A. **PURPOSE**:

The Evidence Receiving and Case Management Units collaborate as the organizing body for the receipt and distribution of evidence in the Division of Scientific Services (DSS). Evidence Receiving is responsible for the in-take of cases, proper temporary storage of evidence, distribution of all evidence and long term storage of evidence related to sexual assaults. Case Management vets cases and prioritizes the assignments based on customer needs. This procedure outlines in general terms the flow of evidence to the DSS, within the DSS and back to the submitting agency.

Part of the responsibility of the Evidence Receiving Unit is to take in drug evidence. Due to the nature of drug evidence special handling is required. Appendix A addresses the intake of drug evidence.

B. **DEFINITIONS**:

1. ECO (however titled): Evidence Control Officer; ECO is used in this document to mean an employee with the state title of Evidence Control Officer, or anyone assigned to work in the Evidence Receiving Unit or assigned to assist the Unit temporarily.
2. ER: Evidence Receiving
3. ERU: Evidence Receiving Unit
4. CMU: Case Management Unit
5. PIN: Personal Identification Number
6. COC: Chain of Custody
7. RFA: Request for Analysis form
8. CSU: Controlled Substances Unit
9. SAR: Submitting Agency Representative
10. LIMS-plus: is a database management system (DBMS) that collects, creates, and stores data related to forensic examinations in a crime laboratory.

C. **RESPONSIBILITIES**:

1. **Managers**: Responsible to provide direction to subordinate staff under their purview as indicated by the organization chart
2. **Supervisors:** Responsible to provide supervision to subordinate staff under their purview as indicated by the organization chart
3. **FSE2:** responsible as a working lead to subordinate staff as indicated on the organizational chart.
4. **FSE1 and Lab Assistants**: Responsible to adhere to this procedure as it pertains to their Unit.
5. **ECO**: Responsible to adhere to this procedure as it pertains to their Unit.

D. **PROCEDURE:**

1. Evidence brought into the DSS will be designated for one, or multiple Units of the DSS. Please refer to Appendix B for evidence submissions with multiple Units for analysis.

2. The DSS accepts evidence from any State or local police department, Federal law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies, State's Attorney's Offices, and other authorized State agencies e.g. Consumer Protection and Corrections (Refer to General Statute 29-7b). Other agencies may submit evidence with *prior* authorization by the Director of the Division of Scientific Services.

   Evidence previously analyzed by another laboratory, or other forensic expert outside of the DSS will not be accepted without prior approval of the Director (or Deputy Director in the Director's absence).

   Evidence previously analyzed by the DSS that is resubmitted for the same analysis must be approved by the Director or their designee prior to acceptance or reanalysis.

3. Evidence may be personally delivered to the ERU, left in drop boxes, delivered by mail or delivered electronically. Refer to Evidence Receiving Unit SOPs for complete guidance on evidence intake.

   a. Personal delivery to the ERU is generally during DSS core hours. After-hours delivery will be at the approval of the Director or their designee.

   b. Drop boxes are located in the lobbies of Evidence Receiving Unit. Agencies using these boxes place the evidence and paperwork into the available boxes and where applicable provide the key to the ERU staff.

   c. Non-personal receipt of evidence (e.g., by mail) is rare and generally occurs with toxicology cases (e.g., driving under the influence). Certain evidence that is outsourced to contract or other forensic laboratories is usually by mail (e.g., USPS., FedEx, UPS). Whenever evidence is sent via mail it should be in a trackable form to the extent that the traceability will stand-up in a judicial setting. For U.S. Postal Service mail, registered mail is more traceable than certified and should be preferred.

   d. Electronic delivery of evidence can occur and specific Unit SOPs can provide further guidance. Electronic evidence can be submitted for Latent Print Unit cases, Toxicology Unit cases, and within other Units where the evidence is in an digital state. In Units where this is used, the Unit SOPs provide guidance on acceptance.

   e. An evidence receipt is generated for the customer so they can have proof that their evidence was successfully submitted to the DSS laboratory. It is usually signed by both the SAR and the ECO. When the SAR is not present the ECO can sign and share a copy of the receipt at a later time. When a receipt is not available then a copy of a case's chain of custody (or part thereof) can be used in place of an evidence receipt. An evidence receipt is not required when non-trackable evidence is received through a carrier (e.g., regular USPS mail), but one can be printed and sent to the submitting agency, if needed.

   f. An administrative case file is made containing all submitted paperwork along with a copy of the evidence receipt. If the evidence receipt copy is digitized and uploaded into the LIMS-Plus Case Images folder then other hardcopies of the receipt are not necessary within other Unit's case files. Note in an effort to transfer to a paperless system the administrative case file will be

those documents and records attached as part of the case within LIMS. These may include scanned records or those generated electronically and included in the LIMS case. Physical paper records will not be maintained.

4. Evidence brought to the DSS is expected to be properly sealed and labeled with the submitting agency's case and item number, whenever possible. All associated paperwork submitted with the case will also have the submitting agency case number identifier. In general, a 'Request for Analysis' form will be submitted with the evidence.
   a. I-Prelog may be used by submitting agencies to submit evidence without having to use a Request for Analysis form. Please refer to Evidence Receiving Unit SOPs for further details.
5. When evidence is submitted to ERU that is not properly sealed the ECO may require the submitting agency representative (SAR) to properly seal the evidence or the ECO may properly seal the evidence themselves. The ECO will make a notation in the synopsis section of LIMS-plus for that case, that the evidence was sealed at the DSS.

   All employees are expected to handle and store evidence in a manner that maintains the integrity of the evidence, specifically documenting each step of the COC and handling the evidence in a manner which prevents contamination or deleterious change. (See SOP GL-13, General Evidence Handling).
6. For evidence containing drugs: the evidence items containing drugs will be handled by ERU as listed in appendix A. When the evidence is purely drug residue, such as "empty" drug bags, pipes or other paraphernalia it can be transferred directly to the needed Unit for storage/analysis. Cases containing solid dose drugs will be stored in the Controlled Substance Unit prior to and after analysis. When analysis will take multiple days the evidence will be returned to the CSU each night, unless the Director (or designee) gives approval for limited overnight storage in another Unit. If approval is obtained this will be noted in the case record.
   a. When the evidence is ready to be examined, the CSU analyst will transfer evidence to the analyst requesting the item(s).
   b. If suspected drugs (excluding items such as drug paraphernalia and empty bags) are found on evidence during analysis (such as in a pocket of a piece of clothing) the analyst will immediately alert the Unit Lead or Supervisor.
      i. The item(s) will be documented with photographs and/or case notes and sub-itemized in LIMS-plus. The items should be transferred to the Controlled Substance Unit for storage.
      ii. The analyst, Lead, Supervisor or Case Management Unit will contact the submitting agency to determine if they require the items to be tested. This information will be communicated to all needed Units.
   c. Upon completing needed analysis, the Unit performing the case analysis is responsible to inform the CSU that the work is complete and that the evidence can be returned to the Evidence Receiving Unit.

7. The following is a generalized description of the evidence flow throughout the DSS from the time it is accepted into the DSS Evidence Receiving Unit, to analysis and return to the submitting agency. There are exceptions to this which are documented within the Evidence Receiving Unit SOPs and Unit specific SOPs.
   a. Evidence is brought in by a submitting agency (hand delivered, put in a drop box, electronically submitted or through the mail).
   b. Evidence is accepted by an ECO (or designee). The ECO checks for proper case seal and identification; comparing the agency case number on the submitted paperwork (Request for Analysis Form) to the agency case number on the evidence itself.
   c. The evidence is logged into and assigned a DSS case number using LIMS-plus. (Refer to SOP GL-4 LIMS)
      i. The chain of custody for the case items starts at the point of entry into LIMS-plus.
         (a) For evidence personally delivered the COC starts with the SAR.
         (b) When submitted by mail, the COC will start with U.S. Mail (or similar).
         (c) When drop boxes are used the COC will start with 'Evidence Secure Dropbox'.
         (d) When submitted electronically, the COC starts with the date of the email.
   d. The ECO (or designee) places LIMS-plus generated bar code labels with the case number printed on them on the paperwork and evidence as appropriate. The bar code label is the mechanism for evidence transfer within the DSS from this point forward.
   e. An evidence receipt is generated and signed by the SAR and the ECO. When the SAR is not present only the ECO will sign.
   f. An administrative case file (paper or electronic) is made containing all paperwork submitted and the evidence receipt.
   g. The evidence is electronically and physically transferred to the proper storage location within the Evidence Receiving Unit, based on the type of evidence.
   h. Case Management Unit vets cases for most Units to determine the best path of analysis when multiple Units are involved and to flag those that are expedited.
   i. Evidence examiners retrieve the evidence and associated paperwork from the Evidence Receiving Unit area. This is done on a daily basis for some Units and as needed by other Units. All transfers are documented electronically in LIMS-plus. To ensure that the transfer is secure when the transfer is person to person, both the ECO and the analyst will use their unique PIN for the transfer.

      The ERU may utilize general evidence storage areas accessible to specific DSS personnel to allow Units to obtain evidence without the need for ER staff to assist. Those retrieving the evidence will update the COC in LIMS per normal procedure.

j. Once the transfer is complete the analyst transports the evidence to their Unit.

k. Within the Unit the analyst transfers the evidence to the proper storage location. The evidence will remain there until analysis is required. Alternatively the analysts keep possession of the evidence assigned to themselves and they store the evidence in their individual evidence storage locker.

l. A case file will be made for active cases, this will contain copies of the administrative case paperwork. This may be performed by the assigned Unit or the Case Management Unit.

   Note that in an effort to transition to a paperless system (or to minimize paper records) Units may maintain records electronically. Unit procedures will provide guidance on how this achieved.

m. When evidence is assigned to an analyst, it is transferred to their possession when needed for analysis.

n. The analyst will maintain the integrity of the evidence by maintaining proper storage of the items as specific in Unit SOPs and by properly documenting the chain of custody.

   i. When initial work is performed on an item of evidence, the analyst will verify the case information comparing the DSS and agency case number on the RFA to that on the evidence itself.

   ii. If sub-items are created the analyst will follow the guidance of GL-4 on appropriate itemization and maintenance of the chain of custody.

o. The analyst will perform appropriate analysis.

p. When analysis is complete on a case, the case report is reviewed and signed. Signature may be handwritten or electronic.

q. Once the case is complete and the final report is signed, the analyst retrieves the evidence from the storage location (tracking the transfer in LIMS-plus), and physically brings the evidence and case reports (where applicable) to Evidence Receiving Unit. In some cases, if additional testing is required by other disciplines, the evidence is transferred to the next Unit for analysis.

r. The evidence and report is transferred from the analyst to the ECO via LIMS-plus; both will use their PINs during the transfer.

   Some Units reports are transferred electronically via email or fax following the guidance of GL-11 'Control of Records'.

s. The ECO transfers the evidence to a storage location for pick up by the submitting agency or for long term storage.

t. The submitting agency may be contacted that evidence is ready for pick-up.

For OCME (Office of the Chief Medical Examiner) cases that are submitted and related to another agency's case, the OCME evidence will be transferred to the parent agency not to the OCME; unless the OCME requests that the item(s) be returned to them.

u. When the submitting agency comes to pick up a case the ECO transfers the evidence and sub-itemized report from the storage location to themselves and finally to the submitting agency, or evidence drop box.

   i. Evidence for sexual assault cases is generally not returned to the submitting agency.

   ii. Long term storage of evidence related to sexual assaults is maintained by the Evidence Receiving Unit. Individual Units may maintain some sub-itemized portions based on the nature of the samples.

v. An outgoing evidence receipt is generated and signed by both the ECO and SAR.

w. The SAR is given the appropriate copies of the case report and the evidence.

Appendix A: Intake of Evidence Containing Drugs

The following is for evidence submitted specifically for the Controlled Substance Unit and for evidence submitted for other Units that are reported to contain drugs.

For newly received cases: storage container are provided that remain unlocked until evidence is placed in the storage container. The ECO will have another DSS employee or the SAR act as witness to the evidence being placed in the storage container and sealed. The Controlled Substance Unit maintains control of the keys to those storage containers. Once a storage container is locked the ECO and the CSU representative will unlock the storage container as each other's witness.

For cases returned from CSU or to the submitting agency: a two lock storage cabinet is maintained for drug evidence. No ECO will ever have control of both keys. When an analyst returns evidence, 2 ECOs immediately lock the evidence into the 2 lock cabinet. To retrieve evidence from the 2 lock cabinet, 2 ECOs open the locker, remove the needed items and immediately relock the cabinet.

1. The ECO reviews the paperwork and evidence packaging to ensure the agency case number on the evidence matches the agency case number on the evidence submission form, per Unit SOPs.
2. The ECO will enter the case into LIMS-plus, create labels and label the individual evidence bags as normal (see Unit SOPs for guidance).
3. The ECO will place the evidence in a storage container with the submitting agent or another DSS employee as the witness to this act. The key to the storage container is controlled by the Controlled Substance Unit. Multiple cases from a single submitting agency can be placed in a single storage container (based on case size).
4. The paperwork will be completed as per Unit SOP. If present, the submitting agent will sign the evidence receipt and will be asked to initial the evidence receipt that they witnessed the evidence being placed in the storage container and the storage container sealed. When the case has been delivered via a drop box, the ECO will have a 2nd DSS employee witness that the evidence was locked into a storage container.
5. Drug cases should be picked-up from Evidence Receiving Unit daily.
6. When the evidence is to be transferred to the CSU analyst the analyst will bring the storage container keys.
    a. The storage container will be opened (with both the ECO and CSU analyst present), the items will be transferred to the CSU analyst in LIMS-plus per normal procedure.
    b. Evidence submissions may be placed in a convenience container. When convenience containers are used, bar code labels can be placed on the convenience container.

7. For cases that cannot be stored in a storage container, the ECO will call the CSU Supervisor, or Unit Manager to arrange for immediate transfer to the CSU storage location.

    In the rare case that the above cannot be performed the method to ensure patency will be at the discretion of the CS Unit Manager.

8. When evidence is returned from CSU to ERU, the evidence will be transferred and the evidence will be locked into the drug cabinet by the ECO. The evidence will stay locked in the 2 lock drug cabinet until it is to be picked up by the submitting agency, at that time 2 ECOs (or 1 ECO and one Management Designee) will unlock the cabinet, remove the needed items and transfer the evidence.

    At no time will the 2 lock drug cabinet be left with either lock unlocked.

Appendix B: Multiple Unit Analysis Requests

1. When more than one section needs to analyze an item multiple unit analysis stickers should be used as a visual cue for the analyst and the ERU. If possible, stickers or markings should be placed on the outer container or packaging to mark what sections need to analyze the evidence. In addition, if the section does not already have an open request, each respective section will receive a request in LIMS. Note: when convenience containers are used, stickers can be placed on the convenience container. If evidence needs to go back and forth between sections multiple times extra stickers or marking should be used. If space is limited on the container, marking can be made in place of stickers to indicate what sections need to analyze the evidence. The abbreviations used below are being used on the multiple unit stickers to help with identifying the sequence of analysis.

2. For Latent Prints (LP) and Firearms (FA) only: transfers go to LP first for analysis.

3. For Latent Prints (LP) and Forensic Biology (FB) only: transfers go to LP first for analysis. For blood-like stains, the transfer should go first go to FB then LP.

4. For Latent Prints (LP), Forensic Biology (FB) and Firearms (FA): transfers first go to LP, then FB, then FA. For blood-like stains, the transfer should go first go to FB, LP, then FA.

5. For Gunshot Reside cases when Forensic Biology (FB) and Chemistry (CHEM) is requested, it will go to FB and then CHEM.

6. For Accelerant cases when Forensic Biology (FB) and Chemistry (CHEM) is requested, it will go to FB and then CHEM.

7. For Drug cases when Latent Prints (LP), Forensic Biology (FB) and Chemistry (CHEM) is requested, it will first go to LP, FB and then CHEM.

8. For any questions pertaining to the sequence of analysis please reach out to a supervisor.

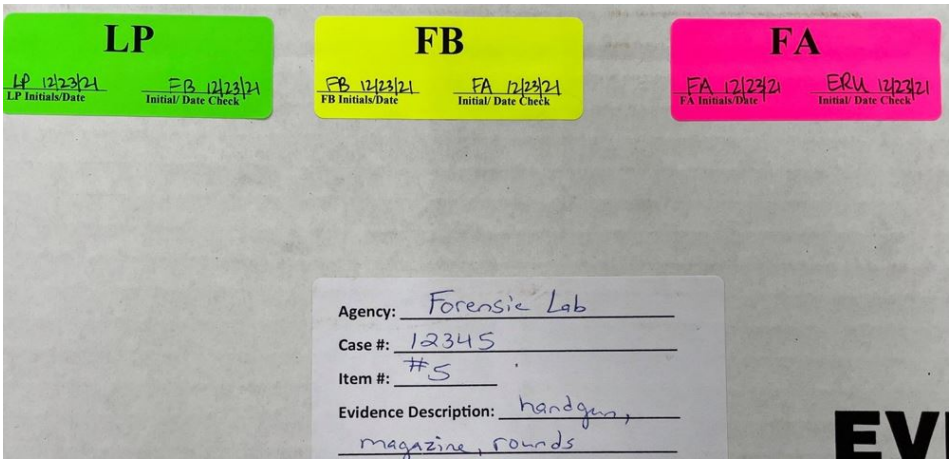
9. When the evidence is transported to the next section for analysis, the Analyst will ensure that the previous section analyst placed their initials and date on the respective section's label prior to conducting analysis. They shall document this by placing their own initials and date on the "Initial and Date Check" line on the previous section's label. Note: This check only signifies that initials appear in the designated location for the section prior as an additional precautionary measure against deleterious effects that may occur as a result of processing evidence in the incorrect sequence. For example, LP should process items for latent print analysis prior to the FB swabbing the item for the potential DNA analysis.

10. The Analyst shall place their own initials and date on their section's label after completing examination.

11. The Evidence Control Officer (ECO) or Analyst shall ensure the applicable labels on the container have been completed prior to returning the evidence to the investigating or submitting agency by placing their initials and date on the "Initial and Date Check" line for the last label in the examination process.

12. If it is determined that analysis is not needed the ECO or Analyst should place a line through the analysis sticker that is not needed with initial and date.

13. Below please find an example of a mock training case marked as an example for a firearm submitted for latent prints, handler DNA and test fire.



- LP will initial and date the Initials/Date line on the LP label after completing their examination.

- FB will verify that LP initialed and dated the LP label prior to examination by placing their initials and date on the Initial/Date Check line on the LP label.

- FB will initial and date the Initials/Date line on the FB label after completing their examination.

- FA will verify that FB initialed and dated the FB label prior to examination by placing their initials and date on the Initial/Date Check line on the FB label.

- FA will initial and date the Initials/Date line on the FA label after completing their examination.

- The ERU or designee will verify that FA initialed and dated the FA label prior to returning the evidence placing their initials and date on the Initial/Date Check line on the FA label.