on the evidence item states, “Two DNA swabs collected from steering wheel of vehicle, VIN #99999”. The description listed on the RFA form states “Swabs- interior door handle”. Agency needs to resolve as the descriptions reference different locations.
 - Example #2- The label placed on the evidence item states, “Two DNA swabs collected from steering wheel of vehicle, VIN #99999”. The description listed on the “Request for Analysis” form states “Swabs- steering wheel”. Nothing to resolve as both descriptions reference the same location.
 - If any identifying information needs to be added to the packaging, the ECO or designee should instruct the submitting agency representative to do so prior to the evidence submission (i.e. agency case number and item numbers should be written on packages). Any changes must be clearly indicated, and the correction should be initialed and dated by the submitting agency representative.
 - If it is noted that evidence is wet upon submission (i.e. leaking through the bag or moisture visibly observed) contact the appropriate AD, DD or designee for guidance to see if the evidence can be repackaged suitably to be accepted. Packaging materials may be provided to the submitting agent to ensure that the evidence is submitted under proper seal. Call the appropriate Unit for immediate pick-up to air dry and store the evidence appropriately. Notes are entered into the synopsis area in LIMS-plus documenting the condition of the evidence/packaging upon submission and if a transport package was provided by the ECO to transport the evidence to the appropriate Unit.
- c. A LIMS-plus generated laboratory number is issued for all new cases. See below for specific details on how to use LIMS-plus for evidence submission.
- If additional evidence is submitted for a previously submitted case, that evidence will be taken under the previously issued laboratory case number. Exceptions are allowable for cases submitted by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) if samples from multiple decedents are submitted with different OCME case numbers. Exception is allowed if an agency has pulled a new case number for the same incident, a new lab number may be generated.
 - If an agency number is already associated with a laboratory number, but the creation of a new laboratory number is desired, the ECO or designee will need approval from the appropriate DD, Laboratory Administrative Manager (however titled), or supervisor prior to overriding the previously associated laboratory number.

Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro

- Note: Some federal and state agencies (i.e. FBI, ATF, DEA and Adult Probation) may use a master case number over long periods of time for ongoing investigations. The OCME may also have multiple victims that have a separate OCME case numbers for the same police department case number.
- d. Entering evidence into LIMS-plus. NOTE: Electronic submission of evidence is entered by the submitting agency and may not adhere strictly to the below recommendations. Corrections may be required, edits needed can be made by the ECO, FSE or designee reviewing the case.
 - Each evidence submission shall be entered as the package with the contents in quotations, as listed by the submitting agency on the RFA form. For example, Bag with “rock”. The quotations indicate evidence receiving personnel did not see the actual evidence and the record is only listing what the submitting agency states is in the package.
 - The ECO or designee will type the description similar to how it is listed on the RFA form. Descriptions may be shortened/modified slightly at the ECO’s or designee’s discretion.
 - Example: Form states “Foam tipped applicator swab”. It is acceptable to enter this item as “Swab”.
 - Refer to ER SOP-10 for instructions on describing Controlled Substance evidence submissions.
 - A barcode label shall be generated for each piece of evidence submitted to the Laboratory. Whenever practical, the barcode shall be affixed to the submission as it is created in LIMS-plus. *Prior to affixing the barcode, one last check is done that the information on the evidence package, the RFA form, and the barcode are consistent.
- e. An evidence receipt will be generated, signed by the ECO or designee, and the submitting agency representative. Procedure is slightly different with the remote drop-box, therefore please refer to ER-SOP 17 “Remote Evidence Drop-off and Returns”. The receipt will include acknowledgement that the barcodes and the local case number correspond. A copy of the signed receipt will be given or emailed to the submitting agency. The original signed receipt is maintained in the administrative case file in the ERU.
 - a. Note: Evidence can be submitted via U.S. Mail or other delivery carrier, or via email for Latent Print or Imprint submissions (refer to LP SOP-26 & IM SOP 16 for guidance). Evidence can be submitted by remote drop-box. Please refer to ER SOP-17 “Remote Evidence Drop-off and Returns” for further direction. DUI Kits can also be submitted

via delivery carrier (e.g. USPS). The method of delivery is selected (e.g. U.S. Mail, FedEx, USPS) to be reflected in the chain of custody (refer to ER SOP-11 for guidance). No copies are required to be given to the submitting agency for these methods of submission.

- f. When LIMS-plus is not operating, evidence may be received (or returned) using a paper evidence receipt and inked signatures from the ECO or designee and an agency representative (QR-ER-01 and QR-ER-02). Note: the remote drop-box system and Addendum RFA can also be used to receive evidence which can remain secured in a locker until it can be entered into LIMS-plus.
- g. Copies of the RFA form will no longer be printed by ERU. Please refer to the electronic copy uploaded at the case level in LIMS-plus.
- h. Proficiency tests are given to the ECO or designee by the Quality Manager or FB/DNA Quality Manager (or designee) for submission to the DSS. The ECO or designee will enter the case into LIMS-plus, assigning it a laboratory case number. Select “proficiency” in the drop-down menu under ‘Reason’. The evidence will be transferred in LIMS-plus to the appropriate general storage area location for examiners to retrieve. Submitting documents will be attached into LIMS-plus.
- i. Competency tests may be given to the ECO or designee by the Quality Manager, FB/DNA Quality Manager, DD, AD or Section/Unit Lead for submission to the DSS. The ECO or designee will enter the case into LIMS-plus assigning it a laboratory case number. The evidence will be transferred in LIMS-plus to the appropriate general storage area location for examiners to retrieve. Submitting documents will be attached into LIMS-plus.

D. LIMS-plus Data Entry for Evidence Submission for a New Case

- 1. Select new case icon. Input submitting agency name and local case number (numbers and letters only, no spaces or punctuation). Check the box “search archive” to confirm a new case. Press enter and select new case when prompted. When necessary, select the “search” tab and input the local number or individuals name to see if the case is already in the system (i.e. OCME samples may already be submitted on a specific case). If a case already exists, you will receive a prompt that a case already exists, and you can add additional evidence to that case.
- Note: Add “CFS” at the beginning of the agency case number for all State Police submitting agencies. Older State Police cases use “DPS” at the beginning of the agency case number not “CFS”. For all cases, check to ensure that the case number matches on the paperwork and the evidence, including the correct number of zeros. If entering additional evidence for a cold case, check the agency case number on the evidence prior to entering into LIMS-plus.

2. Select “Offense” tab. Input offense, city/town of incident, and date of incident.
3. Select “Individual” tab. When available, input the last name, first name, middle name, type, gender, DOB, race and NamUs #, when applicable.
 - Note: For DUI cases only, include the address of the individual.
 - Note: For unidentified humans remains, include “UP” before the NamUs number. For Missing Persons, include “MP” before the NamUs number. Ex. NamUs: UP # 9999
4. Select “Evidence” tab. Input the submitting agency and agency representative (the agent who brought the evidence to the ERU). Add the description of the evidence with the container; (i.e. #1 Bag with “shirt”). If the evidence matches one of the evidence kits, select that kit from the drop-down list. Select “initial transfer”, click on “From”, click on “agency representative”. Select “To”, enter Lab Staff taking in the evidence and their Personal Identification Number (PIN) to signify a secure transfer. Select “Then to”, select the appropriate storage location. Click on apply. To add additional evidence, repeat the above procedure.
 - Note: the agency address on the RFA may differ from the one stored in LIMS. Some agencies have more than one physical location that their representatives work in. LIMS should list the main address of each agency.
5. Select “Requests” tab. Click and add the appropriate requests for the submitted evidence. Using the “RFA” form, Input “Submitting Agency”, “Representative” (the name of the agent requesting the examination), “Lab”, “Section” and “Service” and click ok. Select the “reason” tab if special circumstance such as court, Joyce or police involved is needed.
6. Click “Apply”. Select and print the number of case barcode labels needed for the paperwork and the file folder.
7. If there is any additional or special information to be recorded, it can be entered in the “Synopsis” area of the “Case Info” tab.
8. To generate a receipt, click on the “Transfer” tab, click on the “Print Inbound Evidence Receipts”, sign the receipt in “Received at Lab by” line, and then the check box and initial the “Barcode /Local Number Correspond” area to verify evidence submitted. Have the Agency Representative sign their name and then make the appropriate copies.
9. When entering a case into LIMS-plus, ECO personnel or their designee shall not alter or edit a case submission date/time or a case chain of custody that has already been established in LIMS-plus.

E. Evidence Resubmitted for examination

1. Generally, evidence may be requested to be resubmitted by DSS personnel, by the submitting agency, or by the States Attorney's Office.
2. Resubmitting evidence for examination should be approved by CMU or the Unit Supervisors.
 - a. Note that evidence previously analyzed by another laboratory, or other forensic expert outside of the DSS will not be accepted without prior approval of the Director (or Deputy Director in the Director's absence).
 - b. Note that evidence previously analyzed by the DSS that is resubmitted for the **same analysis** must be approved by the Director or their designee prior to acceptance or reanalysis.
3. Open a "Transfer" window, create the chain of custody, and complete the transfer.
4. To obtain a receipt, at the bottom of the "Transfer" window, check the box for "1st Transfer Receipt" before clicking "OK". If needed, the regular incoming receipt could be used.
 - a. Note that if new evidence and resubmitted evidence are being submitted at the same time, complete one transaction and print its receipt before starting the other (example – complete the resubmit first and print the receipt, then take in the new items and print their receipt)
5. If applicable, select "Requests" tab. Click and add the appropriate requests for the resubmitted evidence.