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## Policy and Procedure for Evidence Submissions

- 1.0 Purpose** - This policy and procedure establishes the requirements for submitting evidence to the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory.
- 2.0 Scope** - This policy and procedure applies to all evidence submissions at any of the Laboratory locations.
- 3.0 Evidence Submission Policy**
- 3.1** The State Crime Laboratory accepts evidence based on the following criteria:
- 3.1.1** The evidence has been obtained as the result of an official criminal investigation (e.g. found property, suicide and murder/suicide are not criminal investigations).
  - 3.1.2** The submitting agency is a law enforcement agency or company/campus police agency certified or commissioned through the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission, The North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission or the North Carolina Company and Campus Police Program.
  - 3.1.3** The investigating officer intends to pursue a criminal case pending the results of evidence analysis and/or the related investigation.
  - 3.1.4** The evidence has not been previously examined by another analyst, the submitting agency, or another independent testing laboratory, unless prior approval has been requested and received from the Crime Laboratory Director. (e.g., items of evidence which have been tested for the presence of semen will not be accepted for examination by the Forensic Biology Section) (Note: A phenolphthalein test shall not be considered a prior examination for the purposes of submitting evidence.)
  - 3.1.5** The customer acknowledges and approves Laboratory personnel use of the most appropriate and up to date methods authorized by the Laboratory.
- 3.2** Initial and subsequent submissions shall be limited in the quantities set out herein so as to prioritize items of evidence and facilitate timely analysis. Subsequent submissions for the same type of examination will not be accepted until the prior report(s) are completed. Laboratory representatives in each forensic discipline will be available to discuss potential submissions with local law enforcement officials.
- 3.3** The type and number of items accepted per submission is based on case type. An item is defined as one article of evidence or a maximum of two swabbings/cuttings that have been collected from the same area where the intent is to combine these swabbings/cuttings. In those instances where multiple swabbings have been taken from an item of evidence, each swabbing shall be treated as an item of evidence (ex.: 15 swabbings from a firearm would be treated as 15 items of evidence).
- 3.4** For all case types, known standards from victim(s) or subject(s) will not be counted against the number of items that may be submitted.
- 3.5** Evidence will be limited per submission to the following:

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**3.5.1** Homicides

- 10 items for the first submission
- 5 items for subsequent submissions

**3.5.2** Sexual Assault Cases

- For the first submission, the sexual assault kit, one pair of underwear (If not contained in kit), and a condom if applicable
- For subsequent submissions, up to 3 items of clothing and/or bed linens

**3.5.3** Crimes against the Person

- 5 items for the first submission
- 5 items for subsequent submissions

**3.5.4** Other Crimes

- 5 items for the first submission
- 5 items for subsequent submissions

**3.6** The item number limitation shall be per type of examination requested (e.g., 5 items for the first DNA analysis submission, 5 items for the first latent evidence submission does not exceed the 10 item limitation in a homicide case). There are no item number limitations for firearms examinations.

**3.7** All Laboratory Sections are required to return evidence un-worked due to the following circumstances:

**3.7.1** The items have been improperly packaged or preserved prior to submission;

**3.7.2** The items appear to have been contaminated;

**3.7.3** Cases in which a standard needed for comparison is not submitted at the time of intake shall not be accepted by the Evidence Control Unit; and

**3.7.4** Digital evidence (computers, cellular phones, etc.) that is submitted without either a search warrant, court order, letter of consent or prior written approval from the applicable Forensic Scientist Manager shall not be accepted by the Evidence Control Unit.

**3.8** In certain circumstances, the applicable Forensic Scientist Manager may allow an exception to a specific numerical evidence submission limitation or to other evidence submission restrictions set out in this procedure. A request for exception shall be made in writing and shall set out adequate justification to allow the exception. The final decision on whether to allow an exception shall be that of the Laboratory Director or designee.

**3.9** **Additional Evidence Submission Policies for Drug Chemistry**

**3.9.1** Evidence from concerned parents, schools, organizations, private citizens; found property, or evidence that has no value for criminal prosecution will **not** be accepted.

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- 3.9.2** No misdemeanor cases of any kind, residue amounts, drug paraphernalia, cigarette butts, or hypodermic syringes shall be accepted without the prior written approval of the Forensic Scientist Manager of the Drug Chemistry Section (Raleigh Lab) or the Regional Laboratory Forensic Scientist Manager at the written request of the district attorney's office.
- 3.9.3** Tablets or cigarettes must **never** be enclosed in tape.
- 3.9.4** Used field test kits will **neither** be accepted nor examined by the Laboratory.
- 3.9.5** Entire plants and plants with the roots still attached may **not** be sent to the Laboratory; submit a representative sample.
- 3.9.6** Non-controlled items (e.g., aspirin) may **not** be sent to the Laboratory.
- 3.9.7** Drug Chemistry generally will **not** identify more than two items from the same schedule of the Controlled Substances Act per suspect in any given case unless the analysis of the additional items will shift the charge from a misdemeanor to a felony (as in the case of marijuana or Schedule II, III, and IV substances) or to a trafficking charge.
- 3.9.8** Evidence in product liability cases, drug residues on U.S. currency, and cases involving stomach contents (lavage) will **not** be analyzed.
- 3.9.9** Drug Chemistry will **not** accept cases for potential poisonings unless prior approval has been obtained from the Forensic Scientist Manager. The Laboratory does **not** analyze for bacterial toxins, which occur when food spoils.
- 3.9.10** When submitting sizable quantities of any drug, arranging an appointment for personal delivery will ensure a more expeditious receipt of the evidence. Because the Laboratory has a very limited storage capacity, bulk quantities of controlled substances will be sampled or analyzed by a scientist and returned to the submitting officer on the same day. To ensure that a scientist is available, contact the Drug Chemistry Section or the Regional Laboratory for an appointment before transporting evidence to the Laboratory.
- 3.9.11** Drug evidence seized from different individuals must be submitted as separate submissions, even if they were arrested at the same time or at the same incident. This procedure will result in separate Laboratory reports being issued for each individual.
- 3.9.12** Drug evidence seized from the same individual on different dates must be submitted as separate submissions.
- 3.9.13** Evidence seized from body cavities or evidence contaminated with blood, body fluids or biological waste must be clearly marked as a biohazard and notations concerning this evidence must be made in the FA Web Portal or Request for Examination of Physical Evidence form. The submitting officer must make every attempt to remove contaminated packaging and submit the evidence in clean bags.
- 3.9.14** Plants (including mushrooms and cacti) must be thoroughly dried prior to sending to the Laboratory. Green plants which are sealed in plastic bags will decompose and will be not be able
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to be examined.

**3.9.15** When submitting items containing suspected controlled substances for latent print and drug analysis, separate the suspected controlled substance evidence from the latent print evidence prior to submission.

**3.9.16** In multi-item cases the Forensic Scientist assigned will only work the evidence of highest evidentiary value, taking into consideration the Schedule and location seized for all items submitted.

**3.9.17** When two or more individuals are charged collectively with the same items, the group will be treated as a single individual for purposes of analysis.

**3.9.18** Commercially prepared hypodermic syringes (*Tubex*, *Carpject*, etc.) which contain a pharmaceutical preparation may be submitted without prior approval when the request for analysis is to determine dilution/substitution of the pharmaceutical preparation

**3.9.19 Drug Dilution/substitution Cases**

**3.9.19.1** When submitting injectable liquids for dilution analysis, a control sample of each type of drug in question must be submitted.

**3.9.19.2** Make sure the control sample is from the same manufacturer and is of the same dosage level (concentration) as the questioned sample.

**3.10 Additional Evidence Submission Policies for Toxicology**

**3.10.1** Toxicology analyzes blood or urine to determine the presence of alcohol, other volatiles, and/or impairing substances.

**3.10.2** Toxicology will **not** screen blood in a DWI case for impairing substances when the blood has an alcohol concentration at or above the statutory minimum to show impairment (0.08 gram of alcohol per 100 milliliters of whole blood) except in cases involving personal injury or death to someone other than the suspect and a request has been made for a drug screen. A request for exemption from this rule must come from the district attorney's office after the alcohol concentration is known. A form letter submitted with the evidence prior to any knowledge of blood alcohol results does not qualify as a valid request for blood drug analysis.

**3.10.3** Toxicology does **not** conduct employee screening for controlled substances or participate in drug monitoring programs. Blood or urine samples related to such programs will not be accepted for analysis.

**3.10.4** Postmortem evidence, including drug paraphernalia and controlled substances found with a deceased person, is **not** examined at the Laboratory and should be submitted to the Toxicologist in the Chief Medical Examiner's Office.

**3.10.5** Do **not** submit dried blood samples. Toxicology cannot test dried blood samples for alcohol or drugs.

- 3.10.6** Do **not** submit urine samples for DWI cases.
- 3.10.7** Do **not** send blood collection kits from different suspects as part of the same evidence submission for DWI cases.
- 3.10.8** Submit all blood samples in commercially available kits such as *Vacutainer* or *Venoject*. Use only kits which contain a preservative and an anticoagulant (gray top test tubes).
- 3.10.9** Be sure the person taking the blood sample does not leave the needle or other unnecessary items in the kit.
- 3.10.10** Use the protective packaging included with the kit for submission.
- 3.10.11** Collect 20 mL of blood in two 10 mL test tubes from the suspect as soon as possible after the incident in question.
- 3.10.11.1** A minimum of 1 mL of blood is required for the analysis for alcohol and/or other volatiles.
- 3.10.11.2** A minimum of 5 mL of blood is required for the analysis for impairing drugs.
- 3.10.12** Storage of blood or urine samples in a refrigerator is recommended to protect against exposure to heat.
- 3.10.13** Indicate any suspected impairing substance being used by the suspect on the Request for Examination of Physical Evidence form when submitting the suspect's blood for analysis.
- 3.10.14** After the analysis is completed, toxicology evidence will be retained by the Laboratory until otherwise authorized.
- 3.10.15** Collect and submit both urine and blood samples in drug facilitated assault/rape cases.
- 3.10.16** Use a leak proof container placed in a zip-lock type plastic bag when submitting a urine sample.
- 3.10.17** Collect at least 20 milliliters of urine for analysis.
- 3.10.18 Non Tax-paid Alcohol Cases**
- 3.10.18.1** Toxicology determines ethanol, methanol, and isopropanol concentrations for illegally manufactured liquor or other liquids. In cases dealing with multiple buys or numerous samples from the same source, only two random samples will be analyzed.
- 3.10.18.2** Alcohol analysis requires only small samples of the suspected liquor. Submit only a 5 ml sample for analysis. The Laboratory will provide small sampling vials if needed.

**3.10.18.3** These samples will be returned to the submitting agency upon completion of the examination.

### **3.11 Additional Evidence Submission Policies for Latent Evidence**

- 3.11.1** Latent Evidence does **not** work cases involving vandalism to private property (not including businesses and places of worship) or damaged personal property. Additionally, the section does not accept items of evidence for processing that were previously processed using the same methods. In cases where evidence that is submitted has been processed in some format (ex: powdered in the field) the section may not repeat the same process. The items will be examined and processed utilizing other available techniques that are most appropriate for use based upon the nature of the evidence.
- 3.11.2** Latent Evidence will **not** work narcotics cases in which evidence was acquired through hand to hand buys by a sworn law enforcement officer or Possession of a Firearm by a Felon cases in which a sworn law enforcement officer removed the weapon from the subject (including when the weapon was recovered near the subject). Plastic bags from narcotics cases will also **not** be examined in the Section. An exception may be granted if a request in writing is submitted from the district attorney's office.
- 3.11.3** Wear surgical (or smooth surface) gloves and handle evidence "lightly." Do not write or place labels or tape on evidence to be processed for latent prints.
- 3.11.4** Hand-carrying fragile evidence to the Laboratory is the best way to prevent damage. Due to the fragile nature of footwear and tire impression evidence, hand-carry it to the Laboratory. If such evidence must be mailed, take extra care in packaging it.
- 3.11.5** The method of analyzing an item of evidence is determined by the analyst assigned to each case. In the event that special circumstances exist which cause a specific type of analysis to be requested, a letter of explanation must be included.
- 3.11.6** In latent print cases, provide both entire fingerprint and palm print impressions of the subjects involved. This is especially important in cases involving numerous latent prints. When fingerprinting an individual, collect complete and legible prints. **Note:** Prints suitable for classification purposes are not always of sufficient quality for latent print comparisons.
- 3.11.7** Submit a subject's full name, race, sex, state identification number (SID), and date of birth. If inked impressions are not submitted with the evidence, the SBI Identification files will be checked.
- 3.11.8** If it is necessary to have the FBI Identification files checked, please notify the examiner.
- 3.11.9** Submit latent prints for SAFIS/AFIT searches with the FA Web pre-log printout to the Evidence Control Unit.
- 3.11.9.1** When completing the required on-line submission form, provide all requested information concerning potential subject(s).

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- 3.11.9.2** The State Crime Laboratory requires the submission of elimination inked impressions in all simple, property type crimes. **Any case of this type which is submitted without elimination inked impressions will be evaluated and compared to any available known standards. A search will be conducted of the SAFIS, but will not be retained in the Unsolved Latent File (ULF) until elimination prints are submitted.** The submitting officer will be notified by report that elimination prints are required.
- 3.11.9.3** Process arrest fingerprint cards through the SBI Criminal Information and Identification Section (CIIS). Please note that arrest fingerprint cards are for recording purposes only. Arrest fingerprint cards are not treated as evidence, and no chain of custody is recorded while they are being processed by CIIS.
- 3.11.9.4** Do **not** submit routine arrest criminal fingerprint cards to the Crime Laboratory unless the intent is for them to be used as evidence.
- 3.11.10** Always photograph any visible impressions prior to processing (casting or lifting).
- 3.11.10.1** Use a scale and a tripod to take the photograph perpendicular or at a 90 degree angle to the impression.
- 3.11.10.2** Fill the viewfinder of the camera with the impression (i.e., get as close as possible).
- 3.11.10.3** Submit negatives of film, compact discs, or DVDs of digital images of impressions as evidence to Latent Evidence.
- 3.11.11** In instances of dust prints, the impressions may be lifted with special gelatin lifters. Photographs of these impressions are important, as the lifts sometimes lack adequate contrast. In all photographs, use a tripod and aim the camera perpendicular or at a 90 degree angle to the impression and provide a scale. Show the center of the impression in the center of the frame to reduce distortion. Be sure the scale is not on or in the impression. Gel lifters should be protected from heat and not stored in a hot environment (i.e. trunk of a car, etc.)
- 3.11.12** Because plaster shrinks as it dries, the State Crime Laboratory recommends using dental stone to cast soil or soft material impressions.
- 3.11.13** Do **not** attempt to clean casts. Doing so may interfere with the integrity of the case or the impression.
- 3.11.14** In all instances, attempt to obtain comparison standards of tires or footwear that could have made the questioned impression. Collect known shoes and tires as soon as possible, and include the elapsed time between the incident and evidence collection when submitting items to the Laboratory.
- 3.11.15** Agencies must collect known tire standards prior to submitting tire track evidence to the laboratory. Submit the collected known tire standards and the tires for examination. Mark all submitted tires as to their location on a vehicle (e.g. "right rear").
- 3.11.16** Submit both shoes or boots (right and left) that could have made the questioned impression. Do
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**not** make impressions of shoes or boots being submitted to the Laboratory. Such “known standard” impressions are better done in the Laboratory where care of such evidence may be assured, and trace material may be controlled.

### **3.12 Additional Evidence Submission Policies for Trace Evidence**

**3.12.1** The following precautions shall be taken in each case:

**3.12.1.1** Do **not** interview the victim(s) and suspect(s) in the same areas of the crime scene.

**3.12.1.2** The suspect should **never** be brought back to the crime scene.

**3.12.1.3** Officers who have had contact with the suspect should **not** be allowed to participate in the search of the scene.

**3.12.1.4** Clothing items from the victim and the suspect should **not** be allowed to rest on the same surface before packaging.

**3.12.1.5** Each item of evidence should be packaged separately and as soon as possible.

**3.12.2** If DNA testing performed on an item of evidence results in a “match” to the suspect, any unworked evidence submitted to the Trace Unit for hair analysis, glass analysis, paint analysis, or fiber analysis that may establish the same association shall be returned without analysis.

### **3.12.3 Hair Evidence**

**3.12.3.1** Hair comparisons are only performed on head and/or pubic hairs. Collect hair standards by plucking and/or combing a total of **50 full length hairs** from the head and pubic area only. Investigators must collect the hair standards from all around the region of interest. For example, pluck hairs from the front, top, back, and sides of the head.

**3.12.3.1.1** Collect and submit known hair samples from suspect(s), victim(s), and any elimination(s) as soon as possible after the incident. Proper standards from all parties (suspect, victim, elimination) are required if a hair analysis is to be performed. If possible, determine if hair length or color has been dramatically altered between the dates of the incident and the collection of the standard. Note these alterations on the RFLE.

**3.12.3.1.2** **Never** collect hairs from one spot only and never cut locks of hair. If the trauma of plucking appears too great, then the hairs may be cut just at the surface of the skin, one at a time.

**3.12.3.1.3** In sex offense cases (notably alleged rape), collect pubic hair combings **before** collecting a pubic hair standard.

**3.12.3.1.4** If a victim or suspect was wearing any type of hair weave or wig during the time an incident occurred, a sample of that weave or wig must be



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collected and submitted as a standard.

**3.12.3.1.5** If a hair standard cannot be collected directly from the victim's body (victim is missing or deceased) a hairbrush may be submitted as an alternate standard.

**3.12.3.2** Agencies shall tape bulky items (for example: clothing, bedding, furniture, hats/headwear) for hair examinations rather than submitting these bulky items to the Laboratory.

**3.12.3.2.1** Use clear fingerprint tape. Do not use frosted fingerprint tape, gel fingerprint tape or latent gel adhesive lifts. After taping the item, place the tape immediately into a clean zip-lock or cellophane bag with the sticky side facing the bag and seal the bag.

**3.12.3.2.2** Exceptions must be approved by the Forensic Scientist Manager of the Physical Evidence Section.

**3.12.3.3** If hairs of evidentiary value are found and a suitable root is present, then the root will be removed and transferred to the DNA unit of the Laboratory. For this reason a DNA standard (cheek scraping) should also be submitted when requesting hair examinations.

**3.12.3.4** In rare instances in non-suspect cases, a DNA profile obtained from a hair sample may be approved for a CODIS search.

#### **3.12.4 Fiber Evidence**

**3.12.4.1** Obtain fiber evidence as soon as possible to ensure retention of the evidence and to preserve the integrity of the evidence. Consider fiber evidence a primary source of information, not a last resort.

**3.12.4.2** Collect standards from all items that could have been involved in either a primary (direct contact) or secondary transfer (from an article contacted by both suspected and known items).

**3.12.4.3** Where a mutual transfer is suspected, treat both items as questioned.

**3.12.4.4** Whenever possible, submit the entire item. When this is not possible, collect a representative sample of as large a size as needed to show any variation in the item.

**3.12.4.5** Standards should be collected from larger items such as carpet or upholstery during the initial search of the crime scene.

**3.12.4.6** Fibers may be collected from larger areas (e.g., car seats, furniture) using tape. Use clear fingerprint tape. Do not use frosted fingerprint tape, gel fingerprint tape or latent gel adhesive lifts. After collecting the fibers, place the tape immediately into a clean zip-lock or cellophane bag with the sticky side facing the bag and seal the bag.

**3.12.4.7** Under special circumstances, vacuum sweepings may be submitted with prior approval of the Forensic Scientist Manager. Vacuum sweepings should only be collected after the collection of the loosely adhering fibers using tape.

**3.12.4.8** When collecting ropes or cords, clearly identify cut ends. Protect knots; do not untie them.

### **3.12.5 Tape Evidence**

**3.12.5.1** Do **not** attempt to physically unwind or separate pieces of tape prior to submission.

**3.12.5.2** If bindings need to be cut from a victim, be careful not to cut through or alter any tape ends. Clearly identify any cut ends created as bindings were removed.

**3.12.5.3** Collect any known rolls for comparison, being careful not to alter the end of the tape roll.

### **3.12.6 Paint Evidence**

**3.12.6.1** Collect standards from the area immediately adjacent to the damaged area of vehicles. Collect paint standards from each panel of the car that is damaged, since bumpers, hoods, doors, etc. may have different types of paint even though they are the same color. For a typical automobile collision where there is a smear present on each vehicle, collect a minimum of four samples for submission: a standard from the damaged area of each vehicle involved and the questioned smears.

**3.12.6.1.1** Indicate the color, make and model of vehicle, and location of damage on each vehicle in the submission information. Include a brief summary of how the collision reportedly happened.

**3.12.6.2** Painted windows and door frames often have many layers of old paint. Submit wood sections containing all the paint layers. Submit the entire known object, if possible. This allows the analyst to determine the most appropriate location for standard collection.

**3.12.6.3** When contact occurs between an automobile and a person, submit the individual's clothing and any other personal items which may have been involved.

**3.12.6.3.1** Submit clothing in paper bags. For hit and run cases, all clothing from a single victim will be treated as one item and may be packaged in one paper bag. If there are multiple victims, package each victim's clothing in separate paper bags.

**3.12.6.3.2** When the suspect vehicle is unknown, no paint standards are required to perform a make/model search in the PDQ Database of Automotive Paint Systems.

**3.12.6.3.3** Paint chips or painted vehicle parts collected from the scene may be submitted for a make/ model search if there were no paint chips of value found on the victim's clothing.

**3.12.6.4** Collect any broken automobile parts, such as turn-signal covers, chrome strips, large paint chips, metal parts, and/or decorative items found at the scene.

**3.12.6.5** Burglary tools, such as screwdrivers and crowbars, may retain paint evidence. Whenever possible, submit the entire tool for analysis.

**3.12.6.6** If possible, submit the entire object containing a paint smear (e.g., car bumper, mail box post). If this is not possible, carefully remove a portion of the object leaving the smear attached.

### **3.12.7 Light Bulb/Filament Evidence**

**3.12.7.1** No examinations may be performed on LED or HID bulbs since these bulbs do not contain filaments.

**3.12.7.2** Collect all the bulbs from the impact area. When necessary to prevent damage to the bulb, the entire lamp assembly may be removed by cutting connecting wires. Be careful to prevent further damage when removing bulbs from vehicles.

**3.12.7.3** Package each bulb or assembly separately. Package loose bulbs in stacked Styrofoam cups or a padded box.

### **3.12.8 Glass Evidence**

**3.12.8.1** Always collect samples of any broken windows or objects including headlight casings that appear to be made of glass and specify where it was collected.

**3.12.8.2** If more than one window is broken, collect and package each separately. It is best to collect glass fragments still located in the window frame to ensure that the standard is from that window.

**3.12.8.3** If laminated (commonly windshield) glass is collected, be sure to obtain a standard that consists of both panes of glass and the laminate layer. Label the interior and exterior side of the window.

**3.12.8.4** In order to perform a glass analysis, a glass standard must be collected. If a standard is not available, the evidence will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis only with pre-approval of the Forensic Scientist Manager of the Physical Evidence Section.

**3.12.8.5** The object used to break the window should be collected and submitted for analysis. **DO NOT** attempt to remove the glass fragments from the object.

**3.12.8.6** The clothing of the victim and/or suspect should be collected as soon as possible

**3.12.8.6.1** Have the subject stand over a large piece of paper and carefully remove his/her clothing. Package all of the clothing along with the paper together in a paper bag or box.

**3.12.8.6.2** Shoes may be collected but often do not produce pertinent evidence because broken glass is commonly found in a person's everyday environment.

**3.12.8.7** Glass fragments may also be found in the hair or skin of the subject and should be collected noting the location where recovered.

**3.12.8.8** Hand delivering the evidence is best practice.

### **3.12.9 Physical Match Evidence**

**3.12.9.1** Collect the two (or more) pieces to be compared, taking great care to avoid further fracture.

**3.12.9.2** Do **not** attempt to physically match the pieces prior to submission, as this process should be conducted only in the controlled environment of the Laboratory.

### **3.12.10 Gunshot Residue Evidence**

**3.12.10.1** The collection of gunshot residue from the hands requires the use of a Gunshot Residue Collection Kit that utilizes both adhesive lifts and cotton swabs (combination kit). Gunshot Residue Collection Kits that contain only cotton swabs will **not** be analyzed. Contact the Trace Unit for a list of current vendors that offer Laboratory approved collection kits. Follow the collection instructions included with each kit.

**3.12.10.2** When a gunshot residue hand kit and clothing are submitted from the same subject, the gunshot residue kit will be examined first. If the kit reveals particles characteristic of gunshot residue, the clothing will **not** be examined.

**3.12.10.3** Clothing and Gunshot Residue Collection Kits collected from the victim of a gunshot wound will **not** be examined for gunshot residue.

### **3.12.11 Fire Debris Evidence**

**3.12.11.1** Control debris samples should **not** be submitted unless requested by the State Crime Laboratory.

**3.12.11.2** Comparison samples of liquids must be collected and packaged separately from debris samples.

**3.12.11.3** Liquid samples must be removed from large containers (e.g., a gas can) and placed into a smaller container before submission to the Laboratory.

**3.12.11.3.1** Seal liquid samples in small glass jars, glass vials, or metal containers.

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Liquids may also be absorbed onto a cotton absorbent material (e.g., gauze, tampons) and sealed in a nylon bag or metal can. Do not include the packaging from the cotton absorbent material with the evidence.

**3.12.11.3.2** Cotton swabs are not the best method for collecting liquid samples. If used, the cotton swabs must be sealed in a nylon bag or metal can. Do **not** include the swab box or any plastic swab caps with the evidence.

**3.12.11.3.3** When collecting a liquid sample, attempt to collect from the top layer if multiple layers are present.

**3.12.11.4** When liquid is removed from a container prior to submission and both the liquid and container are submitted for analysis, only one of the items will be examined if the presence of an accelerant is detected in the first item.

**3.12.11.5** If DNA or Latent Print analysis is needed on a container (e.g., Molotov cocktail, charcoal starter bottle) from the fire scene, remove the liquid and submit as a separate sample for analysis. Specify on the Request for Examination of Physical Evidence form that the liquid sample was removed from the container.

**3.12.11.6** When alcohols are suspected, this must be indicated on the Request for Examination of Physical Evidence form as additional testing is required.

**3.12.11.7** Cases in which ethylene glycol (antifreeze) identification is necessary, follow the packaging guidelines for fire debris evidence. Indicate on the Request for Examination of Physical Evidence form that ethylene glycol testing is needed.

### **3.12.12 Explosives Evidence**

**3.12.12.1** Explosives evidence, except for chemical reaction bombs, requires the approval of the Physical Evidence Section Forensic Scientist Manager prior to submission.

**3.12.12.2** All explosive related evidence must be hand delivered to the Raleigh Laboratory.

**3.12.12.3** If the evidence involves an improvised explosive device (IED), then it is the responsibility of the submitting officer to ensure that the device has been rendered safe by a qualified individual such as a certified bomb technician, an EOD specialist, or a member of the SBI Hazardous Device Unit.

**3.12.12.4** Do **not** fingerprint the devices before submitting to the lab for chemical analysis.

### **3.13 Additional Evidence Submission Policies for Digital Evidence**

**3.13.1** Personal computers, cell phones, CDs and other removable media, digital cameras, tapes and other storage media found at crime scenes may contain vital evidence that may be examined, retrieved and saved by Laboratory forensic examiners. The Laboratory will accept computer forensic examination requests relating to the following incidents:

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- 3.13.1.1** Crimes against children, e.g., child pornography, child abduction, sexual assaults against children, child molestation and traveling to meet a child for the purpose of sexual relations; **or**
  - 3.13.1.2** Violent crimes, threats of violence or terrorism wherein a computer search may provide evidence of such crime (e.g., homicide, rape, or serious assault).
  - 3.13.2** Evidence submitted for examination must include the Computer Forensics Supplement form and the search warrant, court order, or letter of consent to search the evidence.
  - 3.13.3** Cases involving digital evidence, such as computers, must be packaged with anti-static bags or paper packaging. Due to static electricity, computer evidence must not be packaged in plastic. Be careful not to expose this type of evidence to magnetic fields. Magnetic fields are present in two-way radios, police equipment, scanners, speakers, stereo equipment, etc. If available, the computer should be packaged in the original box (from the scene) or equivalent. Anti-static foam padding or crumpled paper (such as newspaper) may be used to prevent shifting during transport.
  - 3.13.4** If the computer to be seized is “off” at the time of discovery, **do not turn it on** or attempt to determine what evidence may be on it.
  - 3.13.5** If the computer is “on,” save any file or files that are open at the time the computer is seized to a separate USB storage device and pull the plug from the back of the CPU. Clearly mark and submit the USB storage device to the Laboratory at the same time as the computer.
  - 3.13.6** Any relevant computer manuals or software located at the scene should also be collected and may be submitted to the Laboratory as items of evidence at a later date if needed.
  - 3.13.7** Submit any passwords that are located during the time of the crime scene search. Passwords are often found jotted down on a desk blotter or on a post-it note or posted near the work station.
  - 3.13.8** When seizing electronic devices such as cell phones and PDAs, locate, seize, and submit any power cords, chargers, or cables to charge the batteries in these devices or to connect these devices to computers.
  - 3.13.9** If a cell phone is off at the time of seizure, leave the phone turned off. If the phone is on at the time of seizure, turn the phone off. If possible, remove the battery from the phone and submit with the phone.
  - 3.13.10** It is recommended that all computers be hand delivered to the State Crime Laboratory.
  - 3.13.11** Do **not** submit computer displays/monitors, keyboards, mouse, printers, speakers, or other accessories.
- 3.14 Additional Evidence Submission Policies for Audio/Video Evidence**
- 3.14.1** When submitting audio/video evidence, carefully package it to prevent damage during shipment.
  - 3.14.2** In the FA Web Portal, or on the Request for Examination of Physical Evidence form, indicate in
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some manner the area of interest on the video. This may be indicated by listing the time in hours, minutes and seconds, or by giving a description of a person of interest.

**3.14.3** When locating the area of interest, avoid pausing or overplaying analog video. Excessive playing and pausing of analog video (e.g., VHS videotapes) may cause serious degradation of the video quality. For analog tapes, the write-protection tabs should also be removed before viewing the video in order to prevent accidental erasure of the evidence.

**3.14.4** For cases involving digital video (video recovered from a DVR system), the original video files as they are stored on the system should be recovered from the DVR system to get the best quality video. To get the best results possible, be sure that when exporting the video from the DVR system for analysis, the video is exported with NO compression. Many DVR systems store video in a proprietary format. When exporting video from the DVR, download the proprietary video player with the video if at all possible. Write protect media containing the exported video and video player if possible.

### **3.15 Additional Evidence Submission Policies for Forensic Biology Evidence**

**3.15.1** The Section does **not** perform saliva testing, mitochondrial testing, or paternity testing.

**3.15.2** Touch DNA analysis will **not** be performed on any on the following:

- Evidence related to weapons violations (e.g., possession of a firearm by a convicted felon).
- Ammunition, spent shell casings or swabbings from ammunition or spent shell cases.
- Swabbings from surfaces of objects at a crime scene (ie. door knob, door handle, countertop).
- Evidence related to drug cases.

**3.15.3** No analysis will be performed on items retrieved from a person or a person's property when the intent is to link that person to the item.

**3.15.4** DNA testing may be performed on items or objects that may have been left behind by the alleged perpetrator(s) (e.g. bottles, cans, straws, cigarette butts, hats, ski masks, and gloves.)

**3.15.5** Section analysts will perform body fluid (blood and semen) and DNA testing, if necessary, on evidence if all standards are submitted (including elimination). If there is insufficient probable cause to obtain a DNA standard from a suspect or if the suspect is unknown, CODIS may be utilized to help develop an investigative lead. If a CODIS match or "hit" is obtained, a DNA standard must be collected from the individual and submitted for confirmation.

**3.15.6** The Section may perform YSTR testing on sexual assault cases and intimate items (e.g., fingernail scrapings) from a homicide under the following circumstances:

- The victim is female.
- The alleged perpetrator(s) is male.
- All necessary DNA standards from the alleged male perpetrator(s) and any male elimination standards are available.

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- 3.15.7** Confirmatory testing for human blood (i.e., to determine if the origin is human) will only be performed if it is suspected that non-human blood may be present on an item, or with a specific written request from the district attorney's office.
- 3.15.8** Fingernail scrapings or clippings may be collected, but will not be analyzed by this Laboratory without prior written approval of the Forensic Biology Section Forensic Scientist Manager.
- 3.15.9** The Section has no test to identify fecal material; however, DNA analysis will be performed on submitted swabbings from the outer layer of the fecal material only. Do not collect a swabbing if the fecal material is in water or non-formed. Allow the swabbing to air dry thoroughly before submitting.
- 3.15.10** DNA analysis will be performed on fingerprint lift cards or on submerged items only upon prior written approval of the Forensic Biology Section Forensic Scientist Manager.
- 3.15.11** Except upon prior written approval of the Forensic Biology Section Forensic Scientist Manager, no analysis will be performed in sexual assault cases when the suspect has admitted to having sex with the victim and the victim is 16 years or older.
- 3.15.12** Avoid directly touching the evidence with bare hands or introducing body fluids that contain DNA to the evidence. **Saliva and mucous produced by coughs, sneezing, or even talking over the evidence may introduce enough DNA to affect the evidence.**
- 3.15.13** Avoid excessive heat, humidity, temperature fluctuations and damp conditions by maintaining evidence under environmentally controlled conditions such as an air conditioned/heated building or room. When transporting evidence, place the evidence in a climate controlled portion of the vehicle if possible (e.g., **do not transport in the trunk**).
- 3.15.14** In general, for items to be processed for touch DNA, no more than two swabs should be taken from the item. Best practice is to use one wet (sterile water) swab followed by one dry swab. Both swabs should be packaged together.
- 3.15.15** The actual firearm is preferred; however, if it cannot be submitted to the laboratory for DNA processing, it is suggested that two swabs (total) be collected from each of the following areas:
- 3.15.15.1** Rough surfaces on weapons (e.g. grips, trigger, slide, hammer).
- 3.15.15.2** The rough surfaces of a magazine (e.g., bottom of the magazine) if one is associated with a firearm.
- 3.15.16** Known blood standards or cheek scrapings must be collected from all individuals (including all elimination standards) relevant to the case. A proper liquid blood standard consists of ONE lavender (EDTA) stopper blood tube OR a dried blood stain. A proper cheek scraping consists of two sterile swabs rubbed vigorously on the inside of an individual's cheeks. If an individual did not bleed, but his/her clothes are being sent in for comparison purposes, his/her DNA standard should also be sent for elimination purposes as his/her DNA may be present from saliva or skin cells.
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**3.15.17** If no blood sample is available due to complete exsanguination (loss of blood), or if an individual has been transfused within two weeks prior to the collection, an alternate standard may be obtained which may include:

**3.15.17.1** If the individual has been transfused but is still alive, collect a buccal swab (cheek scraping) standard.

**3.15.17.2** An article of clothing (with chain of custody intact) that is stained with what must be considered to be the subject's blood.

**3.15.17.3** If the corpse has bled out or is decomposing, ask the pathologist for 2-4 teeth (preferably molars without dental work). If they are not available, request a 3-6 inch section of compact bone (femur). Bone material that is still attached to tissue must be frozen prior to submission to the lab and must be hand delivered. **Please note that human tissue or bones cannot be destroyed or disposed of without a court order. This is the responsibility of the submitting agency.**

**3.15.18** Complete information is essential in making determinations in sexual assault cases as to the donor of any semen detected. Since these cases deal with a possible mixture of body fluids from two or more persons, the analyst **MUST** know whether the victim had sexual intercourse with any other individuals in the five days prior to the assault. If so, an elimination standard from such individual(s) must be submitted. Other important information includes:

- Did the alleged assailant ejaculate;
- Did he wear a condom;
- What body cavities did the assailant allegedly penetrate;
- If oral sex was allegedly involved, state by whom and on whom;
- Was ejaculation reported to have taken place outside the body, and, if so, where the semen was reportedly deposited;
- Does the suspect deny having sex with the victim?

**3.15.19** Analysts need to know, for example:

- How many people could have bled.
- Victim's and suspect's statement.
- What, if any, unusual circumstances may have affected the stains, such as soaking, heating or contamination.

**3.15.20** Only items of evidence directly attributable to a suspect may be uploaded to the national level of CODIS. **If information cannot be provided that reasonably links a particular item to a crime the resulting profile will not be placed into the CODIS database.**

### **3.16 Additional Evidence Submission Policies for Firearms and Tool Mark Evidence**

**3.16.1** The Unit does **not** perform muzzle velocity, suppressor/silencer, or ejection pattern examinations.

#### **3.16.2 Firearm Examinations**

- 3.16.2.1 Never place anything into the barrel of an evidence firearm.
- 3.16.2.2 If possible, carefully unload the firearm at the scene. For revolvers, it is a good idea to note which chamber was under the hammer and/or the location of discharged and live cartridges in relation to that chamber. For pistols and other firearms that load by magazine, remove the magazine and unload the live cartridges from the magazine.
- 3.16.2.3 **Only submit loaded firearms when absolutely necessary, and then do so in person.** Place loaded firearms in sturdy containers, not paper or plastic bags or envelopes, and tie them down to prevent movement. Mark the package - **Caution - Loaded Firearm.**
- 3.16.2.4 When a firearm is submitted to the Laboratory, it will be inspected to ensure the firearm is unloaded and safe prior to receipt.
- 3.16.2.5 In circumstances where the firearm cannot be submitted, but test fires are available, contact the Firearms Unit for further instruction.

### 3.16.3 Fired Ammunition (Bullets, Cartridge Cases, Shotshells, etc.)

- 3.16.3.1 Collect all live ammunition at a crime scene for use as standards. Only submit live ammunition of the same caliber as any firearms submitted. Contact the Firearms Unit if there are any questions.
- 3.16.3.2 Do **not** mark cartridge cases or bullets in any manner. Place them in individual envelopes and place all necessary identification data on the outside of these envelopes. This process prevents accidental marring of the important surfaces of the bullet and/or cartridge case and accidental destruction of trace evidence. All containers must be sealed and initialed.
- 3.16.3.3 When collecting bullet, cartridge case, shotshell, and similar evidence at a crime scene, do **not** attempt to wash or clean the evidence or place cotton or tissue around bullets.
- 3.16.3.4 During autopsies, pathologists should attempt to clean blood or other body fluids off the evidence prior to packaging.

### 3.16.4 Muzzle-to-Target Distance Determination

- 3.16.4.1 Distance determination analysis can only be performed if the suspect firearm and at least two rounds of live ammunition are available. This evidence must be accompanied by a written request on letterhead from the appropriate District Attorney, US Attorney, Judicial Official, or Federal/State Official and approved by the Forensic Scientist Supervisor or Forensic Scientist Manager of the Physical Evidence Section.
- 3.16.4.2 Air dry clothing or other articles submitted for distance determination examinations.

- 3.16.4.3** Submit only the outermost garment(s) that have been shot. Underlying garments that are completely covered and/or garments that have not been shot should **not** be submitted.

### **3.16.5 Tool Mark Examinations**

- 3.16.5.1** Tool marks for comparison with a tool left at the scene of a crime will **not** be accepted unless the suspect tool may be tied to a suspected perpetrator through investigation. Tool mark examinations will be conducted only for cases involving physical violence.
- 3.16.5.2** **Never** touch or fit a suspected tool to a tool mark.
- 3.16.5.3** **Never** clean a tool or a cast of a tool mark. Submit the evidence, as is, to the Laboratory.
- 3.16.5.4** **Never** attempt to make test marks with a suspect tool.
- 3.16.5.5** In the case of extremely large or immovable items for tool mark examinations, either remove that section of the item containing the tool mark or make a cast of the tool mark using Mikrosil, silicone rubber, or other suitable casting material. Submit any castings in paper or cardboard.

### **3.16.6 IBIS/NIBIN Entry**

- 3.16.6.1** Evidence in Possession of Firearm by a Felon cases will be accepted for entry into IBIS only.
- 3.16.6.2** Only cartridge cases may be entered into IBIS. The IBIS BRASSTRAX™ System in operation at the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Firearms Unit does not accept entry of fired bullets.
- 3.16.6.3** If the **evidence** is being submitted for entry into the IBIS database **only**, indicate in the space “Examine for IBIS only.” Please indicate the actual alleged offense in the “Type of Case” space on the Request for Examination of Physical Evidence form.
- 3.16.6.4** When submitting **test** fired cartridge cases for entry into IBIS only, use the IBIS Submission form. It is mandatory that the Case #, Incident/Recover Date, and the Description/Remarks sections be completed for each firearm test fired. Multiple case submissions of test fires may be made on the IBIS Submission form.
- 3.16.6.5** Only centerfire caliber handguns and rifle calibers listed on the IBIS Test-Fire Submission Form should be submitted for entry into IBIS. Do not submit rimfire caliber firearms (e.g., caliber 22), shotguns, or rifles of any other caliber.

## **4.0 Requesting Expedited Analysis**

- 4.1** In certain exigent circumstances, the examination of evidence may need to be expedited (e.g., public

safety concerns during an ongoing investigation where a suspect may be at large and evidence analysis is required for apprehension, or the trial involving the evidence is already scheduled in the near future). In such an instance, the State Crime Laboratory shall consider a written rush request by the district attorney's office explaining the precise justification for the request. (e.g., "case being sent to Grand Jury" does NOT constitute an adequate basis for a rush request.) In certain exigent circumstances, a written rush request may be submitted by the submitting agency's Chief of Police, Elected Sheriff or the SBI Special Agent in Charge of the District in which the incident occurred.

- 4.2 Not every rush request may be honored. A proper written rush request shall be directed to the Forensic Scientist Manager of the appropriate Laboratory Section. The final decision on whether to accord rush status to a case shall be that of the Laboratory Director or designee.
- 4.3 If possible, rush requests should be submitted at least 60 days or more prior to the scheduled court date. In addition when multiple examinations are requested, please allow an additional 30 days for each examination. This time frame will allow adequate time for evidence processing. **For fastest service, submit rush requests via FA web.**
- 4.4 For cases in which a standard needed for comparison is not submitted, the individual who initiated the rush request shall be contacted by the Laboratory. The requestor shall be given three business days to provide the required standards or a reasonable explanation as to why the required standard is not immediately available. If the required items or explanation are not received within three days, the case shall not be expedited and the requestor so notified. Once all required evidence is received and the authorization of the Section Manager is obtained, the case shall be assigned rush status and accorded priority for analysis.

## 5.0 Evidence Packaging

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the Laboratory to ensure, insofar as reasonable and possible, that evidence does not undergo deleterious change while in our possession.
- 5.2 When an officer delivers evidence packaged in such a condition or in a container in which the evidence may be subject to deterioration, he/she may be asked to repackage the evidence prior to submission.
- 5.3 **Package and seal each item individually as appropriate for that type of evidence. Do not use plastic bags for wet/damp, bloody clothing or undried plant material.** Seal and package evidence containing fragile and sharp articles with protective padding to prevent breakage, leakage, cross-contamination, or deterioration.

### 5.3.1 Forensic Biology Evidence

- 5.3.1.1 Always allow DNA evidence that is wet or that contains liquid body fluids to dry naturally before storing and submitting. Once dry, store evidence in breathable containers (e.g., paper or Tyvek envelopes, cardboard boxes, but NOT in plastic) to avoid condensation. **Never use plastic bags or plastic containers for wet/damp and/or bloody clothing.**
- 5.3.1.2 Package each item intended as a separate piece of evidence separately (e.g., victim's clothing in one container, suspect's clothing in a second container, etc.)

### 5.3.2 Latent Evidence

- 5.3.2.1 **Do not package wet items.** Air dry items naturally and then package them in paper bags or cardboard boxes.
- 5.3.2.2 When submitting tape, package each strip or piece in separate containers (**preferably plastic bags or containers**) to prevent the loss or cross-contamination of trace material, and to prevent pieces from adhering to one another.
- 5.3.2.3 Latent Evidence will not accept controlled substances. Remove drug evidence from any container **PRIOR to submitting** for latent print analysis.
- 5.3.2.4 Dust impressions should never be placed in a cardboard box unless the box was manufactured and marketed especially for dust print lifts. Place the dust print lift inside a manila folder and then put the manila folder inside an envelope.
- 5.3.2.5 Package footwear or tire impression evidence in a strong cardboard or wooden box. Cushion well with a suitable packing material.

### 5.3.3 Hair, Tape, and Fiber Evidence

- 5.3.3.1 Place head hair and pubic hair samples in carefully labeled separate envelopes. Make sure that the seals are secure (including envelope corners) to preserve the integrity of the hair standards.
- 5.3.3.2 Do **not** package tape (including tapings collected from bulky items) in paper bags or manila envelopes. Do **not** wad the tape or fold the sticky sides of the tape together. Do **not** allow the tape to stick to paper or cardboard. The tape must be immediately placed into a clean zip-lock or cellophane bag with the sticky side facing the bag.
- 5.3.3.3 Clothing and bedding must be submitted in paper bags or cardboard boxes.
- 5.3.3.4 Do **not** package loose fibers in plastic. Use gel caps, metal tins, or envelopes.

### 5.3.4 Glass Evidence

- 5.3.4.1 The best packaging materials for glass evidence are metal tins, boxes, or manila envelopes. Label the item with the location where it was found and the designation "SHARP."
- 5.3.4.2 Do **not** use envelopes for large pieces of glass. Wrap each large piece separately in cardboard and package tightly to prevent breakage
- 5.3.4.3 If an entire window is being submitted, the best way to package it is in a flattened cardboard box with all the sides sealed.

### 5.3.5 Fire Debris Evidence

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- 5.3.5.1** Samples must always be packaged in airtight containers to prevent evaporation. Appropriate containers include: clean cans (new lined paint cans), glass jars or vials, and nylon bags. Improperly packaged evidence will not be examined.
- 5.3.5.2** **DO NOT** use paper bags, plastic (zip lock) bags or plastic bottles.
- 5.3.5.3** Metal cans and glass jars require a clean rim before closing the lid. Debris on the rim of a glass jar or in the groove of a metal can will not allow the lid to seal completely.
- 5.3.5.4** Nylon bags may be heat-sealed and/or tape-sealed.
- 5.3.5.4.1** Heat-seal: Seal the entire width of the nylon bag. Several seals may be necessary to create an airtight nylon bag. Make sure the nylon bag does not melt along the seal creating holes in the bag.
- 5.3.5.4.2** Tape-seal: First, run a piece of tape along the top opening of the bag creating an airtight seal. Roll that seal down and tape seal again creating a tamper-proof seal. **Do not fold the nylon bag like a chip bag (folded down with one tape seal across the bag) or roll the bag all the way down to the evidence (no vapor space for analysis).**
- 5.3.5.4.3** If air escapes when squeezing the nylon bag (pillow test), the seal is not airtight.
- 5.3.5.4.4** If the nylon bag will not seal properly, place it into another nylon bag or metal can that will seal properly.
- 5.3.5.5** The Laboratory preferred method of fire debris collection and packaging utilizes a nylon bag draped over a metal can similar to a trash bag in a trash can. Place the debris into the nylon bag. Fold the nylon bag into the metal can and secure the lid on the can.
- 5.3.5.6** Make sure the outside of the container is clean. Debris remaining on the outside of a metal can will cause the can to rust and may affect the integrity of the evidence. Samples in rusted containers will not be analyzed.
- 5.3.6 Paint Evidence**
- 5.3.6.1** Paper folds are the best containers for paint chips. Paper envelopes are also acceptable if all four corners and the flap are properly tape sealed. The preferred method of submission is a paper fold inside of a sealed envelope.
- 5.3.6.2** Plastic bags and tape must not be used to collect or submit paint samples.
- 5.3.7 Explosives Evidence**
- 5.3.7.1** Samples must be packaged in airtight containers to preserve the integrity of the evidence.
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**5.3.7.2** Do **not** submit chemical reaction bombs in paper bags since these devices may contain strong acids or bases which could leak through the bag and cause chemical burns.

**5.3.7.3** Nylon bags are the best containers since nylon bags greatly reduce the rate of evaporation of evidence; however, chemical reaction bombs will also be accepted in plastic bags.

**5.3.7.4** Each device should be individually packaged.

### **5.3.8 Firearms and Ammunition Components**

**5.3.8.1** Firearms must be packaged separately in a paper or plastic bag or cardboard gun box. Do not use plastic bags for firearms that are being submitted to the State Crime Laboratory's Latent Evidence Section, Trace Unit, or Forensic Biology Section.

**5.3.8.2** Firearms discovered **SUBMERGED** in water must be packaged and submitted in a sample of that same water. Use a container that may remain with the firearm when submitted. Some examples of containers are screw-capped PVC pipe, old paint cans, and Tupperware-type containers.

**5.3.8.3** Do **not** package fired bullets or shotshell wads in sealed air tight containers.

### **5.3.9 Muzzle-to-Target Distance Determination Evidence**

**5.3.9.1** Package each piece of evidence for distance determination examinations in separate, sealed paper bags. Never use plastic bags to store distance determination examination evidence.

### **5.3.10 Tool Mark Evidence**

**5.3.10.1** Package all tool mark evidence separately. Package the working end of a suspect tool to prevent damage to the working surface and to preserve the integrity of the item. Do **not** use tape to cover or protect the end.

**5.4** Mark each item with the item number you listed on the Request for Examination of Physical Evidence form, your name or initials, and your case number.

## **6.0 Evidence Seals**

**6.1** All evidence submitted to the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory **must** be in a sealed condition. The only seals which will be accepted are:

- Tape
- Heat Sealed Packages
- Packages with Tamper-Proof Seals

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- 6.2 An evidence package is considered sealed only if its contents cannot readily escape and if entering the container will result in obvious damage/alteration to the seal. **Stapled or zip-locked seals are not proper seals.**
  - 6.3 All evidence seals must be initialed by the person sealing the package or placing a seal on the package.
  - 6.4 In the case of tape, the initials may be on the tape, under the tape (if the tape is clear), or partly on the tape and extending onto the package surface. But, in any case, the initials must either be on the tape, under the tape, or partially on the tape.
  - 6.5 For tamper-proof packages, the initials must be on the seal. For heat sealed packages, the initials must be as close as practical to the seal.
  - 6.6 If it is not practical to package a piece of evidence, such as an entire vehicle, the officer or technician submitting that evidence should securely attach a tag to the evidence and initial the tag.
  - 6.7 All evidence containers/packages must be sealed to the extent that nothing may be added to or removed from the container/package.
  - 6.8 Excessive use of tape on evidence packages should be avoided. Close and seal evidence containers carefully, but not so as to make them difficult to open without damaging the contents.

## 7.0 Submission Forms

- 7.1 All evidence submitted to the Laboratory must be accompanied by the FA Web pre-log printout.
- 7.2 In FA Web there is an instruction sheet with numerous submission highlights. Please read the instruction page in its entirety before completing the submission information.
- 7.3 The Supplement for Computer Forensics Requests must be completed on all computer forensics requests. Answer the questions in depth in order for the examiner to understand the request and provide an appropriate file search. It is **imperative** to state under what lawful authority the evidence was seized and to provide the Laboratory with a copy of this documentation (e.g., court order, search warrant, etc.).
- 7.4 Do not allow submission forms, packages, or other cases being transported to become contaminated by biological or other potentially hazardous evidence.
- 7.5 Some considerations for completing the on-line form include:
  - 7.5.1 **Requesting Officer:** Please use the same officer for all submissions in a given case. This simplifies keeping case records together, as well as grouping submissions on the Laboratory report. The Laboratory always returns evidence to the **Requesting officer** unless otherwise specified.
  - 7.5.2 **SBI File #:** When an SBI Field Agent is involved with a case, supply that agent's file number (both new and old number when applicable). Indicate on the Request for Examination of Physical Evidence form, and the CAA (Case Agent Assigned) - this information is available from the SBI



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Field Agent.

- 7.5.3 Lab #:** If evidence has previously been submitted in a case and you know the Laboratory number, please provide that number. If you do not know the specific number, please advise the Laboratory that other evidence has been submitted in the case.
- 7.5.4 Age/Sex/Race:** Provide this information for all suspects and victims as it is pertinent to several kinds of Laboratory analyses. If an individual's date of birth is unknown, provide the best estimate of the person's age.
- 7.5.5 Analysis Requested:** Be as specific as possible. If not sure of what tests may be performed, please call the Laboratory prior to completing the form, or refer to the appropriate sections above for further information. Clearly state the analysis required for each item of evidence. Clarify the request if necessary by stating what you need to know from the analysis on the bottom of the form or on a separate sheet of paper. The Laboratory will not arbitrarily examine evidence without a specific request for each forensic discipline clearly indicated.
- 7.5.6 Origin of Evidence:** Give the exact location where the evidence was seized or collected, (e.g., victim (name), suspect (name), bedroom, vehicle, etc.) The address does not help the scientist, but whose residence does help. **Note: For the safety of all who might handle the evidence, always indicate when evidence was recovered or seized from a body cavity or contaminated area.**
- 7.5.7 Disposition of Evidence:** The Laboratory is not a long term storage facility. All evidence except Toxicology DWI items will be retained with the understanding that it **must** be picked up by the submitting agency within 180 days unless otherwise authorized.
- 7.5.8 Remarks or Synopsis:** Briefly describe in Part B of the submission form what reportedly happened. Supply sufficient detail to illustrate how the evidence submitted relates to the investigation. A copy of the investigative report may suffice if it contains that information. Be sure to specify why each item is being submitted so that analysts may conduct appropriate examinations.

## 8.0 Evidence Submissions

- 8.1** Evidence may be submitted by in-person submission (**preferred**), courier mail, registered U.S. mail, or a commercial carrier that allows for package tracking.
- 8.2** All in-person submissions to the Laboratory are by pre-scheduled appointment only. Customers may submit all evidence types to the closest Laboratory facility for in-person submissions.
- 8.3** Bring the copy of the evidence FA Web pre-log printout to the Laboratory. Due to the heavy volume of incoming evidence, Laboratory personnel will not sign other agencies' receipts. During the submission process, signatures will be captured in the FA database. A receipt will be provided to the submitting person.
- 8.4** Only enclose evidence from one case per package if submitting by mail or commercial carrier. Generally speaking, a case is defined as an incident. Do not package or mail multiple cases (or incidents) together.

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- 8.5** For mailed items, place a copy of the FA Web pre-log printout into an envelope addressed to the correct Laboratory location, and make sure the appropriate return address is clearly indicated. Tape this envelope to the **outside** of the evidence package. Keep a copy for your records.
- 8.6** Mark the outside of the package Attention: Evidence Control. **Do not indicate drugs, firearms, or victim/suspect names on the outside of the package.**
- 8.7** For **non-in-person submissions**, submit evidence to the Laboratory based on county assignment and type of examination.

**8.7.1** Type of Examination Capabilities:

**8.7.1.1** Raleigh Laboratory

**8.7.1.1.1** Digital Evidence

- Audio/Video
- Computer Forensics
- Graphics

**8.7.1.1.2** Latent Evidence

- Latent Prints
- Footwear/Tire Track
- Impression Evidence

**8.7.1.1.3** CODIS

**8.7.1.1.4** Drug Chemistry – Controlled Substances

**8.7.1.1.5** Toxicology

- Blood Alcohol
- Blood Drug

**8.7.1.1.6** Forensic Biology

- Body Fluids
- DNA

**8.7.1.1.7** Physical Evidence

- Firearms
- Tool Marks
- IBIS
- Hair
- Fiber

- Fire Debris
- Gunshot Residue
- Physical Match
- Explosives
- Glass
- Filaments

#### **8.7.1.2 Western Regional Laboratory**

##### **8.7.1.2.1 Firearms**

##### **8.7.1.2.2 Latent Evidence**

- Latent Prints
- Footwear/Tire Track
- Impression Evidence

##### **8.7.1.2.3 Drug Chemistry – Controlled Substances**

##### **8.7.1.2.4 Toxicology**

- Blood Alcohol
- Blood Drug

#### **8.7.1.3 Triad Regional Laboratory**

##### **8.7.1.3.1 Latent Evidence - Latent Prints**

##### **8.7.1.3.2 Drug Chemistry – Controlled Substances**

##### **8.7.1.3.3 Toxicology**

- Blood Alcohol
- Blood Drug

#### **8.7.2 Locations:**

**8.7.2.1 North Carolina State Crime Laboratory**  
Post Office Box 2000  
Garner, North Carolina 27529-2000  
(919) 582-8756

Commercial deliveries only, use:  
121 East Tryon Road  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603  
Attention: Evidence Control

**State Courier #: Mail Service Center 9052**

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**8.7.2.2** Western Regional Laboratory  
Post Office Box 2408  
Skyland, North Carolina 28776-2408  
(828) 654-0525

Commercial deliveries only, use:  
9B Walden Ridge Drive  
Asheville, North Carolina 28803

**State Courier #: 12-90-01**

**8.7.2.3** Triad Regional Laboratory  
2306 West Meadowview Road, Suite 110  
Greensboro, North Carolina 27407  
(336) 315-4900

The above address is to be used for all mail deliveries.

**State Courier #: 02-18-57**

## **9.0 Change in Case Status/Information**

- 9.1** If the status of a case or the progress of an investigation changes and there is no longer a need for the evidence to be analyzed (stop work), please advise the appropriate Laboratory of the change via FA web. Prompt notification that the analysis is no longer needed frees valuable analysis time for other cases.
- 9.2** Requests to correct erroneous information after submission may be made in writing or via telephone conversation by the officer or agent who made the initial request. Such requests may also be made via fax to the Raleigh Laboratory at (919) 661-5849, to the Western Regional Laboratory at (828) 654-9682 and to the Triad Regional Laboratory at (336) 315-4956. The request must refer to the erroneous information which appeared on the submitted form and specify the appropriate change(s). Changes will be made only to active Laboratory cases.

<b>Revision History</b>		
Effective Date	Version Number	Reason
1/1/2017	1	Original Document created from the Laboratory Evidence Guide.