

**ER SOP-16 General Guidelines for Accepting Postmortem
Toxicology Evidence**

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Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro

A. Purpose: To ensure that Postmortem evidence submitted for Toxicology testing is taken in correctly.

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

C. Procedure:

Evidence submitted for Postmortem Toxicology testing must have a "Request for Analysis" (RFA) form (SOP-ER-02:1) completed by the submitting agency. Postmortem Toxicology requests are delivered to lab via representatives from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME).

1. In addition to the RFA form, a manifest is utilized when multiple postmortem cases are submitted. In lieu of an evidence receipt, the manifest will be signed and dated by the Evidence Control Officer (ECO) or designee and the submitting agency representative. Signatures and date will include acknowledgement of the local case number, medical examiner/requestor, AND specimen type (ex. blood, urine, etc.).
2. The ECO or designee signing/dating the manifest will physically transfer the group of cases to the refrigerator (location name "OCME Temp. Refrig. Storage"). This transfer will be noted by a label placed on the manifest with the initials of the ECO or designee and the date. A copy of the signed/dated manifest will be maintained within each of the main case files. The signed/dated manifest with original signatures is returned to the submitting agency representative.
3. An ECO or designee will retrieve a case from the refrigerator for entry into JusticeTrax. The chain of custody in JusticeTrax will begin with "OCME Temp. Refrig. Storage" to the ECO or designee that is entering the case.
 - a. "OCME Temp. Refrig. Storage" is listed as an *agency representative* to allow for JusticeTrax to properly create an evidence receipt.
 - b. A combination of the paper manifest and the electronic chain of custody within JusticeTrax constitute the complete chain of custody for a case.
4. Follow normal evidence submission SOP's and enter the applicable information from the RFA form into JusticeTrax.

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Include the following additional information:

Individuals

Select "Source"

Evidence

Select "TX OCME kit" Kit (requests will be added as part of the kit)

***Note-** The RFA form will have the addition of two letters at the end of the agency case number. These two letters correspond to the medical examiner's initials and shall be used when entering the agency information into JusticeTrax. Specimens will be accepted regardless of whether or not these additional letters are listed on the evidence label.

5. Case barcode identifiers are attached to each evidence container and the RFA form. When submitted, case barcode identifiers will also be attached to the manifest copies.
6. The main case file will be a red colored folder.
7. All evidence will be kept in the refrigerator and is included in the transfer of postmortem evidence to a representative of the Toxicology Unit.