Forensic Chemistry Section
Evidence Procedures Manual

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT:

This document is reviewed at least annually by the Forensic Technical Director and Quality Manager, and changes are made as needed. Previous versions are retained on SharePoint for at least one full accreditation cycle. All personnel in the Forensic Chemistry Section acknowledge the existence of any updated version.

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1. Scope

This Evidence Procedures Manual provides guidelines for personnel performing duties in the Evidence Unit of the Forensic Chemistry Section (FCS) within Maine's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL). For situations not covered by this manual, the Unit Supervisors, Quality Manager and/or Forensic Technical Director should be consulted.

2. Evidence Unit – General Information

The FCS Evidence Unit consists of rooms 205 (evidence storage), 207 (evidence submission & processing) & 209 (evidence personnel administrative area). Access to the FCS laboratory areas and security protocols are described in the FCS Quality Manual, section 6.3.4.

Proper PPE (gloves, goggles, lab coats, and surface coverings) shall be worn when necessary.

Evidence handling areas within rooms 205, 207 & 209 shall be cleaned daily to minimize cross-contamination (approved solutions are available for cleaning as needed). In addition, freezers and refrigerators shall be defrosted and cleaned as needed and/or at minimum once per year.

FCS evidence personnel are responsible for monitoring and documenting the temperature & humidity for areas within the Evidence Unit as well as the temperature of the evidence refrigerator & freezer located in evidence storage room 205 as needed (see section 6.3.3 of the FCS Quality Manual).

FCS evidence personnel (or designees) are responsible for monitoring:

- Forensic Evidence Unit email inbox – Evidence.HETLforensics@maine.gov
- Seized Drug Case Activation email inbox – ActivationForm.HETLforensics@maine.gov
- "Maine HETL Forensic Chemistry Evidence Unit Appointments" MS Bookings calendar
- "HETLForensics, Evidence" Outlook calendar

For all abbreviations used throughout the evidence handling processes described within this manual, refer to the FCS Approved Abbreviations List.

3. Appointments

Law enforcement agencies wishing to submit/pick-up forensic evidence are to create an appointment with the FCS Evidence Unit.

3.1 Appointment Booking Calendar

The "Maine HETL Forensic Chemistry Evidence Unit Appointments" booking calendar can be found on the HETL FCS website:
https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/health-professionals/forensic-chemistry/evidence-unit-and-submissions

- The submitting agency representative will choose the closest option that corresponds to the amount of evidence, a submission date and time, and will enter their contact information.
- Once an appointment has been made, the submitting agency representative will receive a confirmation email and the appointment will be added to the calendar.

3.2 Email

Appointment requests may be sent to Evidence.HETLforensics@maine.gov and should contain the following information:

- Preferred date/time.
- Contact information.
- Type of evidence & number of items to be submitted.

Create the appointment on the "Maine HETL Forensic Chemistry Evidence Unit Appointments" booking calendar:

1. Right click on the requested date in the calendar and select "New".
    - If the requested date/time is not available, inform the submitting agency and provide an alternative appointment.

2. Enter the appointment details and ensure the "HETLForensics, Evidence" Outlook calendar is assigned to "Staff".
3. Click "Create booking".
   - The submitting agency representative and any assigned staff will automatically receive an email notification confirming the appointment.

3.3 Cancellations

1. Choose the specific appointment date/time in the "Maine HETL Forensic Chemistry Evidence Unit Appointments" booking calendar to be cancelled.
2. Right-click on the appointment and select "Cancel booking."
   - A cancellation window will appear where an optional message notifying the submitting agency representative and any assigned staff can be entered.

3. Click "Cancel Booking".
   - The submitting agency representative and any assigned staff will automatically receive an email notification confirming the cancellation.

4. Ensure the appointment has been removed from the "Maine HETL Forensic Chemistry Evidence Unit Appointments" booking calendar and "HETLForensics, Evidence" Outlook calendar.

4. Evidence Acceptance

The FCS only accepts the following types of evidence from law enforcement agencies:

- Seized drug evidence.
- Forensic toxicology evidence.

The FCS on occasion may receive aqueous beverage samples submitted by the Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages and Lottery (BABLO) for ethanol analysis; discuss acceptance & storage of these sample types with the Forensic Toxicology Unit Supervisor.

The following forms, as applicable, shall be completed for all evidence submissions prior to acceptance by the FCS:

- Seized Drug Evidence Submission Form & Contract for Examination.
- Toxicology Evidence Submission Form.
    - In addition, toxicology evidence must be accompanied by one of the following contract for examination forms before any analysis is begun:
        - Laboratory Toxicology Analysis Request & Contract for Examination Form.
        - Drug Facilitated Crime Laboratory Analysis Request & Contract for Examination Form.
        - Laboratory Postmortem Analysis Request & Contract for Examination Form.

FCS personnel accepting evidence must ensure that all items submitted to the FCS are packaged and sealed in such a way that:

- Ensures the integrity of the evidence.
- Easily identifies tampering.
- Prevents loss and cross-contamination.

Evidence is considered properly sealed when the outermost packaging is sealed with tamper-proof evidence tape or by heat seal. Evidence may also be packaged in designated evidence/biohazard plastic bags with an adhesive seal. Officers initials must be present on/across the created seal in indelible ink.

- No gaps in seals should be present.
- Staples do not constitute an acceptable seal.

- For blood and urine evidence collection kit boxes that may be sealed with multiple pieces of evidence tape, the officer's initials must be present across at least one of the evidence tape seals.

For evidence that is discovered to be improperly packaged/sealed during submission, FCS personnel may assist the submitting officer to remediate the issue(s) if possible; if the submitting officer is not the person who collected the evidence and refuses, FCS personnel may, before acceptance:

- Repackage and seal the item(s) in a new container and have the submitting officer initial and date this new seal, or;
- Place HETL-specific evidence tape over the original improper seal and initial and date the seal.

The original improper condition of the evidence shall be documented on the evidence submission form and in StarLIMS.

Consult the applicable unit supervisor for any questionable item packaging/seals before acceptance.

4.1 Seized Drug Evidence

1. Evidence must be submitted in-person by a representative of the submitting agency; the FCS does not accept seized drug evidence via mail or drop-box.
2. Acceptable seized drug packaging containers include:
   - Evidence envelopes.
   - Plastic bags.
   - Plastic containers.
   - Paper bags.

   Outer containers should contain applicable agency information and a brief description of contents and be large enough to leave room for chemist access and resealing.

3. Seized drug evidence removed from body cavities or that have made contact with bodily fluids must be packaged in a clean outer container and clearly marked "Biohazard".

4. Damp or wet items shall be packaged in such a way as not to leak and will only be accepted with approval by the Seized Drug Unit Supervisor.

4.2 Forensic Toxicology Evidence

1. Evidence may be submitted via mail, drop-box, or in-person by a representative of the submitting agency.
   - Evidence submitted vial mail or drop-box that is not properly packaged/sealed shall be remediated by FCS personnel and documented on the evidence submission form and in StarLIMS.
2. Blood and urine evidence should be submitted individually, per law enforcement case, and marked with applicable agency information.
   - DHHS-HETL approved kits are purchased and distributed by the FCS to law enforcement agencies (refer to section 12 for approval procedures).
   - Blood evidence drawn at a hospital may be submitted; evidence personnel will properly seal any packaging, if necessary, during submission.

3. The following forms should be completed and included with the kit/samples before submission to the FCS:
   - Blood and urine evidence in relation to OUI/DUID – "Toxicology Laboratory Analysis Request & Contract for Examination".
   - Blood and urine evidence in relation to a sexual assault – "Drug Facilitated Crime Laboratory Analysis Request & Contract for Examination".
   - Blood and urine evidence in relation to a postmortem examination – "Postmortem Laboratory Analysis & Contract for Examination".

4.3 Evidence Not Accepted by the FCS

The following types of evidence are not accepted by the FCS; extenuating circumstances may be evaluated by the applicable unit supervisor on a case-by-case basis:

- Suspected marijuana & related products.
- Syringes.
- Items that contain residue or are completely empty (seized drug related cases only).

4.4 Evidence Submission Forms

Evidence submission forms must be completed by the investigating/submitting agency and FCS personnel prior to the evidence being accepted, with the exception of toxicology blood kits submitted by mail or at the drop-box; forms associated with this type of evidence may be completed by FCS personnel according to the information provided with the kit if no submission form was included.

If requested, create a copy of any completed forms to give to the submitting agency representative.

The investigating agency and/or prosecutor shall be contacted if information is discovered to be missing or incomplete.

5. Seized Drug Evidence Case Activation

5.1 Requests

Requests for case activation must be made by submission of a completed Seized Drug Case Activation Form. Completed forms may be submitted in person, by mail, or emailed to ActivationForm.HETLForensics@maine.gov.

- The form must specify which items in the case are to be tested and contain the prosecutor's signature prior to approval.
- Evidence will only be assigned to a chemist when BOTH the evidence and completed form are received by the FCS.
  - For evidence that has been submitted to the FCS without a completed Seized Drug Case Activation Form, FCS personnel shall attempt to contact the assigned prosecutor to obtain a completed form.
  - Analysis may be performed without a Seized Drug Case Activation Form in some circumstances (i.e. – law enforcement investigations) with approval by the Seized Drug Unit Supervisor or Forensic Technical Director.

For rush and priority requests, a completed Expedited Analysis Request Form must be submitted along with the Case Activation Form. Rush and priority requests shall be forwarded to the Seized Drug Unit Supervisor or designee upon receipt for review (see below).

5.2 Assignment Priority

All seized drug cases will be assigned by the Seized Drug Unit Supervisor or designee based on priority, chemist availability & available laboratory resources.

Expedited Priority

The Seized Drug Unit Supervisor or designee will review all expedited requests, determine the ability of the unit to accommodate the request and notify the prosecutor and/or submitting agency.

- Rush requests include notification of a trial date or a mandatory discovery compliance date of less than 2 weeks from the date of request and will receive a priority level designation of 1.
- Priority requests include notification of a trial date or a mandatory discovery compliance date of less than 4 weeks from the date of request but greater than 2 weeks and will receive a priority level designation of 2.

General Priority

Standard case activation requests will be tested in priority order. Lower priority cases may have extended turnaround times depending on the volume of higher priority cases.

- Cases with a classification of A-B, where the subject is currently in custody will receive a priority level designation of 3.
- Cases with a classification of C-D, where the subject is currently in custody will receive a priority level designation of 4.
- Cases with a classification of A-B, where the subject is not currently in custody will receive a priority level designation of 5.
- Cases with a classification of C-D, where the subject is not currently in custody will receive a priority level designation of 6.

Other Priority

- Evidence submitted without a Case Activation Form will receive a priority level designation of 0 and will not be assigned to a chemist until a completed form is received by the FCS.
    - Upon receipt of a completed form, the priority level will be updated accordingly.
- Cases for administrative closure will receive a priority level designation of 7.
- In cases where the priority level cannot be determined based on the supplied information, a priority level designation of 8 will be assigned.
    - Evidence personnel shall follow up with the prosecutor to determine the correct priority level.

5.3 Activation Form Review

Upon receipt of the Case Activation Form, FCS evidence personnel shall:

1. Review the status of the case.
2. Determine if the evidence is in custody of the FCS.
   - For forms received prior to evidence submission, place the form in the folder marked "Activation Form w/o File" kept in the room 207 file cabinet and update the "Activation Forms No Evidence" tab on the Seized Drug Activation spreadsheet located on the laboratory network. (K:\Seized Drug Analysis\Drug Case Logs\DrugCaseLogActivations.xlsx).
     - These cases should be followed up on a monthly basis – notify the prosecutor to contact the submitting agency regarding submission of the evidence with the FCS.
   - Once the evidence has been received, update the Seized Drug Activation spreadsheet and continue with this procedure.
3. Verify the following information provided on the form is consistent with the FCS case record:
   - Subject name(s).
   - Agency and case number.
   - Incident date.

   If the information provided varies from the case/evidence information possessed by the FCS, the prosecutor shall be notified of the disparity and asked to confirm the correct information.
   - Verification of case information will not prohibit case activation.
4. Perform a LIMS search to identify any cases that may be linked to the subject's name stated on form:
   - If a prior related case is identified, notify the Seized Drug Unit supervisor; the same chemist (if possible) shall be assigned to perform testing on the new case.

5. Document the FCS case folder number and initial the top right of the Case Activation Form and any other related documentation (if applicable) and place in the case folder.
   - The Case Activation Form may contain additional information to what was provided on the Receipt/Contract for Examination Form received during evidence submission.
   - The FCS shall use all available information as necessary when generating Certificate of Analysis Result Reports.

6. Update the applicable year "Activated Forms" tab on the Seized Drug Activation spreadsheet.
   - Activation date
   - HETL case #
   - Received (in-hand/email)
   - Received by
   - Requester
   - Agency case #
   - Subject
   - Quantity
   - Priority
   - Samples tested – "Awaiting Chemist"

6. Evidence Submission

6.1 StarLIMS

Refer to the FCS StarLIMS User Guide, section 3 for evidence receiving and invoice creation procedures.

NOTE:

- When entering post-mortem blood samples, "postmortem" must be specified in StarLIMS during the input of case information.
- When entering samples related to drug-facilitated sexual assault incidents, "DFC-SA" must be specified in StarLIMS during the input of case information.
- When entering fatal/near-fatal blood samples, "fatal/near-fatal" must be specified in StarLIMS during the input of case information.

A spreadsheet containing client billing codes can be found on the FCS laboratory network (K:\Evidence\Billing-StarLims Client Listing.xlsx).

- For some clients, the prosecuting agency will be billed for any requested tests; the codes for these clients are in red colored text.
- Client codes are created by the HETL finance department.

For additional required procedures when receiving seized drug evidence submitted by the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency (MDEA), refer to section 10.1.

6.2 Evidence & Case Folders

1. Apply a barcode label to each piece of evidence.
    - For cases that consist of multiple items of seized drug evidence, all may be placed together into a single convenience container; a blue circle sticker shall be placed on the top right of the convenience container.
2. Apply a barcode label to the appropriately colored case folder.
    - Seized drug evidence – Green folder
    - Blood evidence – Red folder

- Urine evidence – Yellow folder
- Sexual assault evidence – Manilla folder
- Post-mortem evidence – Black folder

3. Apply a barcode label to the top of the evidence submission form and laboratory analysis request form (if applicable) and place the form(s) in the case folder.
4. Apply a barcode label to a new Chain of Custody Form and fill out the required information:
   - Item(s) that were received and descriptions (approved abbreviations may be used).
   - Received From:
     - FCS evidence personnel
     - Date and time
   - Received By:
     - FCS evidence storage location
   - Page Number (to be updated as additional chain of custody forms are needed)
5. Place the evidence into the appropriate storage area within room 205:
   - Seized drug evidence
     - Powders/solid materials – shelves/bins
     - Liquids – refrigerator
     - Plant materials – freezer
   - Blood evidence – refrigerator
     - Post-mortem samples – freezer
   - Urine evidence – freezer
6. Place the COC/case folder in the appropriate storage location:
   - Seized drug evidence
     - For activated evidence – mark the COC "ACTIVE" in the top right corner of the folder; mark the case folder with the priority level and activation date.
     - Place the COC with the case folder awaiting assignment in the top drawer of the file cabinet in room 207.
     - For inactivated evidence – place the COC form in the applicable "Pending" binder in room 207; store case folders in the 2nd drawer of the file cabinet in room 207.

- Forensic Toxicology evidence
  - COC forms are placed in the case folder awaiting testing within room 205.
  - Evidence batches awaiting testing are compiled by evidence personnel.

6.3 Photographs

In some instances, FCS evidence personnel may need to photo-document an item during evidence submission or return.

- An FCS/state-owned camera must be used for all evidence photographs; personal/cell phone cameras are not permitted.
- Photographs are considered discoverable and shall be maintained to prevent loss and degradation.

1. Ensure the date and time settings on the camera are correct before any photographs are taken.
2. Using appropriate PPE, place the item to be photographed on a distraction-free background.
   - Remove/replace gloves to ensure the camera remains clean.
3. Place a scale and a label containing the FCS case folder number, item number, and photographer's initials within the frame and focus the camera.
4. Ensure proper lighting is being used and take the photograph(s).
   - The item should not be excessively bright or dark such that color and detail are not accurately captured.
5. Create a new subfolder on the laboratory network (K:\Discoveries\Case Photographs); name this subfolder with the case folder number. Transfer all raw digital files from the camera memory card to this subfolder.
6. Print the photograph(s).
   - All photographs must be printed in color and contain the date and time stamp.
7. Retain all photographs in the case folder.
   - Photographs should not be destroyed. All photographs, including poor quality or unintended photographs, shall be saved and remain part of the case folder.

8. Delete the digital files from the camera memory card.
9. Return all photography equipment to its storage location.

7. Evidence Assignment & Return for Storage

7.1 Seized Drug Evidence

Evidence Assignment

1. Remove the assigned case folder from the top drawer ("Activated Seized Drug Cases") of the file cabinet in room 207.
2. Update the following spreadsheets located on the laboratory network (K:\Seized Drug Analysis\Drug Case Logs):
   - Drug Case Log (applicable year) – Individual Chemist Tabs
     - HETL case number
     - All items
     - Priority
     - Date pulled
   - Drug Case Log Activations
     - Update "Samples Tested" with the assigned chemist
3. Create a magnet label containing the case folder number, item number(s) and due date.
4. Update the case folder metadata in StarLIMS with the initials of the assigned chemist.
5. Retrieve the evidence listed on the COC from evidence storage room 205.
6. Fill out the required information on the COC to transfer the evidence from storage to evidence personnel:
   - Item(s) to be transferred and descriptions (approved abbreviations may be used).
   - Received from:
     - FCS evidence storage location
     - Date and time
   - Received by:
     - Evidence personnel (name and signature)

7. Fill out the required information on the COC to transfer the evidence from evidence personnel to the assigned chemist:
   - Item(s) to be transferred and descriptions (approved abbreviations may be used).
   - Received from:
     - Evidence personnel
     - Date and time
   - Received by:
     - Chemist (name and signature)

Evidence Return for Storage

Evidence personnel are responsible for verifying all items returned from a chemist after analysis are properly packaged and sealed with evidence tape or heat seal with the chemist's initials across all non-factory seals with indelible ink.

1. Fill out the required information on the COC to transfer the evidence from the assigned chemist to evidence personnel:
   - Item(s) to be transferred and descriptions (approved abbreviations may be used).
   - Received from:
     - Chemist
     - Date and time
   - Received by:
     - Evidence personnel (name and signature)

2. Fill out the required information on the COC to transfer the evidence from evidence personnel to storage:
   - Item(s) to be transferred and descriptions (approved abbreviations may be used).
     - If evidence is returned in a convenience container, ensure that all items on the COC are accounted for.
   - Received from:

        - Evidence personnel
        - Date and time
    - Received by:
        - FCS evidence storage location

3. Place the evidence listed on the COC into evidence storage room 205.
4. Upon completion of the case folder and publication of the Certificate of Analysis, update the following spreadsheets located on the laboratory network (K:\Seized Drug Analysis\Drug Case Logs):
    - Drug Case Log (applicable year)
        - Individual chemist tab
            - Item tested
            - Results
            - Date received
            - Date notarized
            - Cases
            - Technical review
        - Monthly tab
            - Copy all applicable info from the individual chemist tab over to the appropriate month (only results of 1 item are needed for this transfer).
    - Drug Case Log Activations
        - Completion date

7.2 Toxicology Evidence

Evidence Assignment

Evidence assignment and transfers are performed by Forensic Toxicology Unit personnel; refer to the applicable Forensic Toxicology procedure manuals for further information.

Evidence Return for Storage

Blood/urine toxicology evidence is stored within the toxicology laboratory rooms and is not returned to the Evidence Unit after analysis; see section 8.2 for further information.

8. Evidence Disposition

8.1 Seized Drug Evidence

Seized drug evidence will be returned to the submitting agency representative after analysis has been completed.

For additional required procedures when returning seized drug evidence submitted by the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency (MDEA), refer to section 10.2.

1. Update the COC to reflect the transfer of the evidence from the storage location to FCS evidence personnel.
   - Received from:
     - FCS evidence storage location
     - Date and time
   - Received by:
     - FCS evidence personnel (name and signature)

2. Update the COC to reflect the transfer of the evidence from FCS personnel to the agency representative.
   - Received from:
     - FCS evidence personnel
     - Date and time
   - Received by:
     - Agency representative (name and signature)

2. If requested, create a copy of the completed COC to give to the submitting agency representative along with the evidence.
   - Place the original COC in the Give Back tray (see section 8.3).

8.2 Forensic Toxicology Evidence

Blood/urine evidence will be retained for six months after custody transfer from the chemist to storage and then destroyed (unless otherwise requested).

- For disposition/destruction procedures, refer to the applicable Forensic Toxicology procedure manuals.
- If blood/urine evidence is requested to be returned to the submitting agency, see section 8.1, steps 1-3.

8.3 Give Back List

The Evidence Unit maintains an on-going list of seized drug evidence needing to be sent back to their corresponding agencies.

1. Add the agency & case folder number to the "Evidence to be Picked Up" tab of the Give Back list.
   - This list can be found on the FCS laboratory network (K:\Evidence\Evidence to be Picked Up.xlsx).
2. Place the COC in the appropriate binder:
   - "Processed Cases"
   - "MDEA Processed Cases"
3. After the evidence has been returned to the agency, place the COC in the case folder in the File Storage Room (room 231) and move the case folder number from the "Evidence to be Picked Up" tab to the appropriate year tab on the spreadsheet.
   - Include the date the evidence was returned and the number of the items returned.
   - MDEA only – Update the number of returned MDEA cases on the appropriate year tab on the spreadsheet.

8.4 Special Requests

Disposition/evidence transfer requests made by any agency other than the investigating agency must be obtained in writing along with approval from the submitting agency as well.

- All documentation shall be included in the case folder.

9. Case Closeout

Cases may be administratively closed without analysis due to the following reasons:

- The requested analysis cannot be performed on the submitted evidence.
- The type of submitted evidence cannot be analyzed according to the FCS ANAB Scope of Accreditation.
- Seized drug evidence in the possession of the FCS that has not been activated within one year of the submission date.
- Notification is received from either the investigating agency and/or prosecutor that evidence no longer needs to be analyzed.
    - Refer to the applicable unit procedure manuals for procedures regarding generation of CoA reports for cases where testing has been cancelled.

The investigating agency and/or prosecutor may request testing be performed for a previously closed assignment at any time.

9.1 Unassigned Seized Drug Evidence

No CoA report is generated for seized drug cases where testing has been cancelled before assignment.

1. Retrieve the case folder and COC – write “NO TEST” & the date on the case folder and “NO TEST” on the upper right of the COC. Proceed with steps 1-3 of section 8.3.
2. Place a completed Case Closeout Form and any associated documentation in the case folder.
3. Update the case priority in StarLIMS to level 7 (see section 5.2 for priority designations) and click the “Cancel/Accept” button to close the case in StarLIMS.
4. Delete the case entry from the “Drug Case Log Activations” spreadsheet located on the laboratory network (K:\Seized Drug Analysis\Drug Case Logs).

10. MDEA SafeTracker

SafeTracker is forensic evidence tracking software used by the MDEA for chain of custody and case information of seized drug evidence. FCS evidence personnel have access through the MDEA to update this information during evidence submission & returns.

10.1 MDEA Evidence Submission

1. Login to the SafeTracker program.
2. In the toolbar on the left-hand side, click the "Scanner" icon.
    a. A warning will pop up stating that there are currently items in the scan list; when asked to clean the scan list before proceeding, click "Yes".
3. Scan the unique MDEA SafeTracker barcode for each item.
4. After scanning each piece of evidence, check off the box located next to the "View" tab.
5. Click the drop-down "Actions" tab and select "Check Items In".
    a. Enter the name of the MDEA representative.
    b. In the "Storage Location" field, enter "HETL/Evidence Vault".
    c. The FCS staff member accepting the evidence must enter their digital signature to take custody of the evidence.
6. Sign out of the SafeTracker program once the evidence submission process is complete; DO NOT close/"X" out of the program.
7. Continue with evidence acceptance (see section 6.1).

10.2 MDEA Evidence Return

1. Follow all steps listed above, with the following change:
    a. The MDEA representative accepting the returned evidence must enter their digital signature to take custody of the evidence.

11. Drop-Box

The FCS maintains a 24/7 locked drop-box located at the Augusta Police Department (7 Willow Street, Augusta ME, 04330) for police agencies to have the option of submitting blood-kits without having to come to HETL. Toxicology Evidence Submission Forms are available to be filled out before placing kit(s) into the drop-box.

FCS evidence personnel have key access to the drop-box and shall retrieve any submitted kits from the drop-box at least once every two weeks.

11.1 Evidence Retrieval

1. FCS evidence personnel must check in with the front office of the Augusta Police Department and be given a building access keycard.
2. Collect any sample kits and their corresponding Toxicology Evidence Submission Forms.
3. Update the drop-box log with the date/time, item description, subject(s) name, officer name, department name and FCS personnel signature.
   - For any entries that have not been properly filled out, FCS evidence personnel may enter applicable information into the drop-box log (if available based on the Receipt/Contract for Examination Form).
4. Upon return to HETL, intake the evidence as per section 6.

12. Blood/Urine Kits

12.1 Quality Checks

After receiving a new batch of blood/urine kits, chemists assigned to the Forensic Toxicology Unit shall perform quality assurance testing and approve the kits before they may be distributed to law enforcement agencies.

- Refer to the applicable toxicology procedure manuals for quality assurance & approval requirements.

12.2 Packaging & Distribution

Once approved, FCS evidence personnel are responsible for packaging & distribution of the evidence kits to law enforcement agencies.

For each evidence kit in the batch:

1. Stamp each box with the "Approved by Maine HETL" stamp.
2. Open the box and place the "Laboratory Toxicology Analysis Request & Contract for Examination" form inside.
3. Remove a strip of red evidence tape from within the box and seal the box.
4. Bring the kits to the HETL Shipping & Receiving Section for storage.

12.3 External Client Orders

Orders from law enforcement agencies for blood/urine kits or Intoxilyzer solution may be made by email or phone.

To fulfill an order:

1. Open the "DYMO Label v.8" Windows app.
2. In the address book field, select "Chemistry".
3. In the search field, type in the requesting agency.

4. Print one large and one small label containing the address of the requesting agency.
5. Open the applicable packing slip (these documents are located on the FCS laboratory network (K:\Admin\Order Forms):
   - Blood/urine kits – Packingslip blood-urine.doc
   - Intoxilizer solution – Packingslip Solution.doc

   a. Enter date the request was made in the "Date" field.
   b. Enter the number of items that will be sent in the "Item(s) Shipped" field.
   c. Print the packing slip form.
   d. In the "Send To" field, add the small address label and make a copy of the packing slip form.
6. Fill out the HETL-Highway Safety Mail Card (Billing # A01410A233004).
7. Paperclip the original and copied packing slips, the HETL-Highway Safety Mail Card, and the large address label all together and give to the HETL Shipping & Receiving Section to fulfill the order.

13. Evidence Audits

FCS evidence personnel shall perform an evidence inventory audit at least once a year.

- This may be performed as one complete audit or in parts throughout the year with the approval of the Quality Manager.
- The evidence inventory audit should be performed by two FCS evidence personnel (if possible); one verifying the evidence and the other reading the COC/documenting results.

13.1 Inventory Audit Procedure

1. Retrieve COC forms for all pending evidence, in-progress evidence, activated seized drug cases and evidence awaiting return to the submitting agency.
    a. Pending evidence – COC's can be found in the annual "Pending" binders.
    b. In-progress evidence – COC's can be found with the case folder.
        - In-progress evidence is listed on the applicable year "Drug Case Log" spreadsheets located on the laboratory network (K:\Seized Drug Analysis\Drug Case Logs).
    c. Un-assigned activated seized drug cases – COC's can be found within each activated seized drug case folder in the top drawer of the file cabinet in room 207.
    d. Evidence awaiting return to submitting agency – COC's for each case on the Give Back List can be found in the returns binder.
    e. Evidence waiting to be filed – COC's for each case can be found on the evidence cart in room 207/209.
2. For each COC, confirm the storage location of the item, its packaging type, condition of the seals and contents.
    - Convenience containers that contain multiple items may be opened to verify each item present.
3. Any discrepancies, missing items or missing case folders/COC forms that cannot be resolved shall be documented and brought to the attention of the FCS Quality Manager upon completion of the audit.
    - Investigations/corrective action reports will be performed as per the FCS Quality Manual, sections 7.10 & 8.7.

14. Record Storage & Archives

Completed FCS case folders and other records are securely stored in room 231.

Case folder & record storage and retention policies are described in the FCS Quality Manual, section 8.4 and on the HETL laboratory network – S:\Record Retention.

Case folders are organized by the type of testing (seized drug, toxicology-blood or toxicology-urine) and in numerical order by FCS case number.

14.1 Case Folder Tracking

Blue placeholder file markers shall be used for removing/returning case folders from the file storage room (Room 231); file movement shall be documented within each placeholder marker.

14.2 Records Procedures

Refer to the Record Retention SOP and the State Records Center archive instructions for procedures & requirements for proper form usage, packing, transferring, & retrieving processes found on the HETL laboratory network (S:\Record Retention).

Additional FCS specific procedures:

- Package cases according to the type of case-testing (seized drug, forensic toxicology-blood or forensic toxicology-urine) in numerical order by FCS case number.
- Record the contents of each box on the spreadsheet found on the HETL laboratory network (S:\Record Retention\Forensics\2021, 2022 Boxes.xlsx).
    - The box number is a continuation based on the last box number listed on the previous Transmittal of Records Form.
    - Scan the StarLIMS barcode, found in the top of each case folder into the applicable “Box Number” column.
- Complete a packing list for each box (may be performed by all FCS personnel).

- A copy of the packing list is placed inside each box and another copy kept within the Evidence Unit.
- Evidence personnel will forward a copy of all packing lists to the HETL Office Manager.
  - File Number
  - File Name or Subject – enter "NOT NEEDED" for all entries
  - Open Date – enter the received date of the first case folder in the box
  - Closed Date – enter the received date of the last case folder in the box

– Enter the following information to create a new Transmittal of Records Form for records from a single year and place a copy in the Archive & Record binder kept in room 207.

NOTE: The Record Center will not accept records from different years on the same form.

- Department – DHHS
- Bureau/Division – HETL-Forensics
- Person to contact & telephone number (FCS staff filling out the form)
- Location of Records – 47 Independence Drive, Augusta, ME, Room 231
- RO/RO Assistant Name/Access Card #/Email Address – coordinate with the HETL Office Manager
- Date of Submission
- Schedule #/Series # – 1439 / XX (for applicable series #, see the Records Retention SOP, section V.1.a.ii)
- Media – type of records (paper, electronic, etc.)
- Series Title – Forensic Case Files
- Box Number
  - For boxes that contain cases folders:
    - First item – first case number in the box
    - Last item – last case number in the box

- Case numbers should be proceeded with the case type
  - Toxicology blood evidence – "BLOOD"
  - Toxicology urine evidence – "DRG"
  - Seized drug evidence – "SDD"

  Examples – BLOOD250001, DRG250002, SDD250003
- For boxes that contain other forensic records:
  - Folders shall be labeled with a descriptive name of the contents of the folder and entered into the "First Item" & "Last Item" fields

    Examples – 2025 Proficiency Tests, Agilent GC/MS Tune Files, etc.
- First Date – month and year of the oldest file in the box
- Last Date – month and year of the most recent file in the box

- Once the record transfer has been completed:
  - Obtain a copy of the completed Transmittal of Records Form from the HETL Office Manager.
  - Scan a copy of the completed Transmittal of Records Form and save on the laboratory network (S:\Record Retention\Forensics\Transmittal of Records and Packing Lists).
  - Place a copy of the completed Transmittal of Records Form in the Archive & Record binder kept in room 207 and remove the previous, incomplete copy.
    - This binder will contain all information needed to fill out the "Request for Reference Service Form" when records need to be obtained by the FCS.

15. Revision History

Revision Number	Date of Revision	Revised By	Description
1	4/12/2022		Section 1 updated to include procedure for lack of initials. 1.3.4.8 updated to remove room number. 1.3.4.2 updated to state the receipt form will document a description of the evidence and packaging, as submitted.
2	7/27/2022		Removed specific room numbers and replaced with location descriptions to prepare for lab relocation. Removed address from first page. Added guidance in section 1.3 for photographing evidence.
3	4/21/2023		Section 1.3.4.8 added, previous 1.3.4.8 renumbered to 1.3.4.9 and updated. Section 1.3.4.10 added. Section 1.3.1.2 1.3.1.2 definition updated to match Quality Manual
4	4/3/2024		Photography section expanded.
5	11/19/2025	MD	New version of FCS Evidence Manual published.
6	12/15/25	MD	Section 4.2 • Added "DHHS-HETL" approved kits • Corrected form name to "Laboratory Urine Drug Analysis Request" • Removed packaging requirements for hospital drawn blood • Clarified to initial across all outer seals Section 4.3 Clarified residue & empty containers applies to seized drug cases only Section 4.4 Updated to add "WO/Lot" & expiration date to contract Section 12.2

			Corrected form name to “Laboratory Urine Drug Analysis Request”
7	9/8/26	MD	General formatting Evidence Receipt/Contract for Examination replaced with applicable Evidence Submission Form/Laboratory Analysis Request & Contract for Examination throughout manual Section 2 – reference to QA Manual regarding temperature documentation Section 3 – hours of operation removed Section 4 – proper seals and documentation of seal conditions clearly defined; information regarding seals removed from 4.1 and 4.2 and combined; toxicology request for analysis forms specified before analysis is begun; adhesive seal added as a proper seal; “green” removed as requirement for HETL evidence tape Section 4.1 – paper bag added as acceptable packaging Section 4.2 – step 2 changed from “shall” to “should” Section 4.4 – investigating agency or prosecutor will be contacted if submission forms are incomplete; submitting agency may request copy of completed evidence submission form Section 6.1 – StarLIMS instructions for post-mortem, DFC-SA and fatal/near-fatal incidents updated Section 6.2 – requirements for SPW to be recorded removed; case barcode label added to the chain of custody form; awaiting assignment removed from forensic toxicology evidence Section 6.3 – network path for case photographs updated Section 8.4 – disposition/transfer requests changed from submitting agency to investigating agency Section 9 – case closeout requests changed from submitting agency to investigating agency; reference to unit procedure

			manuals for any CoA generation; 9.1 heading changed to "Unassigned Seized Drug Evidence" Section 12.2 – new Toxicology evidence/contract form updated
8	9/18/26	MD	Section 4 – proper seal definition updated to specify outermost packaging Section 5.1 – FCS personnel will attempt to contact the assigned prosecutor for submitted evidence without an activation form
9	10/19/26	MD	Section 4 – clarified FCS personnel responsibility to ensure integrity of evidence and proper packaging, updated methods of acceptable seal methods, updated remediation for improper packaged evidence Section 4.1 – seized drug evidence not accepted by drop-box Section 4.2 – toxicology evidence submitted by mail or drop-box improperly packaged/sealed will be remediated by FCS personnel