

# DNA Evidence Management

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# DNA Evidence Management

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This document describes the operational guidance and procedures for evidence management in the DNA Casework Unit (DCU) and the Scientific and Biometrics Analysis Unit DNA Group (SBAU) and supplement the FBI Laboratory level 1 documents pertaining to receipt, check-in, inventory, transfer, return, and storage of physical evidence. The Case Administration Group (CAG) functions as the evidence hub within DCU.

## 2 SCOPE

This document applies to DNA personnel performing evidence management tasks, including receiving, transferring, and returning evidence for DCU and SBAU.

## 3 PROCEDURES

It is noted that the procedures listed below will typically occur in the order described; however, to maximize the workflow, they can occur in a different order, as necessary.

### 3.1 General Operations

- A. Evidence transfers to/from entities outside of DCU are generally performed by CAG personnel, with the exception of transfers that occur outside of normal Laboratory Division (LD) business hours. In these situations, other appropriately trained personnel may temporarily support CAG functions. DNA discipline evidence transfers in SBAU are generally performed by SBAU DNA personnel.
- B. Personnel will record all evidence transfers, including secondary evidence transfers, in the FBI Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) Forensic Advantage (FA) and/or in the unit's STACS™ Casework (STACS) software, on a paper Chain-of-Custody (COC) Log (7-243/7-243a), or in the Chain-of-Custody Log in the Explosives Reference Tool (EXPeRT), as appropriate, prior to performing work on the evidence.
- C. A virtual transfer is a recording of a transfer within FA, STACS, or EXPeRT where the physical custody of the item does not change. Virtual transfers are typically used when switching between the LIMS systems, for administrative reasons (e.g., Chain-of-Custody corrections in STACS), or due to limitations of the software.
  1. For virtual transfers recorded to switch between LIMS (i.e., FA to STACS or STACS to FA), a reason will not be recorded on the COC as an exception to the level 1 requirement.
- D. Transfers of drug and valuable evidence will be performed according to the appropriate level 1 documents. Appropriate locations for the storage of drug and valuable evidence may be physically located outside of DCU or SBAU controlled space; however, virtual storage locations for these areas will be available within STACS.

- E. For Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) investigations or prohibited cases that are conducted outside of FA, the case and sample information entered into STACS will be limited to generic descriptions.

### 3.2 Evidence Receipt

- A. The listing of incoming evidence placed in the Evidence Storage Room (ESR) can be viewed in the DNA (Primary) Evidence module (or equivalent) of FA. For evidence submitted in Legacy cases, CAG and SBAU personnel will be notified, typically by email, by the Evidence Management Unit (EMU) or the delivering LD unit or discipline.
- B. Evidence may be physically transferred in bulk from the DCU ESR or by a hand to hand transfer(s) from EMU or other LD unit personnel to a laboratory space for receiving into DCU by any CAG member, as long as the evidence transfers are appropriately recorded. The CAG laboratory space (e.g., Rm 3390) may be used as a temporary storage location for all non-drug and valuable related evidence during evidence receipt into DCU. Evidence may be physically transferred in bulk from the SBAU ESR to a laboratory space for receiving into SBAU by any SBAU DNA personnel.  
**Note:** All drug and valuable evidence will be transferred hand to hand, as per level 1 requirements.

#### 3.2.1 Evidence Receipt in a Multiple Unit Submission (MUS)

For legacy cases not in FA use the appropriate Chain-of Custody Log(s) in lieu of FA.

- A. Retrieve the evidence and record the transfer to personal custody in FA.
- B. Record a virtual evidence transfer in FA by selecting the “Placed in Storage” (or equivalent) transfer type and the “DCU (see DCU STACS COC)” or “See SBAU DNA STACS COC” (or equivalent) storage location.
- C. The information pertaining to the evidence received and packaging expectations in the FA batch details is captured in a record referred to as the FA list. This record is typically uploaded to the Case Record Object Repository and/or the paperwork tab in STACS.
- D. Proceed to Receipt and Inventory in STACS.

#### 3.2.2 Evidence Receipt in a Single Unit Submission (SUS)

- A. Retrieve the evidence and record the transfer to personal custody in FA.
- B. Review the request for examinations (e.g., Electronic Communication [EC], Laboratory Examination Request [LER], incoming communication) and any additional records to determine relevant information regarding the submitted evidence.

- C. Perform evidence breakdown according to the appropriate level 1 document (i.e., LAB-200). This includes generating check-in notes, capturing the batch details (i.e., generating the FA list), and assigning newly inventoried items to the DNA Case Record in FA.
- D. Scan and/or upload applicable records (e.g., Check-in notes, missing person consent forms, FA list) to the Case Record Object Repository, Case Object Repository and/or to STACS, as appropriate.
- E. Record a virtual evidence transfer in FA by selecting the “Placed in Storage” (or equivalent) transfer type and the “DCU (see DCU STACS COC)” or “See SBAU DNA STACS COC” (or equivalent) storage location.

### 3.2.3 Receipt and Inventory in STACS

- A. Use the Receipt and Inventory module to add an evidence container. Scan a STACS container barcode (e.g., AXXXXXE) and apply to the evidence container.
- B. Fill out the appropriate information fields pertaining to the evidence container (i.e., Container Description, External Unit of origin).
- C. Based on the information from the batch details in FA (i.e., the FA list) and/or the container markings, select the appropriate items of evidence in STACS and add to the newly created STACS container (i.e., drag and drop).
- D. Highlight the container, then complete the container inventory to confirm.
- E. Repeat, as needed, for additional evidence containers.

### 3.2.4 Completion of Evidence Receipt

- A. As necessary (i.e., receipt of SUS evidence), notify the contributor that the evidence was received within DCU or SBAU and record the contact in the Case Communication Log within FA or STACS. [Refer to LAB-200 for acknowledgement content.] Ensure emails are retained (i.e., attached to the Case Communication Log, retained in a physical 1A, or uploaded to Sentinel).
- B. Compile appropriate case records. Records are generally maintained digitally. FA records (e.g., Case Record Report, Exam Plan) as well as records from the Object Repository (e.g., EC/LER/incoming communication, Sexual Assault Kit (SAK) paperwork, missing persons consent forms, TEDAC submission forms) may be printed for temporary reference or if a paper case file will be generated. For a legacy case, the equivalent paperwork may be received or compiled.

- C. Use the appropriate transfer module in STACS and transfer the evidence to a person or a storage location.

### **3.3 Evidence Return**

- A. When ensuring all items are accounted for, FA must be referenced for packaging information when the contents are paper based evidence items (e.g., envelopes, letters), with the exception of legacy cases. Packaging expectations for other types of evidence may be obtained from either FA or STACS.
- B. When returning secondary evidence, create a new FA item as needed, and generate a secondary evidence list report in STACS. This secondary evidence log will be uploaded to the Case Object Repository in FA. For legacy cases, the secondary evidence log will be retained with the case records.
- C. If secondary evidence from both a MUS and a SUS for a case will be returned at the same time and to the same location, all secondary evidence may be returned with the MUS.

#### **3.3.1 Evidence Return in a Multiple Unit Submission (MUS)**

For legacy cases use the appropriate Chain-of-Custody Log in lieu of FA.

- A. Retrieve the evidence and record the transfer to personal custody in STACS.
- B. For evidence containers opened in DCU or SBAU, ensure all items are accounted for and sealed appropriately.
- C. In the “Transfer to/from External Unit” module in STACS, record a virtual transfer of the evidence, including any necessary comments (e.g., FA item number for secondary), by selecting “Transfer to/from FA” (or equivalent) as the external unit or another location, as appropriate.
- D. In FA, record and physically transfer the evidence to the appropriate storage location or person.

#### **3.3.2 Evidence Return and Shipping of a Single Unit Submission (SUS)**

For a TEDAC SUS refer to section [3.3.1](#).

- A. Retrieve the evidence and record the transfer to personal custody in STACS.
- B. Ensure all items are accounted for and sealed appropriately.
- C. In the “Transfer to/from External Unit” module in STACS, record a virtual transfer of the evidence, including any necessary comments (e.g., FA item number for

secondary), by selecting “Transfer to/from FA” (or equivalent) as the external unit or another location, as appropriate.

- D. Record a virtual evidence transfer in FA from the “DCU (see DCU STACS COC)” or “SBAU DNA (see SBAU DNA STACS COC)” (or equivalent) storage location to the appropriate person.
- E. Package the evidence for return according to the appropriate level 1 documents.
  - 1. Ensure the FA label is affixed to the shipping container and the appropriate items within the shipping container are reflected in FA.
  - 2. Ensure the shipping address is correct and generate a Shipping Invoice (7-264/7-264 LIMS) in accordance with the appropriate LOM practice.
  - 3. Ensure the Shipping Invoice and secondary evidence log (if applicable) are in the shipping container and a copy of the first page of the Shipping Invoice is attached to the outside of the container.
  - 4. Ensure the shipping container is labeled with the appropriate evidence type descriptor (e.g., general [G], drug [D], valuable [V], firearm [F]). As appropriate, ensure the refrigeration label is affixed to shipping container.
- F. Physically transfer the sealed shipping container to the mail room and record a hand-to-hand transfer in FA. Sealed shipping containers may be appropriately stored prior to transfer to the mail room.

### 3.3.3 Evidence Return Records

The following records are typically generated and/or retained during evidence return:

- Secondary Evidence List Report is uploaded to the Case Object Repository in FA.
- Shipping Invoice (for non-TEDAC SUS cases) is uploaded to Case Object Repository and may be uploaded to the Case Record Object Repository.
- STACS Chain-of-Custody may be generated during evidence return and uploaded to the Case Record Object Repository and/or will be uploaded to Case Object Repository when the case is closed in STACS

## 4 LIMITATIONS

The items transferred will be verified to the extent possible without unnecessarily opening packaging layers. Refer to the DNA Quality Assurance Manual (i.e., BIO-101) for additional requirements pertaining to evidence management.

## 5 SAFETY

All evidence samples are considered potentially infectious regardless of the perceived status of the source individual or the age of the material. All personnel who work with such material will refer to the [FBI Laboratory Safety Manual](#) for information on personal safety and proper disposal of the chemicals and biohazardous wastes.

## 6 REVISION HISTORY

Revision	Issue Date	Changes
00	02/04/2022	Reformatted DNA 501-8 into new template and assigned new Doc ID. Minor updates to content. Added exception for virtual transfer reasons.