

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. Abbreviations:

ERU	Evidence Receiving Unit
ER	Evidence Receiving
NIST	National Institute of Standards & Technology
DSS	Division of Scientific Services

D. Procedure:

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

Access to the Evidence Receiving Unit will be **strictly** monitored. In general, only Evidence Receiving Unit 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 on the day of submission shall be stored in the designated Evidence Receiving storage location.
 3. Items requiring refrigeration or freezing will be temporarily held in the Evidence Receiving Unit refrigerator or freezer. When an examiner is available, all frozen and refrigerated items should be retrieved to be stored appropriately in another DSS storage area.

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 (GL 21.4) located on the refrigerator. The maintained refrigerator temperature shall be between 1° C - 7° C. The maintained freezer range should be < -5 ° C. Temperatures of the refrigerator and freezer will be checked monthly by the Unit lead of the ERU, and initials and date are added to the log sheet maintained in ERU.
- (c) If the temperature deviates from this range 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 refrigerator or freezer shall be taken out of service until repaired or replaced. If taken out of service evidence will be transferred in LIMS and stored in another refrigerator/freezer in the laboratory.
- (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 in a larger envelope or stored as submitted in the ERU. A copy of the evidence incoming receipt 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. Storage areas are designated for the Units with outstanding requests (i.e., Latent Prints, Forensic Biology, Arson etc.).
- 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 approximate numerical order in the boxes labeled by Unit (i.e., Latent prints, Forensic Biology, Arson etc.).
- Larger items** that cannot be boxed may be maintained in the larger item storage shelving area. 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 and/or the examination conducted.
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 appropriate evidence return storage location.