

**TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**  
*Forensic Services Division*

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Evidence Unit Standard Operating Procedures Manual  
Returning Evidence to a Law Enforcement Agency

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**9.0 Returning Evidence to a Law Enforcement Agency**

- 9.1 Evidence will be verified by laboratory number and exhibit number to ensure all evidence, including items not analyzed by a Forensic Scientist, will be returned. The packaging description, number of containers, and exhibit numbers will be documented with the chain-of-custody stamp in the case file.
- 9.2 Evidence removed from the vault will have the electronic chain-of-custody documented with due care, such that every piece of evidence being transferred is scanned into LIMS. The receiving officer will sign the chain-of-custody stamp to show that he/she has accepted control of the evidence, and the Forensic Technician will initial and date the stamp to complete the transfer. The Forensic Technician may print the receiving officer's name beside the signed section.
- 9.3 Evidence should be returned in its original outer packaging. Documentation will be made in the case file when evidence is not returned in the original packaging.
- 9.4 If multiple agencies have submitted evidence under the same lab number, the evidence will be separated by agency and returned to the appropriate agency. All evidence may be returned to one agency if a letter is on file from the other submitting agency(s) indicating its approval to release the evidence to one agency.
- 9.5 When evidence is returned to the submitting agency by mail, it will be returned by certified mail, UPS, or Federal Express only. A copy of the mail receipt will be stapled into the master folder to document the chain-of-custody. The electronic chain will also be completed to indicate that the evidence has been returned to the agency.