

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Forensic Services Division



Quality Assurance Manual

Process Requirements-Review of Requests

7 Process Requirements

7.1 Review of requests, Tenders and Contracts

7.1.1 Evidence may be submitted to any TBI-FSD regional laboratory by a law enforcement agency or court official. All evidence submitted to the lab will be accompanied by an official *TBI Request for Examination* form. The *TBI Request for Examination* form will remain in the case file. The Forensic Technician and/or Forensic Scientist, upon intake, will review the request form and ensure the lab is capable of satisfying the request. Any issues will be resolved prior to testing. If the regional lab is not capable of fulfilling the request for analysis, the evidence will be transported to an appropriate laboratory. These practices ensure that the:

- a) Requirements, including the methods to be used, are adequately defined, documented and understood;
- b) TBI Laboratory is capable of conducting the requested examinations/calibrations;
- c) The appropriate Unit Supervisor(s) or designee will review request forms associated with cases that may be subcontracted. Use of an external provider and the extent of testing performed by external provider will be agreed upon with the customer prior to testing/calibration activities;
- d) Examiner selects an appropriate technical procedure, to the extent possible, that is dictated by the nature of the evidence and a customer's request;
- e) Issues pertaining to the request that affect testing/calibration are reconciled prior to any work being performed.

7.1.2 Examiners will select appropriate technical procedures to meet the needs of the submitting agency while taking into account the nature of the evidence and the facts of the case. Prior to TBI validation, these technical procedures should be published either in international, regional or national standards, or by reputable technical organizations, or in relevant scientific texts, or journals, as specified by the manufacturer of the equipment or developed by the TBI Laboratory. If the TBI Laboratory uses a standard procedure, it will use the latest edition when possible. The standard procedure will be supplemented with additional details to ensure consistent application. The TBI Laboratory will confirm that it can properly use a standard procedure prior to introducing it for forensic examinations or calibration activities. If the standard procedure changes, the confirmation will be repeated. TBI Laboratory-developed technical procedures or procedures adopted by the TBI Laboratory, including standard procedures, are used as appropriate.

7.1.3 Applicable Unit SOPs will address how requests for a statement of conformity are fulfilled.

7.1.4 Customers will be notified prior to testing if unavailable or unsuitable. The laboratory will make a good faith effort to provide the most appropriate testing/calibration service based upon the customer's request. If during the course of

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testing the laboratory's ability to follow through with the customer's request for analysis comes into question, then the customer will be notified. Also, if during the course of examination other items of potential probative value are identified (e.g. hairs, drugs) the customer should be notified and a notation concerning these items will be made in the case documentation. These conversations with the customer will be documented in the case file or in LIMS.

7.1.5 The customer shall be informed of any deviation from the contract.

7.1.6 Any changes to the contract will be communicated to all appropriate personnel.

7.1.7 TBI Laboratory employees will communicate with agencies as needed to clarify their requests for monitoring the laboratory's performance in relation to the work performed. They will also answer any questions concerning the status of the requests while maintaining confidentiality to other customers.

- a) Laboratory management will work with customers and ensure cooperation in the event of a customer's request to monitor the laboratories work performance. If necessary, TBI Professional Standards Unit will be contacted to mediate the request.
- b) If possible, TBI Laboratory employees will assist a customer with the preparation and packaging of items needed for verification purposes. These items will be made available to the customer for pick up in the appropriate Regional Evidence Receiving area.

7.1.8 Any significant changes to the *Request for Examination* form or changes to calibration activity requests will be documented. Communications with the customer concerning changes to the request shall be documented. Documentation will be retained in the case file or in the LIMS.

7.1.9 When items of evidence are uploaded and searched in a database, the extent of these searches will be clearly communicated to the customer and documented in the case file.