

# Evidence Management Unit Quality Assurance Manual

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# Evidence Management Unit Quality Assurance Manual

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Evidence Management Unit (EMU) is part of the FBI Laboratory and has staff in Huntsville and Quantico who fall under the Quality System. EMU personnel are responsible for the receipt, catalogue, and documentation of evidence submitted to the FBI Laboratory. The EMU is also responsible for the photography of evidence items as needed and appropriate. Upon the receipt of evidence, EMU personnel will enter case submission information into the FBI's Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) and perform the appropriate in-processing procedures for each case. EMU personnel will ensure hazardous items are handled appropriately and, for submissions managed by the EMU, create an appropriate Examination Plan. EMU personnel will also perform the transfers necessary to move evidence throughout the FBI Laboratory. Evidence received, in-processed, and transferred by the EMU will be handled and maintained to best preserve evidence for forensic examinations and technical exploitation.

The EMU maintains the Repository for evidence submitted to the Terrorist Explosive Device Analytical Center (TEDAC) and, upon request, may provide improvised explosive device (IED)-related evidence to TEDAC partners for training and knowledge sharing purposes as described in EVDC-350.

## 2 SCOPE

The EMU Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) applies to all EMU personnel, both FBI employees and contractors, within the FBI Laboratory who are responsible for receiving, checking in/inventorying, photographing and/or handling evidence and maintaining the quality system. It contains information related to quality assurance (QA), unit organizational structure, roles and responsibilities, personnel qualifications, training and performance monitoring, administrative reviews, facility security, nonconformities, safety, equipment maintenance, and administrative records retention.

## 3 QUALITY ASSURANCE

In addition to the FBI Laboratory's QAM (LAB-100) and the FBI Laboratory's Operations Manual (LAB-200), EMU personnel will follow all EMU procedures and requirements. Dissemination of information related to Laboratory and EMU QA is accomplished through staff meetings and/or written and electronic mail communications. The EMU quality system documents are reviewed annually by the Unit Chief or the EMU QA Representative(s).

## 4 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Positions and personnel within the EMU are comprised of government employees and, as needed, contract staff. The organization of the EMU is detailed in the unit organizational chart, which is posted on the appropriate FBINET and UNET SharePoint sites. The unit organizational chart will be updated to reflect changes in personnel and supervision responsibilities. Job descriptions are maintained by the FBI Laboratory Administrative Unit.

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## 5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 5.1 Supervisory Physical Scientist Unit Chief (UC)

The duties and responsibilities of the UC position include but are not limited to:

- Managing the overall operations of the unit.
- Developing short- and long-term goals and objectives for the unit.
- Directing and coordinating all aspects of work related to evidence handling/processing.
- Providing administrative and evidence handling/processing supervision to employees.
- Developing major aspects of key forensic science program development.
- Planning for future staff, resources, and budget for the unit.
- Ensuring, through direct report supervisors/managers, staff performance appraisals are completed.
- Managing all contracts and contract staff in the unit.
- Communicating and collaborating with other FBI Laboratory UCs and with personnel from outside organizations.
- Ensuring FBI Laboratory management is informed of any pertinent evidence-related issues.
- Ensuring all unit procedures and requirements comply with FBI Laboratory QA standards and are followed by unit personnel.
- Ensuring unit personnel are informed of changes to policies, practices, and procedures that affect the unit.
- Evaluating nonconformities in accordance with LAB-100 Section 5.
- Reporting major nonconformities to the Quality Manager at the time they are identified.
- Approving major deviations prior to submission to the Quality Manager in accordance with LAB-100 Section 4.
- Providing 24-hour availability to address national and international crises.

### 5.2 Supervisory Physical Scientist/Evidence Analyst (SPS/EA)

The duties and responsibilities of the SPS/EA position include but are not limited to:

- Managing the schedule and workload of all EMU evidence staff to ensure efficient and timely completion of work.
- Planning, coordinating, and directing evidence handling/processing to include the overall management of evidence submissions and testimony as required.
- Determining the type and sequence of examinations to be performed on evidence, to include the units that are to be involved.
- Providing authoritative consultation to the customer(s) and ensuring appropriate responses are sent.
- Profiling cases/link analysis.
- Coordinating major cases.

- Providing administrative and evidence handling/processing supervision to employees.
- Mentoring personnel regarding evidence in-processing procedures, as well as providing guidance to other entities.
- Developing procedures regarding the management of submitted evidence.
- Developing guidelines for accepting or rejecting evidence, which may include expanding or reducing the scope of the requests.
- Providing input into the development and/or update of a LIMS, which may include setting procedures and technical specifications relating to evidence and suggesting functions that should be included in the system(s).
- Developing and/or maintaining systems of internal accounting and control to monitor efficiency.
- Generating metric reports from the LIMS and ensuring their accuracy.
- Reporting potential nonconformities to the UC at the time they are identified.
- Assisting the UC as needed.
- Performing the duties of the Physical Scientist/Evidence Analyst as needed.

### 5.3 Physical Scientist/Evidence Analyst (PS/EA)

The PS/EA position may be referred to as evidence management personnel. A PS/EA's duties and responsibilities may include the following based on employee level:

- Managing a large number of incoming cases, which may include major cases.
- Managing all administrative aspects of a case from receipt to close out.
  - Note: More independence in this process is expected with higher grade levels.
- Reviewing and evaluating incoming submissions to determine the nature and extent of examinations requested.
- Ensuring the priority/category assigned to a case is accurate and, if needed, making the appropriate changes to its status.
- Ensuring the appropriate personnel are contacted if hazardous evidence is received and ensuring any associated actions performed for safety are documented appropriately.
- Ensuring the inventory of submitted evidence is conducted and recorded appropriately and evidence is itemized accurately.
- Having substantial knowledge and understanding of all types of forensic examinations conducted by the FBI Laboratory.
- Providing advice to customers on FBI Laboratory capabilities and the collection, preservation, and submission of evidence.
- Determining the Examination Plan based on the evidence received, the request, and the capabilities of the FBI Laboratory.
- Assigning appropriate units/disciplines to conduct necessary examinations.
- Ensuring the sequence of examinations will preserve the integrity of the evidence.

- Contacting the customer to verify receipt of the evidence, discussing the case, resolving issues or discrepancies, and finalizing the Examination Plan when applicable.
- Recommending additional examinations, as applicable, to include other FBI Divisions or other government agencies (OGAs).
- Serving as the centralized point of contact between the customer and the FBI Laboratory by handling the majority of the inquiries from the customer, providing updates regarding the status of a submission, and, when appropriate, initiating contact between the customer and the Forensic Examiner(s).
- Monitoring data pertaining to Chain-of-Custody issues, evidence type, examination type, and efficiency of case turnaround times as needed.
- Tracking all assigned cases throughout the examination process and updating cases to maintain accurate information.
- Overseeing the transfer of evidence to units/disciplines for examination.
- Mentoring personnel regarding evidence in-processing procedures, as well as providing guidance to other entities.
- Assisting in the development of procedures regarding the management of evidence.
- Maintaining and updating relevant databases.
- Liaising with external customers and/or OGAs to stay abreast of new innovations, which may assist in the examination of evidence.
- Reporting potential nonconformities to the Supervisor(s) and/or UC at the time they are identified.

#### **5.4 Supervisory Photographer**

The duties and responsibilities of the Supervisory Photographer position include but are not limited to:

- Managing the schedule and workload of all EMU photography staff to ensure efficient and timely completion of work.
- Collecting monthly photography metrics/statistics for assessing work efficiency and quality.
- Managing a caseload of multiple and varied assignments, independently evaluating and prioritizing casework to meet changing deadlines, and producing results that meet or exceed standards for quality, quantity, and timeliness.
- Using the necessary photographic workstations, software programs, and software digital image capturing systems to perform photographic operations for TEDAC.
- Routinely operating and maintaining a full range of standard and specialized photographic equipment.
- Ensuring photographic equipment is maintained and supplies are ordered and stocked to ensure the continuity of operations.
- Serving as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the development and application of photographic technologies in the field of friction ridge print photography.
- Evaluating evidence independently and applying complex forensic lighting theory and photographic techniques to enhance friction ridge impressions.

- Performing reproduction and enhancement of fingerprint cards and transparent lifts using accepted digital imaging procedures.
- Providing thorough and accurate records of evidence movement through the proper Chain-of-Custody.
- Providing adequate, detailed, and complete records of the methods and procedures used in digital imaging enhancement.
- Reporting potential nonconformities to the UC at the time they are identified.
- Assisting the UC as needed.
- Performing the duties of the Photographer as needed.

## 5.5 Photographer

The duties and responsibilities of the Photographer position include but are not limited to:

- Managing a caseload of multiple and varied assignments, independently evaluating and prioritizing casework to meet changing deadlines, and producing results that meet or exceed standards for quality, quantity, and timeliness.
- Using the necessary photographic workstations, software programs, and software digital image capturing systems to perform photographic operations for TEDAC.
- Routinely operating and maintaining a full range of standard and specialized photographic equipment.
- Ensuring photographic equipment is maintained and supplies are ordered and stocked to ensure the continuity of operations.
- Serving as a SME in the development and application of photographic technologies in the field of friction ridge print photography.
- Producing and preserving images on a variety of subjects in both the laboratory and field operation setting.
- Evaluating evidence independently and applying complex forensic lighting theory and photographic techniques to enhance friction ridge impressions.
- Performing reproduction and enhancement of fingerprint cards and transparent lifts using accepted digital imaging procedures.
- Providing thorough and accurate records of evidence movement through the proper Chain-of-Custody.
- Providing adequate, detailed, and complete records of the methods and procedures used in digital imaging enhancement.
- Reporting potential nonconformities to the Supervisor(s) and/or UC at the time they are identified.

## 5.6 Evidence Specialist (ES)

The duties and responsibilities of the ES position include but are not limited to:

- Handling physical evidence and generating records in a highly accountable way.
- Tracking evidence using the appropriate LIMS and ensuring accuracy of all material submitted for investigative, intelligence, and court purposes.

- Providing guidance to Forensic Examiners, other FBI personnel, and customers regarding the proper securing, storage, packaging, transportation, and shipping of evidence.
- Demonstrating knowledge of the FBI policies regarding evidence packaging, maintenance, and storage, and providing these policies to other agencies as needed.
- Assisting with the shipping/receiving of hazardous materials as needed.
- Receiving evidence and verifying evidence as needed.
- Performing case review to determine proper disposition and/or destruction of evidence.
- Performing Sentinel functions related to evidence (e.g., Lead coverage, Electronic Communication (EC) review).
- Performing duties in support of the operations and functions of the unit as deemed necessary by the UC and supervisory personnel.
- Reporting potential nonconformities to the Supervisor(s) and/or UC at the time they are identified.

## 6 PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

### 6.1 Qualifications

- A. Personnel in the SPS/EA and PS/EA positions must meet the requirements, including education, specified in the individual occupational requirements of the Office of Personnel Management General Schedule Qualification Standards for their position.

### 6.2 Training

- A. EMU personnel will administer and maintain the *Training Manual for EMU* (EVDC-951) for the SPS/EA, PS/EA and ES positions. This training manual details the EMU Training Program and identifies the requirements necessary for achieving qualification and authorization to perform the duties associated with these positions.
  1. EMU personnel will ensure the appropriate unit personnel attend the required hazardous materials shipping training.
- B. EMU personnel will administer a Photography Training Program and maintain the associated training curriculum for the Supervisory Photographer and Photographer positions. The Photography Training Program identifies the requirements necessary for achieving qualification and authorization to perform the duties associated with these positions.
- C. A qualification and authorization EC will be prepared in accordance with the LAB-100 Section 6.4 for all SPS/EA, PS/EA, ES, Supervisory Photographer, and Photographer personnel who successfully complete the required training program.

- D. For refresher training, the applicable training manual will be completed in its entirety or in specified sections as determined by the UC and Training Coordinator(s).
- E. All personnel assigned to the EMU are required to complete a minimum of eight (8) hours of continuing education (CE) each fiscal year.
1. CE should focus on maintaining or enhancing the skills and expertise of the employee and should be consistent with their performance plan. Employees are encouraged to seek out relevant CE opportunities; however, all elective CE must be approved by the employee's Supervisor and/or the UC.
  2. EMU personnel may satisfy the CE requirement through a variety of traditional and non-traditional learning opportunities, which can include:
    - Internal unit/section/division trainings or instruction
    - Training conferences
    - Professional development classes/workshops
    - Computer-based learning
    - Academic courses
  3. EMU personnel may evaluate any elective CE event by either providing written assessment to their Supervisor or verbal assessment at a unit meeting.
  4. Each EMU employee will ensure all CE training records are entered into Virtual Academy, the FBI's official record keeping system for training records.

### **6.3 Performance Monitoring**

- A. Personnel who handle evidence while performing tasks other than those listed in LAB-100 Section 6.4.A (e.g., evidence management personnel, forensic photographers) will be monitored through annual performance feedback from their management.
- B. In addition to annual performance feedback, all evidence handlers will be monitored via observation (e.g., observation audit) once per accreditation cycle (i.e., once every four years).
- C. The EMU Performance Monitoring Plan lays out the expected performance monitoring schedule and tracks its completion.

**7 ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS**

- A. Any *Laboratory Report* (7-1 LIMS, 7-1) prepared by EMU personnel will undergo an administrative review before being issued. *Laboratory Reports* prepared by EMU personnel do not require technical reviews.
- B. The EMU Chief and EMU Supervisors can conduct administrative reviews on *Laboratory Reports*.
- C. EMU personnel will not conduct an administrative review on their own *Laboratory Report*.

**8 FACILITY SECURITY**

- A. Laboratory space is separated from office space. No food, drink, gum, or tobacco products are allowed in laboratory space without prior written approval from the Health and Safety Group.
- B. The FBI Laboratory buildings and all other associated buildings are secure. These buildings require Security Access Control System (SACS) badge access. Evidence storage areas have additional security controls in that they require SACS badge access and alarm activation/deactivation. Evidence storage areas may also require Hirsch Pad PIN entry and/or X-09 (or equivalent) combination locks. During normal working hours, the alarm activation and/or X-09 (or equivalent) lock may remain inactive. At the end of the day, all necessary security measures will be followed.
- C. If loss of power or electricity were to occur, backup generators would restore power to the SACS badge readers. However, if backup power fails, the FBI Laboratory Security Group maintains control of all physical keys to rooms in the Laboratory building and other associated buildings.
- D. The Intake Center and the high bay area of the TEDAC Repository are designated as closed secret storage. In these areas, hard drives must be removed from classified computer systems at the end of each workday and stored in a safe or secure area designated as open secret storage.

**9 NONCONFORMITIES**

- A. When a potential nonconformity is identified, EMU personnel will assess, categorize, and address the situation in accordance with LAB-100 Section 5.
- B. EMU personnel will notify the Supervisor(s) and/or UC of all situations and conditions in which a nonconformity has occurred.

## 10 SAFETY

- A. Health and safety policies and procedures for the FBI Laboratory are established by the FBI Laboratory Health and Safety Group. The EMU has designated Health and Safety Representative(s).
- B. All EMU operations will be performed in a safe manner and in accordance with the standards established by applicable regulatory practices. EMU personnel will follow the health and safety practices and procedures outlined in the FBI Laboratory Safety Manual.

## 11 EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

- A. None of the equipment utilized by the EMU is used to perform examinations or analysis; therefore, EMU equipment does not affect laboratory activities.
- B. Balances and safety hoods are calibrated annually as a best practice.
- C. X-ray equipment is not calibrated unless the software indicates the system requires calibration. Personnel who utilize the x-ray equipment undergo training to be able to interpret x-rays.
- D. Digital imaging equipment is serviced in accordance with maintenance agreements and/or as needed. If maintenance is needed on the Silver Halide Printer, EMU Photographers will follow EVDC-310.
- E. Any equipment found to not be functioning properly will be removed from service and a notification will be placed on the equipment. A record of maintenance will be retained upon completion of servicing.

## 12 RECORDS AND RETENTION

A list of EMU records that will be retained in the case file include:

- Incoming communications from the customer regarding the submission (e.g., EC, Laboratory Examination Request (FD-1121, letter, spreadsheet, storyboard, TEDAC Item Submission Form (7-275), or TEDAC Bulk Submission Form (7-276))
- Check-In Notes or EMU Photo Check-In Form (EVDC-001)
- FBI Laboratory Examination Plan (7-262) and/or TEDAC Examination Plan (7-274) as appropriate
- Records of damage to shipping containers
- Pertinent emails to the customer/stakeholder, such as an acknowledgment email
- Activity and Communication Log (7-245), Case Communication Log, or appropriate communication log
- Chain-of-Custody Log (7-243 or 7-243a), or LIMS equivalent
- Case Report/Case Record Report

- Laboratory Report (7-1 LIMS, 7-1) for cancelled examination requests or a no examination communication to the customer if applicable
- Checklist for Creation of EMU 1A Packets – Legacy Cases (EVDC-000) as appropriate
- TEDAC EMU Checklist for Permanent Transfer/Destruction of IED-Related Material(s) (EVDC-003) or TEDAC EMU Checklist for Temporary Lending of IED-Related Material(s) (EVDC-004)

### 13 REVISION HISTORY

Revision	Issue Date	Changes
04	02/07/2022	Added Section 5.8 to account for ES Position. Added Section 6.3 to account for Performance Monitoring. Updated Section 11 to remove reference to appendix since forms are now standalone and to include EVDC-003 and EVDC-004. Updated formatting to standardized template.
05	04/03/2023	Section 1 - Removed reference to maintaining TEDAC file room and coordinating supply shipments to TEDAC customers. Section 3 – Updated who will conduct reviews. Section 5.2, 5.3 - Updated formatting of SPS/EA and PS/EA here and throughout document. Removed the following positions: Explosive Safety Specialist, Evidence Control Technician, Logistics Management Specialist, Case File Assistant, and Management and Program Analyst. Removed any reference to these positions throughout document. Section 6.2.D – Updated formatting. Section 6.2.E.1 – Updated who will provide approval. Section 6.3 – Updated to reflect LAB-100. Added reference to EMU Performance Monitoring Plan. Section 7 – Added section on Administrative Reviews. Section 11.C – Updated x-ray calibration requirement. Section 11.D – Added reference to Silver Halide Printer. Minor grammar and formatting updates throughout document.