

A. Purpose:

Proper evidence storage and maintenance of chain of custody is essential to protect the integrity of all evidence in the Division. The following describes the documentation of and procedures for obtaining, storing and returning evidence in the Firearm and Toolmark Unit and the documentation/maintenance of the chain of custody in LIMS.

B. Responsibility: All personnel assigned to the Firearm and Toolmark Unit.**C. Procedure:**

1. Examiners from the unit retrieve evidence from the Evidence Receiving Unit as required. The evidence transfer is recorded in LIMS.
2. All evidence for the Firearm and Toolmark Unit is transferred to the unit as soon as possible after submission to the Lab and upon notification by the Evidence Receiving Unit personnel.
 - a. Firearms evidence not coming directly to the unit will be checked for safety to determine if it is in an unloaded condition and marked as such by the FSE in the Evidence Receiving Unit. Evidence coming directly to the unit does not have to be handled in this fashion.
 - b. Aseptic technique will be used (including the use of lab coat, gloves and mask) when performing the safety check.
3. When transferred to the unit the examiner will update the chain of custody in LIMS and place the evidence in the appropriate storage location within the unit; in general this will be "Firearms Evidence Storage 1"
 - a. At all stages in the Firearms Unit the chain of custody will be maintained to document the location of the evidence. Evidence transfers need to be documented as the time they occur, person to person transfers require the use of PINs for both parties, person to storage location requires the examiners PIN.
4. Case work in-progress is secured in an evidence locker assigned to the examiner or the secured work area of the unit (Firearms Evidence Storage 1); the chain of custody will be appropriately annotated.
 - a. When evidence is transferred to another examiner for the purpose of technical review the chain of custody will be updated in LIMS to show the reviewer had custody of the evidence while the performing the verification.
5. After completion of all examinations, all submissions are stored in a secure location until they are returned to the Evidence Receiving Unit.

Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro

6. After the case report is completed, reviewed and co-signed, the evidence can be returned to the Evidence Receiving Unit. Chain of custody is updated and the evidence is stored in Evidence Receiving Unit until it is picked up by the submitting agency.

D. References:

1. GL-13 General Evidence Handling

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