



Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI)
Criminalistics Services Division

Physical Evidence: *Packaging & Submitting to the OSBI Lab*

Objectives

- Proper evidence handling
- Proper evidence packaging
- Submitting evidence to OSBI
- Discipline-specific submissions
- Expediting analysis
- Destruction



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Evidence Handling

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3

Basic Types of Property

- **Evidence** – Property directly related to a crime that may prove or disprove a person's involvement in a crime
- **Found Property** – Property having no evidentiary value that appears to be lost or abandoned with no apparent owner
- **Safe Keeping** – Property having no evidentiary value that is acquired at accident or crime scenes and cannot be immediately returned to the owner; includes firearms seized per a lawful court order (e.g. protective orders)
- **Property for Destruction** – Property a citizen or officer has turned in and asked to have destroyed such as found drugs or other contraband which is not associated with any criminal investigation

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4

Purpose of Proper Evidence Handling

- Preserve critical evidence
- Package evidence appropriately so it can be easily identified, located, and analyzed
- Safety of officers
- Maintain chain of custody



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5

Take Special Care with the Big Three...



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6

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Evidence Packaging

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7

Basic Packaging Requirements

- **Proper package/container**
 - Ensure it is suitable for the size of the evidence
 - Must be made of material that will preserve the integrity of the evidence
 - Must protect the evidence from loss, cross-transfer, or contamination



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8

Basic Packaging Requirements

• Proper labeling

- Your agency case number &/or subject's name
- Description of item(s)
- **MUST BE LEGIBLE**
- Can be handwritten or applied with labels or tags



EVIDENCE	CASE # _____	ITEM _____
	DATE _____	TIME _____
	DESCRIPTION _____	
	LOCATION _____	
	AGENCY _____	

EVIDENCE	EVIDENCE IDENTIFICATION	
	Case No. _____	Item No. _____
	Description of Evidence _____	
	Type of Offense _____	Time _____
	Remarks/Details _____	
	Agency _____	Signal _____

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9

Basic Packaging Requirements

• Proper seal

- 2" clear tape (Duck HP 260 or equal/better), evidence tape or a combination; heat sealing is also acceptable when necessary
- Initials or other unique identifier of person sealing the evidence
- Date recommended



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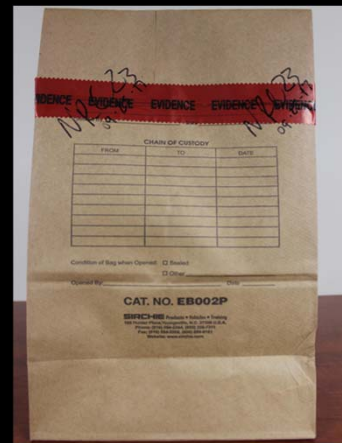
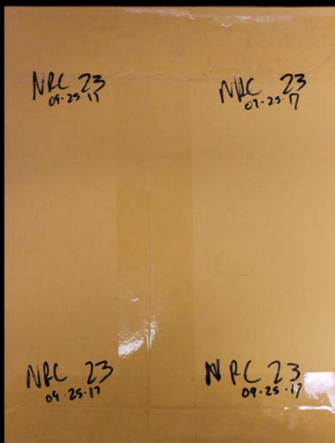
10

Evidence Seals

- **Envelopes:** Seal top flap with 2" clear tape (or evidence tape), covering the entire seal
- **Boxes:** Seal top and bottom seams with 2" clear tape (or evidence tape); sides are not required
- **Sacks:** Fold down top of sack and seal across the flap and around the edges of the sack with 2" clear tape (or evidence tape)

All seals require initials or other unique identification of the person sealing the evidence on **top** of **ANY** piece of tape

Evidence Seals



Evidence Seals

- **Plastic containers:** Seal using evidence tape, either one continuous piece or two pieces across from each other; 2" tape may be used to reinforce the evidence tape, if necessary, as long as both pieces are initialed
- **Cans:** Seal with one continuous piece of *evidence tape* across the top and down the sides (including buckets with lids) or two separate pieces of evidence tape across from each other; no clear tape can be used on cans if it can be peeled off without evidence of removal

All seals require initials or other unique identification of the person sealing the evidence on **top** of **ANY** piece of tape

Evidence Seals

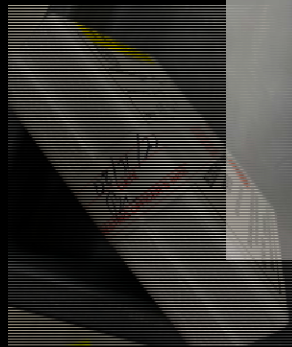
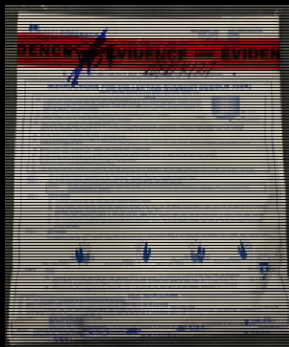


Evidence Seals

- **Kits:** Boxed sexual assault kits, GSR kits, and other purchased kits are acceptable with the seal provided by the kit manufacturer, and envelope-style sexual assault kits shall meet the OSBI evidence sealing requirement for envelopes
- **Bulky Evidence:** Evidence that does not lend itself to a container (e.g. doors, car bumpers, etc.) should have the area of interest for analysis isolated, protected and marked or initialed

All seals require initials or other unique identification of the person sealing the evidence on **top** of **ANY** piece of tape

Evidence Seals



Other Packaging Requirements

- **Liquids:** May require multiple containers; they must be in something that will contain the liquid if it should leak (e.g. glass jar inside of plastic sample jar or placed in a bucket)
- **Glass Containers:** Should be placed inside a container that will also protect the glass from breaking



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17

Other Packaging Requirements

- **Fentanyl:** If evidence is an unknown powder or possible Fentanyl, package envelope in a K-PAK bag or similar packaging and label outer package as "Possible Fentanyl" when suspected
- **Biohazards:** Must be packaged in paper and labeled
- **Sharps** Must be packaged in appropriate containers



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18

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Evidence Submission

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19

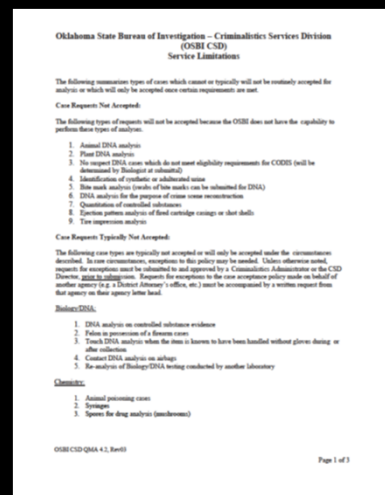
Evidence Acceptance Policy

- <https://osbi.ok.gov/forensic-services/quality-system-overview>
 - Use Chrome or Firefox browsers; do not use Internet Explorer
- Quality system/accreditation
- Evidence submission information
- Policies/procedures
- Notifications
- Feedback

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20



Evidence Acceptance Policy

- The evidence must be submitted by an individual or agency authorized to request services
 - Agencies and individuals authorized to request services are listed in Title 74, Sections 150.2 and 150.5
 - The lab cannot accept evidence from private citizens or other individuals/agencies not listed in statute



Evidence Acceptance Policy

- The evidence must be relevant to a *criminal* investigation which should, in most circumstances, be expected to result in criminal charges being filed
 - Your request for analysis should be for “probative” evidence &/or reasonable, e.g. Does the analysis help answer an investigative question?
 - Evidence relevant to civil investigations or non-criminal product cases such as food or drugs suspected of being old, faulty, etc., will not be accepted for analysis



Evidence Acceptance Policy

- Evidence must have a legitimate associated service request which complies with OSBI policies
 - OSBI reserves the right to select the most appropriate testing method(s) and to select the item(s) most appropriate for analysis
 - Evidence will not be accepted for the purpose of long-term storage or if the lab cannot meet the needs of the customer



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23

Evidence Acceptance Policy

- Evidence must be submitted in person, via evidence locker, or through a delivery service such as the United States Postal Service (USPS), United Parcel Service (UPS), or Federal Express (FedEx)
 - Different units do have certain submittal requirements and exceptions



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24

Evidence Acceptance Policy

- Evidence samples submitted for the purpose of comparison (paints, fibers, projectiles, DNA, etc.) must be accompanied by the appropriate reference samples
 - **Exception:** This does not apply to samples submitted for comparison to a database
- Evidence must not include syringes, which under normal circumstances will not be accepted for analysis
 - Exceptions to this will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by a Criminalistics Administrator or the CSD Director
- Explosives/fireworks will not be accepted for analysis
- All weapons must be submitted in person

Request for Laboratory Examination (RFLE)

- Complete the entire form
- Print **legibly** or type
 - Officer contact info
 - Case info
 - Suspect(s) info (if known)
 - Victim(s) info
 - Description of items being submitted and type of exam(s) requested
 - Check Yes or No for a copy of the report to be made available to the District Attorney
- Sign the form

OKLAHOMA STATE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
REQUEST FOR LABORATORY EXAMINATION

Requesting Officer: Charles Nicholas (TYPE: REQUESTOR'S NAME) Badge # 23 Agency Group: Tulsa Police Department
Requesting Officer's Email: cnicholas@psbbook.org Phone No: 918.299.6111

Submitting Officer: (Person delivering evidence to the OSBI Laboratory) Evidence Delivered: In Person By Mail
(TYPE: OFFICER'S NAME & BADGE #) (OFFICER'S SIGNATURE) (AGENCY/THOUD)

Requesting Agency Case #: 2017-1214
Type of Offense: Poss. of CDS
County of Offense: Tulsa
Date of Offense: 08-25-17 OSBI Laboratory Number

SUBJECT SUSPECT(S):

Last Name, First Name, Middle Name	DOB	Race	Sex	HTN	Known Subject**
John F Smith	01-01-1975	W	M	121-15-5-119	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
					<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
					<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**For Booking and Print cases only. If names have not been identified, please attach a signed statement describing what steps have been taken to identify them.

VICTIM(S):

Last Name, First Name, Middle Name	DOB	Race	Sex	Known Subject
State of Oklahoma				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

EVIDENCE SUBMITTED:

Detailed Description of Evidence (attach additional pages if necessary)	Type of Exam Requested** (per mail)
Green Leafy Substance	CDS

**For all Biological/CODS requests, an officer statement or police report is required.

SEND A COPY OF REPORT TO: (include address) Yes No
Tulsa Police Department

Copy of Report to DA's OFFICE: Yes No

Other Things to Document on RFLE

- If evidence has been removed from a body cavity
- If powder is possible Fentanyl
- If glass or sharps are inside of puncture proof containers



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27

Evidence Acceptance Facilities

Forensic Science Center

800 E 2nd St; Edmond
(405) 330-6724

Northeast Regional Laboratory

1995 Airport Pkwy; Tahlequah
(918) 456-0653

McAlester Evidence Facility

(Evidence Submission Only)
701 W Carl Albert Pkwy; McAlester
(918) 423-6672

Lawton Evidence Facility

(Evidence Submission Only)
1010 SW Railroad St; Lawton
(580) 291-8127

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Evidence Acceptance Hours

Evidence is accepted between 8am – 4pm Monday thru Friday



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29

OSBI Evidence Lockers

- Located in the evidence receiving facilities in Edmond, Tahlequah, McAlester, and Lawton, and accessible during normal laboratory operating hours
- Available for your convenience should a Physical Evidence Technician (or other OSBI Criminalistics personnel) not be available to receive evidence from you
- Each case will still need a submittal form (RFLE) filled out and left with the evidence
- Chain of custody for the OSBI laboratory system will not begin until your evidence is retrieved from the evidence locker by an authorized individual
- Once the evidence is logged in, the evidence receipt will be available to you on the Report Portal

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30

OSBI Evidence Lockers

- Evidence that can not be placed into evidence lockers:
 - Firearms
 - Wet items
 - Items that need to be stored in the refrigerator or freezer
 - DNA/Biology cases
 - **Exceptions:** Known reference (buccal) swabs and sexual assault kits – submittal envelope 1 can be submitted via the evidence locker without prior approval / submittal envelope 2 can only be accepted via the evidence locker with *prior approval* from Specialized Biology Unit personnel
- If you need to submit these types of items to McAlester, Enid, or Lawton, please call your laboratory before traveling to ensure someone will be available to accept your evidence

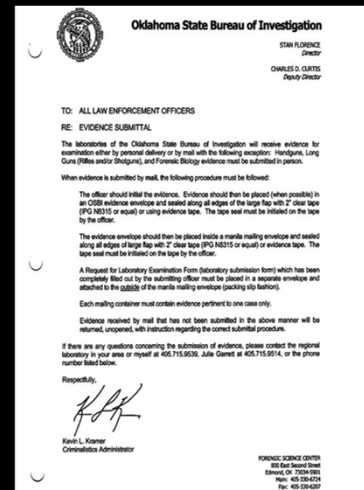
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31

Submitting Evidence By Mail

- Only one case per mailing container
- Place evidence envelope inside of manila envelope or mailing container
- Seal the mailing container the same as the evidence envelope, this mailing container is now part of the evidence
- Complete RFLC and place in envelope taped to the *outside* of mailing container, similar to a packing slip
- If evidence is not packaged properly it will be shipped back to the agency for proper submittal



Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation
 STAN FLORENCE
 Director
 CHARLES D. CURTIS
 Deputy Director

TO: ALL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

RE: EVIDENCE SUBMITTAL

The laboratories of the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation will receive evidence for examination either by personal delivery or by mail with the following exception: Handguns, Long Guns (Rifles and/or Shotguns), and Forensic Biology evidence must be submitted in person.

When evidence is submitted by mail, the following procedure must be followed:

The officer should initial the evidence. Evidence should then be placed (when possible) in an OSBI evidence envelope and sealed along all edges of the large flap with 2" clear tape (FPG H2315 or equal) or using evidence tape. The tape seal must be initialed on the tape by the officer.


The evidence envelope should then be placed inside a manila mailing envelope and sealed along all edges of large flap with 2" clear tape (FPG H2315 or equal) or evidence tape. The tape seal must be initialed on the tape by the officer.

A Request for Laboratory Examination Form (laboratory submission form) which has been completely filled out by the submitting officer must be placed in a separate envelope and attached to the inside of the manila mailing envelope (packing slip location).

Each mailing container must contain evidence pertinent to one case only.

Evidence received by mail that has not been submitted in the above manner will be returned, unopened, with instruction regarding the correct submittal procedure.

If there are any questions concerning the submission of evidence, please contact the regional laboratory in your area or myself at 405.715.9339, Julie Garnes at 405.715.9514, or the phone number listed below.

Respectfully,

 Kevin L. Kramer
 Criminalistics Administrator

FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTER
 801 East Second Street
 Muskogee, OK 74401-0001
 Fax: 405.524.0224
 Mail: 405.524.0287

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32

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Discipline-Specific Submissions

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33

Submitting Toxicology Evidence

- DUI kits can now be submitted (hand delivered) to any OSBI laboratory or regional evidence acceptance facility or they can be mailed to the OSBI FSC (Edmond)
- Hand deliver all other toxicology evidence, including but not limited to DFSA kits, alcoholic content, non-vehicular homicides, etc. (everything that is not a DUI) to any OSBI laboratory or regional evidence acceptance facility
- DFSA kits must be refrigerated at all times (due to the urine in the kits)



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34

Submitting CDS (Drug) Evidence

- Must be packaged separately from other property
 - Leave the drugs in existing container but package that appropriately
- Submit only what you actually need tested
- Do not submit:
 - Syringes
 - Field test kits
 - Receipts, rubber bands, lighters/matches, other trash
 - Razorblades/knives
 - *Exception:* Submittal okay if residue present but must be packaged appropriately
- Marijuana with any perceptible moisture content (i.e. fresh plants) must be loosely packaged in a paper container that allows for drying or shall be dried prior to storage; fresh plants will mold in plastic



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35

Submitting Trace Evidence

- Match packaging size to evidence
 - Submit entire object when possible and practical
 - Package arson evidence in lined cans or arson bags
- Collect known samples close to damage
- Document location of known and unknown samples
- Never submit evidence from known and unknown samples in the same packaging



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36

Submitting Firearms

- All firearms must be submitted in person and must be **unloaded**
 - Must document on package & RFLE that gun is unloaded
- Preferred packaging: cardboard gun box
 - If DNA is needed, do not package in plastic
- Do not put anything inside the barrel that could alter or damage the weapon
 - If you use zip-ties, please do not thread through the barrel
- Magazines should be removed from firearm and packaged with it
- Ammunition should not be packaged with the firearm & should not be submitted (safety hazard)
- Do not submit extra firearm accessories, such as extra magazines, holsters, cleaning gear, gun box, etc.
- Properly label if biohazard is possible



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Submitting Projectiles

- No metal to metal contact
 - Package separately
- Preferred packaging: smaller containers within a larger container
- Use container to document any agency item/marker numbers
- Properly label if biohazard is possible



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38

Submitting Cartridge Casings

- The decision to package them separately or together is at the submitter's discretion
 - If each has unique agency item/marker number, need to be packaged separately, with that information on container (do not write/scribe on the evidence)
- Preferred packaging: smaller containers within a larger container
- Properly label if biohazard is possible



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Submitting Toolmark Evidence

- Tools and tool-marked items should always be protected against damage
- Submit both tool & tool-marked item(s) for analysis
- If evidence is cut in order to submit (e.g. wire from a wall or spool), mark the end you cut



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40

Submitting Evidence for Distance Determination

- Submit firearm in question
- Submit only victim's/target surface clothing with bullet hole(s)
 - OSBI does not process suspect's clothing for muzzle-to-target distance determination
- Submit only the outer garment, if known
- Submit only dried clothing
 - The item should be dried as flat as possible, not wadded up, as this will assist us with the chemical processing of the garment
- Multiple garments/articles of clothing need to be packaged separately to prevent cross-contamination

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41

Submitting Latent Prints

- Digital images of latent prints or impression evidence will not be accepted by email submission and must be submitted on physical media (CD, DVD, etc.)
 - **Exception:** Digital images of impressions for the sole purpose of identification of deceased or living individuals may be submitted via email
- Submit complete known impressions of all victims and suspects with evidence, if possible; this will provide the necessary comparison materials to complete your case in a more timely manner

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42

Submitting Biological Evidence

- All Forensic Biology evidence must be submitted in person
 - **Exception:** Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits and known buccal (cheek) swabs for DNA reference samples may be submitted via evidence locker or a delivery service
 - Always keep sexual assault kits separate from clothing
- Never package biological evidence in plastic; always package in paper to prevent mold and contamination
- Wet items must be air-dried prior to packaging
 - Never blow on samples to dry them
- Swab or take cuttings from large items if possible
 - Simple cotton swabs submitted in envelopes are best for the collection of crime scene stains and known samples
 - Control swabs are not needed
- Never touch any biological sample; it may transfer your DNA to the item
- Never lick outer envelopes to seal them
- Must mark all biology evidence as biohazard



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43

Submitting Biological Evidence

- Cases are “triaged” as they are submitted to determine which items are best suited for analysis based on circumstances of alleged crime; be prepared to answer questions from a biologist during submittal
 - Major crimes (homicides, assaults & robberies) will be discussed with the officer &/or DA to determine best items for processing at the time of submission
 - Property crimes (burglaries, larcenies, arsons) are limited to a maximum of 3 items (not including knowns)
 - Sexual assault kits (envelope 1 only) do not require consultation with a biologist; all other sexual assault evidence (kit envelope 2, clothing, bedding, etc.) require consultation with a biologist
 - Non-reporting and anonymous sexual assault kits are not accepted

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44

Submitting Biological Evidence

- All biology submittals must have the RFLE and an accompanying **incident report** that describes what happened and from where items were collected
 - Helps us determine your best evidence
 - Helps us determine if a piece of evidence is CODIS eligible or not
 - Speeds up analysis (fewer phone calls for info)

Submitting Biological Evidence

- All DNA requests must be submitted with known reference samples; this must include samples from the victim, suspect(s) [if possible] and exclusionary knowns, as needed
 - Known DNA reference samples must be labeled with who they are collected from in item descriptions (not just “DNA swabs” or “known swabs”)
 - Known/reference samples do not need to be labeled or packaged separately for whatever side of the mouth they are collected from
 - Do not use OSBI Offender Collection Kits (CODIS kits) for known DNA reference sample collection

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Expediting Analysis

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Things That Slow Down Lab Analysis

- Discrepancies
- Extra items (not analyzed)
- Packaging
- Safety issues



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How to Expedite Analysis

- Appropriately label all evidence on outer containers with enough detail to determine who or where item(s) was/were collected from
- Include direct contact information of the requesting officer on RFLE, e.g. if officer works night shift, provide e-mail in addition to phone number
- Separate and submit evidence needing different types of analysis in different packages where possible, e.g. unknown substance for drugs in one container, clothing for biology in another container, etc.
- Submit evidence in a timely manner to allow plenty of time for analysis prior to court dates (2 to 3 months is preferred)
- Make sure all appropriate evidence is submitted prior to requesting us to “rush” your case

Communication

- Notify us when the status of a case changes
 - New case information
 - Court dates
 - Rush/expedite
 - Analysis is no longer needed
 - **Communication is key!**

Destruction

- OSBI does not take any of the following for destruction:
 - Alcohol
 - Biological evidence
 - Ammunition or fireworks
 - Cell phones or electronics
 - Batteries
 - Car tags

Physical Evidence: Packaging & Submitting to the OSBI Lab

Summary & Resources

Summary

- Proper evidence handling ensures evidence integrity/preservation, chain of custody & safety
- General and discipline-specific proper evidence packaging and submission encompasses:
 - Proper containers, labeling & seals
 - OSBI Evidence Acceptance Policy
 - OSBI Request for Laboratory Examination (RFLE) (lab submission form)
 - OSBI laboratories/facilities & hours of operation
 - Ways to submit to OSBI (in-person, evidence lockers, mail)
- You can assist in expediting analysis
- OSBI destroys all drugs and drug paraphernalia

Resources

<https://osbi.ok.gov/forensic-services/quality-system-overview>

- Facilities & Available Services, OSBI CSD QMA 4.1
- Evidence Acceptance Requirements, OSBI CSD QMA 2
- Evidence Packaging & Sealing Requirements, OSBI CSD QMA3
- Service Limitations, OSBI CSD QMA 4.2
- Alternate Service Providers, OSBI CSD QMA 5
- Request for Laboratory Examination (RFLE) form (laboratory submittal form), OSBI CSD QPA 5.1
- Destruction form, OSBI CSD QPA 7.1
- "Syringes No Longer Accepted" customer notification
- "Evidence Description Accuracy" customer notification
- "Submittal of Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits" customer notification
- OSBI Laboratory Reports Online registration form
- OSBI CSD Laboratory Kit & Supply Request form
- OSBI Forensic Laboratory Customer Service Survey
- OSBI Evidence Collection Manual: https://osbi.ok.gov/sites/g/files/gmc476/f/documents/crime_scene_manual.pdf

Resources



Julie Garrett, Supervisor, OSBI Physical Evidence Unit

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(405) 715-9514

Thank You

For comments and/or recommendations to improve this presentation, contact:

Barbara Wells, Administrator, Criminalistics Services Division

Barbara.Wells@osbi.ok.gov

(405) 715-9549

History

- Revision 0, September 8, 2022: Initial/original presentation
- Revision 1, December 1, 2022: Removed all references to Digital Evidence Unit (due to transfer from CSD to Investigative Division) and reworded the “Submitting Toxicology Evidence” slide and notes to clarify that toxicology evidence, including DUI kits, can be submitted to any OSBI laboratory/evidence acceptance facility
- Revision 2, April 3, 2023: Updated names of OSBI Evidence Facilities, added slide 36 under CSD, updated info on “Thank You” slide
- Revision 3, July 25, 2023: Removed NWRL from lab locations
- Revision 4, August 9, 2023: Updated to OSBI brand/color, removed slide 36.