

Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro

A. Purpose: To ensure there is a secure storage area and to maintain the integrity of the submitted evidence in the Division of Scientific Services (DSS).

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

C. Procedure:

1. The integrity of the evidence shall be preserved at all times.

Access to the Evidence Receiving Unit (ERU) will be **strictly** monitored. In general, only Evidence Receiving personnel and those approved by the Director will have access to the ERU and its evidence holding rooms.

A complete chain of custody must be maintained and recorded for each item of evidence submitted to the laboratory.

This chain shall be maintained through use of the generated bar code and the JusticeTrax system. For submissions prior to January 1998, a written chain of evidence may be maintained.

2. All items not transferred to a Section will be stored in the appropriate evidence receiving storage location until such time an examiner retrieves this evidence.
3. Items requiring refrigeration or freezing will be temporarily held in the Evidence Receiving refrigerator or freezer. When an examiner is available, all frozen and refrigerated items should be retrieved before the end of that day.

The ERU shall have a refrigerator and freezer for temporary storage of physical evidence (i.e. autopsy samples, sexual assault kits, urine/blood samples, which are submitted by outside agencies).

(a) A NIST traceable thermometer shall be kept inside the refrigerator and freezer.

(b) The refrigerator and freezer temperature will be checked and logged on a weekly basis. The date, temperature, and initials of the individual checking this temperature shall be recorded on a log sheet (ER SOP-04.1) located on the refrigerator. The maintained refrigerator temperature shall be between 1 degree and 7 degrees Celsius. The maintained freezer range should be less -5 degrees Celsius.

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- (c) If the temperature deviates from this range, for the refrigerator and/or freezer, it will be noted on the log sheet. A subsequent temperature check will occur within one (1) hour and also noted on the log sheet. If the temperature is still out of range after the additional check, the device shall be taken out of service until repaired or replaced.
- (d) Completed log sheets will be maintained in a designated binder within the ERU.
4. The evidence submitted in a case may be boxed, put within a larger envelope or stored by itself in the ERU. A copy of the evidence incoming receipt and the submitting request form should be placed with the evidence.

Boxed items are labeled with the laboratory case number and submitting agency for identification purposes. When items are boxed, they are stacked in approximate numerical order in the incoming evidence storage room. Boxes may be segregated as to what section they are going to be eventually transferred to.

Smaller packages may be placed in an envelope and should have the evidence receipt attached to the item or envelope for identification purposes. These envelopes will be stored in numerical order in the boxes provided within the evidence holding room. Envelopes may be segregated as to what section they are going to be eventually transferred to.

Larger items that cannot be boxed may be maintained in the larger item storage shelves. The item is labeled with the Laboratory case number and submitting agency for identification purposes.

5. Evidence should be returned to ERU packaged as submitted, unless otherwise necessary by the nature of the physical evidence.
6. Evidence returned to the ERU from an examiner of the DSS will be checked for proper seals and examiner initials before being transferred through JusticeTrax into the proper storage location.