

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Forensic Services Division

Evidence Unit Standard Operating Procedures Manual

Evidence Handling Protocol



12.0 Evidence Handling

It is important that all evidence is packaged, handled, and stored in a way that will ensure its integrity. The materials used to package the evidentiary items depend on the type of evidence recovered, the condition of the evidence, and the subsequent analyses to be conducted. All packaging materials should be clean and unused. If it is suspected that evidence is submitted to the laboratory in unclean or previously used packaging materials, this will be documented in the case folder.

General Evidence Packaging Guidelines

- Use appropriate packaging for the items being packaged
- Protect the evidence
- Protect yourself and others
- Package all evidence separately (when possible)
- Consider all analyses that may be conducted
- Allow moist evidence to air-dry before packaging (when possible)

All evidence packaging will be marked. Refer to Section 1.9 of Chapter 1 of this manual for further guidance on this topic.

12.1 Sealing

Evidence shall be under proper seal when submitted to the laboratory's Evidence Receiving Unit. Large evidence items may be tagged in lieu of proper seal. A proper seal consists of tape and initials or a heat seal with initials. A proper seal is also defined in Chapter 3 of the Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual.

12.2 Storage

Evidence will be placed into a secure limited access evidence storage site until such time as it can be requested by an examiner or Forensic Technician. A secure drying area will be used to dry clothing or other evidentiary materials contaminated with blood or other substances. Refer to section SOP's for additional storage and handling practices.

12.3 Unit Specific Evidence Handling Procedures

Unit specific evidence handling procedures applying to Forensic Biology, Forensic Chemistry, Firearm/Toolmark Identification Unit, Latent Print Unit, Microanalysis, and Toxicology can be found in Appendix A-F of this manual.