



September 24, 2019

Dear Laboratory Stakeholders:

In September of 2011 the DCI Laboratory implemented new evidence submission and processing guidelines in an effort to address increasing backlogs and turnaround times at the lab. The last update of these guidelines was issued in October of 2014. Due to continued high evidence submission rates, backlogs and turnaround times remain high in several areas of the lab. We are recirculating the submission guidelines (attached) at this time to provide a review for submitting agencies, and give additional information relative to submitting evidence for all of the forensic discipline sections of the lab.

As we've stated in the past, the intent of these submission guidelines is to focus laboratory resources on performing analyses and examinations on the most probative items of evidence in each case, and to reduce or eliminate processing on evidence with lesser or no probative value. In some instances we will not accept evidence unless special circumstances exist and prior approval is provided by the appropriate section supervisor. The guidelines are meant to address unnecessary processing of evidence, not eliminate the analysis of evidence that really is needed. The guidelines provide a mechanism for lab stakeholders to contact the lab and, through dialogue regarding the particular needs involved with the case, request additional work on the case. We are always going to allow the opportunity, based on the case, to submit additional evidence if needed. Our goal with these guidelines is to set submission policies that will result in a more planned out approach with respect to choosing the items of evidence sent for analysis, and to provide information as to when we will stop analysis on a case based on results achieved. We hope to achieve this by having agencies focus on submitting only the most probative items of evidence first, then submit additional evidence later (if needed) rather than sending in everything (regardless of probative value) in the very beginning. By prioritizing the most probative items we hope to improve turnaround times on the most valuable evidence for all stakeholders.

One particular area of concern we want to address is the fire and safety risks inherent with the submission of vaping devices. These devices are constructed cheaply and typically are powered by lithium batteries. We have experienced devices that move within the shipping container due to improper packaging and turn on. To prevent the risk of fire, we are requiring vape cartridges to be separated from the electronic bodies before submitting to the lab. Cartridges should then be placed in a leak proof container for submission. The electronic body is to be retained at your agency. If cartridges cannot be separated, the battery must be removed from the body and the pen rendered inoperable. With respect to the storage of evidence, we think taking steps to reduce the risk of fire is a good practice to protect our people, facility, and evidence. Possibly you may want to consider a policy on vaping devices with regard to *your* long term evidence storage areas. As with all commercially packaged evidence, please do not submit multiple boxes or containers of similarly packaged items. One package is sufficient.

This information has been provided by email to agency heads at all of our stakeholder agencies, and submitting agency personnel responsible for pre-logging of evidence. The information will also be posted on the DCI Laboratory web-site (<http://www.dps.state.ia.us/DCI/lab/index.shtml>) and the pre-log site in the

BEAST. Please pass this information on to other personnel within your agency or organization who are involved with submission of evidence, or who may be otherwise impacted.

If you have questions regarding the submission guidelines, please do not hesitate to call our main lab number at (515)725-1500. Laboratory Administrator Bruce Reeve or other laboratory personnel will be available to answer your questions. You can also contact Lab Administrator Reeve by email (reeve@dps.state.ia.us).

Thank you for your assistance in helping to adopt these guidelines aimed at addressing backlog at the DCI Laboratory. As Iowa's only full service crime lab, we understand the value of the services we provide to the criminal justice community. It is our sincere hope that we can continue to provide the timely forensic science services you need and expect from us.

Sincerely,

KEVIN WINKER, Director of Investigative Operations
Iowa Department of Public Safety



BRUCE P. REEVE, Laboratory Administrator
Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation

Encl: Evidence Submission and Processing Guidelines

Iowa DCI Criminalistics Laboratory
Evidence Submission and Processing Guidelines
September 24, 2019

GENERAL SUBMISSIONS

- Only evidence that will be used for prosecution should be submitted for analysis.
- When multiple sections of the laboratory are involved, consultation with the submitter and the other affected sections of the laboratory should take place prior to laboratory processing. Processing by one section of the laboratory may have a detrimental effect on the other section's (s') ability to process this item of evidence.
- Evidence submissions relative to computer crimes and cell phones should be made through the DCI Cyber Crimes Unit at one of three locations: located in Ankeny (DMACC Bldg. 3-W), Cedar Rapids, and Council Bluffs, not at the DCI Crime Laboratory. More information regarding the Cyber Crime Unit offices is available on their website at www.dps.state.is.us/DCI/fieldoperations/cybercrime.shtml.
- The submitting agencies or prosecuting attorney's office should notify the DCI Laboratory if and when they become aware that a case has been disposed and no longer needs to be worked by our laboratory.
- Syringes pose a great safety hazard; they are not acceptable for submission and will be returned without analysis performed. Syringe washings for drug analysis and swabs from syringes for DNA may be acceptable as long as they meet the submission requirements of the respective section below. Please contact the laboratory for additional information or guidance on collection of syringe washings.

DRUG EVIDENCE SUBMISSIONS

- Do not send in multiple boxes or containers of the same commercially packaged items. One package is sufficient. Examples would include vape cartridge boxes, marijuana candies and other consumables.
- Vape cartridges must be separated from the electronic bodies before submitting to the lab. Cartridges should then be placed in a leak proof container for submission. The electronic body is to be retained at your agency. If cartridges cannot be separated, the battery must be removed from the body and the pen rendered inoperable.
- Do not send in the entire "drug store" of labeled THC or CBD products unless it will enhance the case. Please call the drug identification section with questions.

- If separate items belong to multiple defendants, it should be noted on the receipt form as to which Item(s) belongs to which defendant.
- We will ask larger agencies to hold drug case submittals pending notification from the prosecutor that the case needs to be worked for trial.
- Drug paraphernalia will not be tested unless it is the only item in the case or the submission is approved by the drug chemistry section supervisor or designee.
- Items with residue(s) will not be tested if weighable quantities are also submitted.
- Cigarette butts and residues will not be analyzed for drug identification analysis unless :
 - it is needed to establish probable cause, or
 - it is the only item in the case.
- Quantitative (purity) work will only be performed on federal methamphetamine cases of one gram or more, or if approved by the drug chemistry section supervisor or designee. The federal prosecutor and contact information MUST be provided in the submission narrative.
- Controlled substances must be separated from packaging prior to submittal to the lab when cases require latent print processing.
Exceptions:
 - Tightly wrapped bricks or bundles do not need to be separated. The outsides will be processed prior to analysis of drug material within.
 - Do not submit small tied-off corners of plastic bags for latent print processing. They do not provide a surface suitable for successful processing and will not be examined for latent prints.
- Drug diversion type cases, or factory-sealed, tamper-proof, or sealed blister-pack items will not be routinely accepted. Information is already provided on the packaging, so as long as the packaging is uncompromised, analysis is not needed. The information can be easily looked up by the agency.
- Plant material, such as marijuana, must be dried prior to laboratory submission. For some plant items it may be beneficial to submit in paper packaging. Please contact the drug chemistry section if questions arise prior to submission.

LATENT PRINT EVIDENCE SUBMISSIONS

- When requesting comparisons to known print cards already on file, the DCI numbers or FBI numbers need to be listed with the names of the persons of interest for comparisons to latent prints.
- No latent print examinations will be performed on drug cases when the drug evidence is taken off the suspect's person, unless special circumstances require these examinations to be conducted. Prior approval by the latent print section supervisor or designee is required.
- Controlled substances must be separated from packaging prior to submittal to the lab when cases require latent print processing.
Exceptions:
 - Tightly wrapped bricks or bundles do not need to be separated. The outsides will be processed prior to analysis of drug material within.
 - Do not submit small tied-off corners of plastic bags for latent print processing. They do not provide a surface suitable for successful processing and will not be examined for latent prints.
- Drug paraphernalia will not be accepted for latent print processing. The exception is that scales will be processed.
- Individual pieces of ammunition and fired cartridge cases will not be processed for latent prints. The exception is for death investigations. Ammunition boxes are suitable for processing.
- Do not submit items over 50 pounds. It is recommended that large items be processed on-site, before movement disturbs any latent prints.
- Items from clandestine drug labs will be limited to five items, with examiner discretion as needed. Additional items can be examined after discussions between the submitter and LP examiner. The following items will not be examined for latent prints;
 - tubing
 - grinders
 - blister packs
 - disassembled batteries
- Requests for latent print analysis on the following crimes will not be accepted unless the submission is approved by the latent print section supervisor or designee;
 - Felon in possession cases when the firearm is taken off the person.
 - Felon in possession cases when the firearm is *not* taken off the person we will process the weapon, but not the ammunition.
 - Found property (not involved in a criminal act).
 - Criminal mischief with damages less than \$1,000.

DNA EVIDENCE SUBMISSIONS

- Where the issue is consent and not identity, please consider not submitting DNA evidence for processing unless needed.
- DNA testing will be complete when an association is established from probative evidence. (For example, an association is established between the subject and the victim.)
- A scenario **must** be provided with the submitted evidence. The scenario will establish the value of each item as to its likelihood to provide probative results or an investigative lead and also determine CODIS eligibility. Please complete the DNA Case Information form when submitting DNA evidence. This form can be found on the BEAST web pre-log site or contact the evidence room.
- The number of evidence items accepted by the Laboratory will be limited depending on the nature and type of case submitted. Additional items may be accepted at the time of the initial submission after consultation with the investigator, the DNA analyst, and the DNA section supervisor. Consultation may be in person or via conference call. Including the prosecutor in item submission decisions is advised.

A. TIER ONE SUBMISSIONS (without consultation)

1. Homicides
 - a. Up to 10 probative items
 - b. Appropriate DNA standards
2. Sexual Crimes
 - a. Sexual Assault Kit: one additional probative item and appropriate DNA standards
 - b. If no Sexual Assault Kit: up to three probative items and appropriate DNA standards
3. All Other Crimes Against Persons
 - a. Up to three probative items
 - b. Appropriate DNA standards
4. Property Crimes
 - a. Up to two probative items
 - b. Appropriate DNA standards

*NOTE: No multi-item submissions will be allowed for circumventing this policy.

- B. Additional appropriate DNA standards (knowns) may be submitted at any time.
- C. If probative information is obtained from the tier one submissions, no further submissions will be accepted without approval of the DNA section supervisor and/or DNA technical leader. After completing initial testing, if additional analysis is indicated, the case analyst will consult with the DNA section

supervisor and/or DNA technical leader to evaluate the case status. The investigator will be contacted thereafter to discuss a possible second tier submission.

- D. TIER TWO SUBMISSIONS (consultation required)
 - 1. Homicides – Up to 10 additional probative items
 - 2. Sexual Crimes – Up to three additional probative items
 - 3. All Other Crimes Against Persons – Up to three additional probative items
 - 4. Property Crimes - Up to two additional probative items

*NOTE: No multi-item submissions will be allowed for circumventing this policy.

- E. If no probative information is obtained from the first or second tier submissions, a conference including the investigator, prosecutor, case analysts, DNA section supervisor, and/or technical leader will be necessary before any further submissions are allowed.
- F. Every effort will be made to assign newly submitted evidence to the first tier case analyst immediately upon submission.

➤ Touch Evidence :

- A. Touch Evidence is defined as evidence which has no visible staining and would contain DNA that only results from touching an item with the skin. Touch evidence does not include cigarette butts, swabbing from cans, bottles, straws or other items in which the substance being tested is most likely saliva. Touch evidence does not include items submitted for wearer such as shirts, shoes, hats, etc., where there is probability of prolonged contact.
- B. Touch evidence will be accepted for possible STR DNA analysis when there is a high degree of likelihood that the evidence submitted will provide probative results or investigative leads. A high degree of likelihood may be established by means of witness corroboration, visual monitoring systems, or sound deductive reasoning.
- C. Touch evidence will be processed on violent crimes cases only.
- D. Touch evidence will be processed only when no other probative evidence exists.
- E. When other sections of the laboratory are involved, consultation with the submitter and the other affected sections of the laboratory should take place prior to laboratory processing. Processing by one section of the laboratory may have a detrimental effect on the other section's(s') ability to process this item of evidence. Therefore DNA processing may not always be the best choice.
- F. Items submitted for touch evidence processing will comply with existing policy relating to the number of items of evidence that may be submitted based upon case type.
- G. Elimination standards (knowns) should be submitted with touch evidence where appropriate (e.g. owner of stolen vehicle).
- H. Possession drug cases and felon in possession of firearms cases will not be processed for DNA unless approved by the DNA section supervisor and/or technical leader.

DOCUMENT EXAMINATIONS

- False Use of Financial Instrument (check) cases involving totals less than \$1,000 will not be accepted without prior approval from the section supervisor.
- False Use of Financial Instrument (check) cases involving only banking industry digital images of checks as the only items in question will not be accepted.
- Check cases with totals over \$1,000 involving a combination of digital images and original checks will be accepted. For further information about digital check images, contact the section supervisor.
- Counterfeit currency is not accepted. Contact your nearest U.S. Secret Service field office for more information.

FIREARMS and TOOLMARKS EVIDENCE SUBMISSIONS

- Property crime cases involving toolmark requests will not be accepted unless they meet a damage/loss threshold of \$1000 or are approved by the firearms section supervisor or designee.
- No BB, pellet, or Airsoft guns will be accepted for analysis. Manufacturers' statements containing specifications and warnings associated with each model can be found on the manufacturers' websites, on literature sold with the items, or sometimes imprinted on the item itself.
- Suspect's clothing and hand swabs will not be accepted for gunshot residue analysis. Please contact the laboratory for information regarding suggested testing facilities.
- Clothing will be accepted for gunshot residue distance determinations only when suspected weapons are also submitted.
- Prior to beginning work on "older" cases, calls may be made to the submitting agencies or prosecuting attorney's offices in an effort to learn if the cases are still active or have been disposed of.
- The National Integrated Ballistic Information Network, NIBIN, is a computer database used to determine whether a firearm has been discharged in multiple shooting incidents. Only fired cartridge cases deposited at the scene by semiautomatic pistols and rifles will be entered into NIBIN. Bullets are not entered into the current NIBIN.

- For a listing of which firearms are acceptable for test fires and entry into NIBIN, please see the list on the BEAST Web Prelog site or contact the Firearms Section of the DCI Lab.
- When submitting firearms, the lab will enter fired cartridge cases from semiautomatic pistols and semiautomatic rifles. Entries from semiautomatic rifles are limited to the following calibers: 22 Long or Long Rifle, 223 Remington / 5.56mm NATO (5.56X45mm), 7.62X39mm (7.62 Russian), or 308 Winchester / 7.62 NATO (7.62X51mm).
- The lab will not enter products from single shot pistols, revolvers, shotguns, rifles other than semiautomatic rifles chambered for calibers listed above, or black powder firearms.

Questions can be referred to the Firearms Section.

➤ Delivery of Guns For Destruction

When preparing to transport seized and forfeited firearms to the DCI Crime Lab as part of the Guns for Destruction process (IAC 661-95), it is necessary to call the laboratory first and make arrangements with the Firearms Section. There are times when the laboratory has reached its capacity on processing and storing guns for destruction. At those times, the laboratory will necessarily have to suspend the receipt of additional guns until processing and destruction frees up the necessary storage space.

On occasion, a firearm may be in the laboratory for testing and the work has not been performed when a court order to destroy the gun is obtained. In these situations, please contact the Firearms section to let them know that either the work doesn't need to be done and the firearm can simply be destroyed or, the firearm still needs to be worked but the firearm can be destroyed at the completion of the work. A copy of the court order and a letter informing the laboratory should be forwarded to the laboratory in either situation.

TOXICOLOGY SUBMISSIONS

- The suspect or victim's name **MUST** be placed on the containers that immediately contains the biological specimen (cup, bottle, grey topped tube, etc.) in addition to any labeling on specimen kit or any other packaging materials.
- Urine alcohol specimens must be in grey stoppered tubes containing 100 mg of sodium fluoride and 20 mg potassium oxalate or equivalent