

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Forensic Services Division

Evidence Unit Standard Operating Procedures Manual

1.0 Evidence Submission by Hand



1.0 Evidence Submission – By Hand

The following is the acceptable procedure for the submittal of evidence to the TBI Crime Laboratory system:

- 1.1 Inspect the evidence to ensure that it is properly sealed.
 - 1.1.1 All suspected Heroin, Fentanyl, Fentanyl analog, and/or Carfentanil cases submitted to a TBI Crime Lab for testing must be double-bagged in plastic by the submitting agency prior to submission and properly sealed. TBI Evidence Receiving shall be informed by the submitting agency at the time of case submission regarding suspicion of Heroin, Fentanyl, Fentanyl analogs, and/or Carfentanil. After TBI Laboratory Testing: All cases confirmed to contain Fentanyl, Fentanyl analogs, Carfentanil, or similar dangerous compounds will be packaged by the TBI Crime Lab in an additional safety-sealed plastic bag and labeled with a warning label indicating the contents.
- 1.2 Verify that the “Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Request for Examination” form (also referred to as the “Request Form”) is completed properly before accepting evidence; All agency information is listed, subject(s)/and/or victim(s) listed. Ensure that the evidence being submitted is an item the laboratory will work. Ensure that the submitting agency has clearly stated in the “Request for Examination” section what tests are being requested. Make sure that all required signatures are present before the submitting officer leaves.
- 1.3 Verify that the information on the Request Form corresponds with the information on the evidence packaging. If no information is written on the evidence packaging, then the submitting officer will be asked to label the packaging with the following information: the agency name and case number and/or the subject/victim name.
- 1.4 Verify that the examinations requested for each item are clearly described. The unit that will perform the testing will be marked by the Forensic Technician on the Request Form.
- 1.5 The submitting officer and the Forensic Technician or TBI Violent Crime Scene Response Team (VCRT) member must both sign the Request Form. **(Refer to section 2.0 for receiving Blood Alcohol Kits)**

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- 1.6 The Forensic Technician will write the date and time the evidence is received into the laboratory and the submitting officer's name on the Request Form. If the chain has been initiated by the TBI Violent Crime Scene Response Team (VCRT) member, then the Forensic Technician will document the date and time of evidence transfer from the VCRT member on the Request Form. The Forensic Technician will subsequently enter the chain of custody, including the initial receipt by the VCRT member, into LIMS.
- 1.7 The Forensic Technician on the Request Form will document a description of the evidence packaging and the number of containers submitted to the laboratory. (see Appendix G, Package Descriptions). The "Contents Not Verified" stamp must be placed on the form if not already present. **The "Contents Not Verified" stamp may not apply to Blood Alcohol Request.** The Forensic Technician receiving the evidence will initial the stamp and date it per when the evidence was received.
 - 1.7.1 If on the Request Form a hazardous material (e.g. Fentanyl) is indicated, the Forensic Technician will place the package inside of a clear plastic bag and heat seal the bag together for safety precautions. Both sides of the inner packaging should be visible through both sides of the clear plastic bag. This will also be documented on the Request Form.

Due to the fact that this packaging is a safety precaution only, initials are not required on the heat seal.
- 1.8 Information from the Request Form will be entered into the computer system (LIMS) as soon as possible.
- 1.9 The unit to be analyzing the evidence, the laboratory number, the date the evidence is received, and initials/name of the Forensic Technician receiving the evidence will be written on the outer packaging of every item submitted to the laboratory. The date of receipt, the exhibit number, and the name of the Forensic Technician receiving the evidence may be contained on the barcode affixed to the outer packaging of the evidence and need not be hand written.
- 1.10 Any evidence that poses a biological health threat to Crime Laboratory personnel will be flagged as such with a biohazard sticker
- 1.11 All firearms being submitted as evidence will be checked immediately for safety purposes. Only a commissioned Forensic Scientist from the

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Firearm/Toolmark Identification Unit and/or a commissioned Forensic Scientist or Forensic Technician Supervisor who has been trained by the Firearms Identification Unit or other trained designee to safely inspect firearms can perform this safety check. The Firearm safety check will be conducted in the Evidence Receiving Area. Any Firearm(s) which the Forensic Scientist or Forensic Technician Supervisor deems “AT RISK” and not obviously unloaded, must be carried into the Primary Evidence Vault (PEV – located in Evidence Receiving) area. The muzzle of the firearm must be pointed down into a bullet trap device when being checked. During firearm(s) safety checks, a Forensic Technician will witness the safety check of the firearm and will escort the Forensic Scientist into the PEV area when checking “AT RISK” firearms. After the firearm has been inspected the Forensic Scientist or Forensic Technician Supervisor or designee will reseal the evidence and initial the seal and initial and date the Request Form.

Submitted Firearms not being analyzed by the Firearm/Toolmark Identification Unit:

In the event a firearm is submitted in a loaded and/or unusual condition, such as a firearm having a cartridge in the chamber, a loaded magazine inserted and/or being submerged in a container of water, a Forensic Scientist from the Firearm/Toolmark Identification Unit (where applicable) or trained personnel must conduct the safety check and make written documentation of the condition of the firearm.

- 1.12 Secure the evidence in the appropriate unit of the PEV. Evidence may be left out at work units for short periods of time (breaks, lunch, etc.) due to the fact that these areas are only accessible to laboratory personnel who have been given access to that particular work area. All evidence must be stored and secured in the PEV overnight. Exceptions may be made if evidence needs to be air dried overnight. Evidence is still secured in hoods or drying room with access only to TBI personnel.
- 1.13 Any hand-delivered evidence that is brought into an incorrect laboratory may not be accepted. The submitting officer will be informed of this and asked to deliver the evidence to the appropriate laboratory.
- 1.14 Evidence that is hand-delivered to a TBI Laboratory that cannot be tested because of policy or lack of evidence will not be accepted.
- 1.15 Evidence submitted by a Regional Laboratory that has not been assigned a regional laboratory case number will be submitted through the Evidence Receiving Unit.

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- 1.16 Evidence from a Regional Laboratory that has been assigned a laboratory case number may go directly to the appropriate unit for analysis.
- 1.17 In the case of exhibits of monies totaling \$20 or more, the Forensic Technician will contact a Forensic Scientist to open the packaging and verify the amount of money submitted in the presence of the submitting officer. The Forensic Scientist verifying the amount will document on the Request Form that the money has been counted and reseal the evidence and initial the seal.

1.18 **Term and Definition for Evidence Storage Location**

Primary Evidence Vault (PEV) – The laboratory’s main evidence storage vault located in the Evidence Receiving Unit. This locked area is accessible by more than one individual therefore evidence must be logged into and out of this location.

Contents Not Verified Stamp – It is not the responsibility of the Forensic Technician to verify the contents of evidence submitted to the crime laboratory. The Forensic Technician will denote this on each Request Form. This is not required for Blood Alcohol/Toxicology Request Forms.

Multi-Section Case (MS) – Evidence submitted to be analyzed by more than one section.

1.19 **Agency specific labels placed on outer packaging prior to being received by the laboratory:**

Labels placed on evidence packaging by an agency may be covered for proper laboratory markings and by TBI barcode labels as long as at least one agency label can be clearly read in its entirety. (i.e. Metro evidence barcode labels and hospital labels that are placed on sexual assault kits.)