

Evidence Handling Procedures

1 Scope

1.1 This document describes requirements for the handling of physical evidence submitted to the Trace Evidence Unit (TEU) and Scientific and Biometrics Analysis Unit - Trace (SBAU-Trace). It applies to individuals who perform examinations in the disciplines of Hairs and Fibers, Geology, and Anthropology.

2 Receipt of Evidence

Evidence received in the TEU and SBAU-Trace is typically delivered by appropriately trained personnel to a general storage area. If evidence is received from a carrier (e.g., FedEx), or personally delivered by law enforcement agencies, it must be taken to appropriately trained personnel for initial check in. The TEU or SBAU-Trace personnel retrieving the evidence from general storage will initiate the *Chain-of-Custody Log (7-243a)* for Legacy cases or transfer the case to themselves in Forensic Advantage (FA).

Cases will be reviewed to ensure that the following paperwork is included/available:

2.1 *Chain-of-Custody Log* for Legacy cases only: The evidence will be delivered to general storage by appropriately trained personnel. The personnel retrieving the evidence from general storage will initiate the 7-243a to document the intra-unit transfer(s) of the evidence. This form is retained for inclusion in the *Supporting Document Envelope* or 1A (7-251).

2.2 Request for Examination: If additional information is required prior to processing, the contributor may be contacted. This contact will be recorded on the *Case Activity and Communication Log (7-245)* or the Case Communication Log in FA, as appropriate.

2.3 *Laboratory Work Sheet (7-2)* or *TEDAC Work Sheet* for Legacy cases only: This form will contain a listing of the specimens received and their assigned sample numbers (if present), and is retained for inclusion in the *Supporting Document Envelope* or 1A (7-251).

3 Evidence Inventory in TEU and SBAU-Trace

3.1 After a case is assigned and the evidence has been delivered to the unit, the evidence container(s) and/or packaging will be opened and the contents inventoried. If any of the evidence container(s) and/or packaging is damaged or in an unsealed condition, it will be recorded in the case notes. The decision to proceed with evidence processing will be dependent on the circumstances of the case and the nature of the packaging and will be determined by an Examiner. If examinations will not be conducted by the unit, the assigned Examiner will issue a

Laboratory Report and include a detailed explanation describing why the requested examination was not conducted per the LOM – Preparing Laboratory Reports and Retaining Records in FA.

3.2 The person receiving the case will check the items received against the itemized listing on the Chain-of-Custody (Legacy or FA) and EXPeRT barcode (if present) on the external container. If anything is missing or if items are present which are not listed as being delivered, it will be brought to the attention of an Examiner and the appropriate Evidence Management personnel. The description of the items received should be consistent with any information received in the Request for Examination. If any discrepancies are found, the appropriate Evidence Management personnel will be notified.

3.3 Notes will be taken regarding the type and nature of the primary packaging of the submitted item(s). If the primary packaging is not sealed but examinations will still be conducted, the lack of seal will be noted, and the packaging sealed upon completion of the TEU or SBAU-Trace examination.

3.4 Multiple examination requests on submitted items of evidence require that testing be conducted in proper sequence to optimize results and to minimize loss, cross-transfer, contamination, and degradation. If TEU or SBAU-Trace receives evidence that should be examined by another discipline prior to a trace evidence examination(s), or after examinations by another discipline that prevent a trace evidence examination(s) from being conducted, the appropriate Evidence Management personnel will be notified.

4 Secondary Evidence

Material derived from an item of evidence is designated as secondary evidence. In TEU and SBAU-Trace, examples of secondary evidence include (but are not limited to) the following: glass microscope slides, plastic pillboxes, paperfolds, and vacuum canisters. All secondary evidence for Legacy cases will be accounted for on the appropriate unit Secondary Evidence Inventory (SEI) (Appendices A and B). All secondary evidence for FA cases will be accounted for on the appropriate unit SEI (Appendices C and D) or the FA generated Secondary Evidence Log (SEL).

4.1 Transfers of Secondary Evidence in FA

For FA cases, a new item number(s) will be assigned after secondary evidence has been generated and prior to any transfer of the secondary evidence. The secondary evidence item description will include the name of the discipline and the number and type of secondary evidence. Once secondary evidence is assigned an item number(s), it will be transferred in accordance with the LOM - *Practices for Transferring and Storing Evidence*.

4.1.1 The slides generated will be assigned a separate item number from the other secondary evidence.

4.1.2 For TEU, the remaining secondary evidence will be assigned a separate item number(s). For SBAU-Trace, paperfolds will be assigned a second item number, and any remaining secondary evidence a third item number.

4.1.3 For TEU, the SEI or FA generated SEL will be placed into the FA Case Object Repository. For SBAU-Trace, the SEI or FA generated SEL will be placed in the FA Case Record Object Repository.

4.1.4 If any additional secondary evidence is generated after a SEI or a SEL has been created and the secondary evidence assigned item numbers, the SEI or SEL will be updated to reflect the updated totals if a new secondary evidence item(s) is not created.

4.1.5 If any portion of the secondary evidence assigned to an item number needs to be transferred, a new SEI will be generated and that specific portion of the secondary evidence will be assigned a new item number(s), and the original SEI or SEL amended.

4.2 Transfer of Secondary Evidence for Legacy Cases within TEU or SBAU-Trace

When secondary evidence is transferred within the TEU or SBAU-Trace on the *Chain-of-Custody Log*, the following transfers are allowed:

4.2.1 When secondary evidence is transferred in total, the “Item(s)” block on the *Chain-of-Custody Log* will read “TEU Secondary Evidence”, “Trace Secondary Evidence”, or acceptable abbreviation for Secondary Evidence as listed in the Trace Evidence Abbreviations document of the Trace Evidence Quality Manual.

4.2.2 Transfer of Glass Microscope Slides

4.2.2.1 If the glass microscope slides are transferred in total, the “Item(s)” block on the *Chain-of-Custody Log* will read “all slides” or specifically list what was transferred by Questioned (Q)/Known (K) Number(s) and quantity.

4.2.2.2 If a portion of the slides are being transferred, then the specific specimen number and the number of slides associated with that specimen number will be recorded (*e.g.*, Q1 (2 slides), Q2 (1 slide), K1 (1 slide)). When a portion of the slides is being transferred, all of the slides associated with that specimen number will be transferred (*e.g.*, if specimen Q1 has 2 slides, both slides must be transferred).

4.2.3 Transfer of Pillboxes

4.2.3.1 If the pillboxes are transferred in total, the “Item(s)” block on the *Chain-of-Custody Log* will read “all pillboxes” or specifically list what was transferred by Q/K Number(s) and quantity.

4.2.3.2 If a portion of the pillboxes is being transferred, then the specific specimen number and the number of pillboxes associated with that specimen number will be recorded (*e.g.*, Q1 (2 pillboxes), Q2 (1 pillbox), K1 (1 pillbox)). When a portion of the pillboxes is being transferred, all of the pillboxes associated with that specimen number will be transferred (*e.g.*, if specimen Q1 has 2 pillboxes, both pillboxes must be transferred).

4.2.4 Transfer of Paperfolds

4.2.4.1 If the paperfolds are transferred in total, the “Item(s)” block on the *Chain-of-Custody Log* will read “all paperfolds” or specifically list what was transferred by Q/K Number(s) and quantity.

4.2.4.2 If a portion of the paperfolds is being transferred, then the specific specimen number and the number of paperfolds associated with that specimen number will be recorded (*e.g.*, Q1 (2 paperfolds), Q2 (1 paperfold), K1 (1 paperfold)). When a portion of the paperfolds is being transferred, all of the paperfolds associated with that specimen number will be transferred (*e.g.*, if specimen Q1 has 2 paperfolds, both paperfolds must be transferred).

4.3 Transfers of Secondary Evidence for Legacy cases to Other Units

When secondary evidence is transferred to a different unit by the TEU or SBAU-Trace on the *Chain-of-Custody Log*, all of the secondary evidence will be transferred together. The “Item(s)” block on the *Chain-of-Custody Log* will read “TEU Secondary Evidence”, “SBAU-Trace Secondary Evidence”, or acceptable abbreviation for Secondary Evidence as listed in the Abbreviations document of the Trace Evidence Quality Manual. This transfer will be accompanied by a completed Secondary Evidence Inventory (Appendix A or B).

4.4 Retained Secondary Evidence

Secondary evidence is retained by SBAU-Trace after examinations are completed for possible future comparison purposes. The secondary evidence is transferred to the appropriate designated archive location (*e.g.*, Afghanistan Slide Archive) after the completion of examinations. Legacy secondary evidence transferred to a final location of evidence storage prior to the creation of the archive locations will be transferred to the appropriate archive location if removed from evidence storage. Evidence storage and archives are located in limited access storage or examination areas and will be protected from loss, contamination, or deleterious change.

4.4.1 For Legacy cases, this will be indicated by the final blocks of the *Chain-of-Custody Log* indicating that the item(s) has been transferred from the person with custody to the appropriate Archive location.

4.4.2 For FA cases, the item(s) will be transferred in FA from the person with custody into the appropriate Archive location as designated by name (*e.g.*, H/F 0301 ROW Slide Archive).

4.4.3 If a current case is compared against previously completed cases (*e.g.*, by searching a database or reviewing case notes) the parameters of the comparison will be recorded in the case notes of the current case (*e.g.*, compared against all previously examined Somalia cases).

4.4.3.1 If items from previously completed cases are removed from evidence storage or an archive location to physically conduct comparisons with the current case, the case notes of the current case will further record the specific items compared by Laboratory number and item/Q number.

4.4.3.2 If secondary evidence is removed from an archive or evidence storage location, this transfer will be recorded on the appropriate chain of custody for Legacy cases or in FA.

5 Databases

SBAU-Trace may utilize internal databases to keep track of characteristics (*e.g.*, color and construction of fabric) useful for identifying items of interest for potential comparison purposes. Database entries and changes will be limited to qualified SBAU-Trace personnel. If appropriate, searches of these databases will be recorded in the case notes.

6 Active Examination

6.1 An active examination is one in which the evidence will be tested, examined, observed, and/or otherwise handled within the next seven working days in TEU and within the next thirty working days for SBAU-Trace.

6.2 When not under active examination, the evidence will be properly sealed and located in a limited access storage or examination area. All secondary evidence not under active examination will be located in limited access storage or examination areas and will be protected from loss, contamination, or deleterious change.

7 Changes to Evidence Description

Any changes to the description of the evidence, including subdivided items, will be added to the *Laboratory Work Sheet* or *TEDAC Work Sheet* for Legacy cases and updated in FA for FA cases. Appropriate evidence management personnel will be notified, as appropriate, of updated information for Legacy and FA cases.

8 Examination Records

8.1 Examination records will record the date and room number, if multiple rooms are available, that each individual item or group of items, if they were packaged together, are being processed. Tasks are completed on the date recorded unless otherwise noted.

8.2 An examiner will review the trace evidence processing notes prior to performing their examinations if the evidence was processed by an individual other than themselves. This review will be recorded in the Case Record Communication Log for FA cases or on the *Case Activity and Communication Log (7-245)* for Legacy cases.

9 Evidence Transfers in TEU

9.1 When items of primary evidence are to be transferred prior to the completion of processing of all primary evidence items, excluding known hair samples, assigned to the case record, a note will be recorded by the Examiner or Physical Scientist in the Case Record Communication Log to record the decision to do so.

9.1.1 At the time that these items are returned, the individual processing the evidence will confirm that all necessary processing was completed on these items. This confirmation will be recorded in the Case Record Communication Log.

9.1.2 With Technical Leader approval, this requirement may be waived due to the circumstances of the case. This waiver will be documented in the Case Record Communication Log.

10 References

- FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual.
- FBI Laboratory Operations Manual.
- FBI Laboratory Safety Manual.
- Trace Evidence Procedures Manual.

Rev. #	Issue Date	History
7	02/03/2020	Updated SBAU-Trace name throughout. Removed reference to drug and valuable evidence handling in Scope. Updated Section 2.4.1 to allow for FA generated Secondary Evidence Log. Clarified Section 3 specific to Multi-unit submissions. Changed Section 4.4 title from 'Archived Collections' to 'Retained Secondary Evidence.' Updated wording in Sections 2.3, 4.1.4, all of 4.4, 7, and 8.2. Removed reference to 'search slip' for Legacy cases.
8	05/03/2021	Changed 'geological' to 'geologically-derived' throughout. Changed 'category of testing' to 'discipline' with updated groupings throughout.

Approval

Redacted - Signatures on File

Trace Evidence Unit Chief: Date: 04/30/2021

Scientific and Biometrics Analysis Unit Chief: Date: 04/30/2021

Hairs and Fibers Technical Leader: Date: 04/30/2021

Geology Technical Leader: Date: 04/30/2021

Anthropology Technical Leader: Date: 04/30/2021

QA Approval

Quality Manager: Date: 04/30/2021

Appendix A: *Trace Evidence Unit Secondary Evidence Inventory* for Legacy cases

Redacted - Form on File

Appendix B: *SBAU-TRACE Legacy Secondary Evidence Inventory Log*

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Appendix C: *Trace Evidence Unit Secondary Evidence Inventory* for FA cases

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Appendix D: *SBAU-TRACE FA Secondary Evidence Inventory Log*

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