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FORENSIC SCIENCE BUREAU

1. SCOPE OF OPERATIONS

1.1 Forensic Quality Assurance Specialist Overview

This document specifies procedures for processing analysis requests and delivery of evidence to the laboratory sections for analysis.

It is not possible to anticipate every situation that may arise or to prescribe a specific course of action for every case; therefore, the Forensic Quality Assurance Specialist (FQAS) must exercise good judgment based on experience and common sense.

1.2 History of the Forensic Quality Assurance Specialist Position

The FQAS position was authorized in 2012 to assist the laboratory analysts by managing the laboratory assignments and transport of evidence.

1.3 Mission Statement

No Supplemental Requirements

1.4 Goals and Objectives

No Supplemental Requirements

1.5 Code of Ethics

No Supplemental Requirements

1.6 Organization and Staffing

The FQAS reports to the Quality Assurance Manager.

1.7 List of Locations, Addresses and Phone Numbers

No Supplemental Requirements

1.8 Organizations Chart

No Supplemental Requirements

1.9 Section Descriptions and Responsibilities

No Supplemental Requirements

1.10 Hours of Operation

No Supplemental Requirements

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No Supplemental Requirements

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No Supplemental Requirements

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No Supplemental Requirements

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1.14 Planning and Development

No Supplemental Requirements

1.15 Purchasing Supplies and Services

No Supplemental Requirements

1.16 Management Review System

No Supplemental Requirements

1.17 Equipment and Supply Inventory

No Supplemental Requirements

2. FACILITY DESIGN AND SECURITY**2.1 Bureau Physical Plant/Space and Design**

No Supplemental Requirements

2.2 Section Security (ISO 5.8.4)

The FQAS operates from the first floor QA intake room. Access to this area is restricted to the FQAS, Top Management and the evidence room personnel. No evidence will be left unsecured in this area.

3. QUALITY ASSURANCE

No Supplemental Requirements

4. LABORATORY RECORDS

No Supplemental Requirements

5. EVIDENCE PROCEDURES**5.1 Practices**

- **Suspension of cases**

- Evidence received that does not meet the prescribed requirements for submission will be resolved before the evidence is forwarded to the section for analysis.
- If an assignment exists, the assignment status will be changed to "S" Assignment Suspended.
- The customer will be notified, requesting resolution of the issues. This communication will include a due date for corrections and notice that the evidence will be returned to the Evidence Control Section on a specific date if the issues are not resolved.
- If the issues are not resolved within two weeks:
 - A printout of the email notification of the customer will be attached to the evidence,

- If no assignment exists in LIMS, the written chain of custody will be completed.
 - The evidence will be returned to the Evidence Control Section,
 - At the discretion of the FQAS, this two week timeline may be extended with documentation in the case record.
- **DPS (Texas Department of Public Safety) liaison**
 - All requests must have a DPS submission form and a lab analysis request in the LIMS system prior to transport to DPS by the FQAS. If one is received without the other the requestor is notified by the FQAS indicating the need to complete the required steps in order to have the evidence transported. If the request is turned in without the DPS form, the requestor is given a two week deadline. At the end of the two weeks the request is administratively closed. Documentation of the communications and reason for the administrative closure will be included in the case record.
 - When the DPS submission form and LIMS analysis request are completed, the FQAS will request the evidence from the Evidence Control Unit, who will deliver it to the Central Evidence Locker (CEL) for retrieval. Custody of the evidence will be updated to indicate custody of the FQAS until it is delivered to DPS.
 - Items are usually delivered to DPS on Wednesdays as the schedule permits. We have a set appointment every Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. We contact evidencecoordination@dps.texas.gov if we are unable to make our appointment time.
 - The receipts given by DPS are attached to the case file upon return from delivery and the CM (Case Manager) assignments are admin closed only after the receipt is scanned. In general, the receipt is scanned to the documents section under the "all" documents designation. When the request is from the Blood Alcohol Analyst, the receipt should be scanned under the BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) report located under tab 7 within the case. If there is no report, it reverts to the "all" in the document section.
 - All returned items will be transferred in LIMS to the custody of the FQAS and then transferred to the CEL. Items that are refrigerated by the lab, even if not refrigerated by DPS will be returned to the CEL refrigerated section.
 - **Drug Analysis:**
 - **Analysis Requests**
 - All Drug analysis requests come in as priority 3 except for the Rocket Docket cases, which are designated a priority 1. For requests made by a Detective or the District Attorney's office, the priority will be updated by the FQAS to reflect the request. Any questions regarding the status of a specific assignment will be routed to the Chemistry Supervisor, via LIMS, for clarification. All evidence is requested by the FQAS on a daily basis as schedule permits.
 - **Assignment Item Confirmation**
 - If all narcotic items have not been requested, the unrequested items will be linked to the case prior to requesting from evidence room, as they are often packaged together. Items requested will be researched using the Versadex property report to determine if it contains drug items, indicated by NL ##### storage location.
 - **Evidence Requests**

- Once the above steps have been completed, the DC assignment status is changed from "O" Assigned to Section to "R" Requested from Property.
 - When the evidence is retrieved from the CEL by the FQAS, custody is transferred to the FQAS and the packaging is checked for proper seal. LIMS barcodes are printed and attached at the top of the chain of custody or as close as possible.
 - The evidence will be checked for completeness and any additional analysis required on the items. Once the evidence has verified, the assignment status will be changed to "E" "Ready for Examination."
- **Evidence Delivery**
 - Drug Evidence will be delivered to the Chemistry Section Drug Vault.
 - APD cases will be placed in one location separated by priority. Within the priority, cases are indexed by size and then by lab number.
 - Outside Agency Cases will be placed into bins or shelves labeled for that agency.
- **Evidence Transfer**
 - Drug Evidence will only be picked up from the chemistry bulk storage vault.
 - Evidence that is ready for transfer to another section will be picked up from box labeled ready for transfer. The analyst will route a message to the FQAS when they have placed the evidence in the box.
 - Items of evidence ready for return to outside agency will be placed by analyst in the agency labeled return bin or note posted on item on agency shelf that item is for ready for return.
- **BAC analysis:**
 - **Analysis Requests** (based on the APD submission form)

Most blood alcohol analysis requests are entered by the FQAS using the Prelog system, creating a BAC assignment. This is performed on Monday and Thursday as scheduling permits. This process may be suspended if the capacity of the laboratory refrigerator is at maximum.

 - Any cases remaining in the Versadex transcription queue are transcribed by the FQAS.
 - All corrections will be verified by the officer in an email that will be attached either in the document section or copied over into the narrative.
 - Blood alcohol evidence must be accompanied by a completed Blood Alcohol Submission Form. If the form is not with the blood, the lab notifies the officer and escalates into command until a form is received. Blood is not returned to the evidence room until it has been worked.
 - Any evidence received with the APD submission form sealed inside the packaging such that the information required is unreadable will be forwarded to the BAC section.
 - After requests are completed, the items are transferred to the custody of the FQAS. LIMS labels are printed and affixed above the chain of custody if possible. The items are transferred to the DRUG TOXREF and delivered to the Blood Refrigerator located in the Toxicology lab.
 - Once evidence is ready to be delivered to the Toxicology lab, the assignment status should be changed to "E" "Ready for Examination."

- **Evidence Transfer**
 - All blood alcohol evidence is retrieved from the CEL by the FQAS and transferred to the laboratory refrigerator.
 - Evidence will be placed in lab refrigerator in order of lab number.
 - Blood alcohol specimens that require transfer to an outside lab for additional testing will be picked up from box in refrigerator that is designated for this purpose.
- **Crime Scene Evidence**
 - **Analysis Requests** are received in LIMS either through Prelog or by entry by laboratory personnel.
 - **Evidence Delivery**
 - Crime Scene evidence is requested by the FQAS as time permits using the CSL/O assignment queue in LIMS. If the evidence was collected by a Crime Scene Specialist the case is assigned to them.
 - When the evidence is picked up from the central evidence locker by the FQAS, custody is transferred to the FQAS and the packaging is checked for lab quality. LIMS barcodes are printed and attached at the top of the chain of custody or as close as possible.
 - The cases are checked for evidence delivery completion and any other analysis required on the items. If the items have other analysis requested, labels are affixed to the evidence as a flag for the Crime Scene Lab Personnel. The two flags used are for DNA swabbing to be performed by the Crime Scene Lab and for the transport of items from the Crime Scene Lab to the Firearms lab for testing.
 - If the case is assigned to a Crime Scene Specialist, the specialist is notified via the LIMS routing system when the evidence is ready and their name is placed on the evidence.
 - All evidence is transferred to and then delivered to the Crime Scene Evidence vault by the FQAS.
 - **Evidence Transfer**
 - Evidence that is ready for transfer to another section will be picked up from the transfer shelf.
- **DNA Evidence**
 - **Analysis Requests**
 - DNA evidence requests are processed by the DNA section staff.
 - **Evidence Return**
 - All evidence transferred to the evidence control section will be transported by the DNA laboratory personnel.
- **Firearms Evidence**
 - **Analysis Requests** are received in LIMS either through Prelog or by entry by laboratory personnel.
 - **Evidence Delivery**
 - Firearms lab evidence is requested by either the analyst or the FQAS.

- Evidence picked up is transferred into the custody of the FQAS.
 - The evidence is received and it is checked for proper lab packaging standards and to make sure all the evidence requested for each case has been delivered by the evidence room.
 - If the evidence has all arrived the case status is marked "E" ready for examination. If the case evidence is not complete, the status remains "R" requested until all the evidence is delivered to the central evidence locker.
 - When the evidence is ready for analysis it is transferred in LIMS to the Firearms Storage and then delivered to the Firearms Storage.
 - **Evidence Transfer**
 - The evidence for transfer is made available in the FA Vault for pickup.
- **Latent Print Evidence**
 - **Analysis Requests** are received in LIMS either through Prelog or by entry by laboratory personnel.
 - **Evidence Delivery**
 - Latent Print envelopes are picked up from the CEL. All latent print envelopes have the Forensic Analysis requests entered by the FQAS with a designation of ADM. This is performed on a daily basis as scheduling permits.
 - All cases in the Versadex transcription queue are transcribed by the FQAS.
 - If there is a problem with a latent print envelope, the officer is notified and given a two week deadline. When the correction is verified by an email from the officer, a copy will be attached in the case either in the documents section or the narrative section. If the evidence is not corrected by the deadline, the evidence is rejected with the deadline notice attached to the evidence. No white-out or correction tape is to be used for corrections on evidence. A single line with initials so that the original number can be read is all that is necessary.
 - When all items have requests, the evidence will be transferred to the custody of the FQAS. Lab labels are printed and affixed above the Offense# line and centered on all items received from outside the lab or within the box marked for the LIMS label. Once all case notes have been entered, the items are transferred to the LP REV and delivered to the latent print unit drawer.
- **Outside Agency Evidence**
 - **Submissions**
 - All outside agency analysis requests and evidence submitted to the FQAS should be received through the FQAS by appointment and delivering the evidence and case paperwork to the FQAS evidence intake.
 - Submissions are received by scanning the bar code on the submitting agency's paperwork.
 - All evidence must be properly sealed and initialed and match the paperwork for what is being submitted.
 - Information regarding the county, case type, agency ID, and submitted by boxes is entered into LIMS.
 - Verify the email address in the distribution section of LIMS.

- Print and attach the LIMS bar code label to all evidence. The receipts generated are given to the person submitting the evidence.
 - Each item of evidence must be marked for identification (i.e. initials) by the submitting person.
 - All electronic file items should be transferred to “Electronic file, hardcopy does not exist”. All evidence will be transferred to the section it is going to and the status changed to “E”, ready for examination.
 - If payment for analysis is required, a completed payment authorization from the submitting agency must accompany the evidence submission.
- **Evidence Returns**
 - Evidence will be picked up from the sections when analysis is complete or returned by section personnel to the FQAS for return to the outside agencies.
 - The evidence is transferred to the FQAS’s custody and then stored until the agency representative can come pick it up. Transfer all items to the outside agency by using the ET OA LIMS custody and make sure to check the box to capture the signature and print a receipt for the receiving agency. The receipt is given to the Outside Agency Representative once the transfer is complete.

6. LABORATORY SAFETY

No Supplemental Requirements

7. PERSONNEL

No Supplemental Requirements

8. COMPUTER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

No Supplemental Requirements