

ERIE COUNTY
CENTRAL POLICE SERVICES
FORENSIC LABORATORY



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[Submission Guidelines for Customers](#)

The Erie County CPS laboratory accepts a wide variety of different types of evidence. This evidence can be associated with many different types of crimes. This document is intended to serve as a general guide for the submission of commonly encountered evidence. Please contact the Laboratory if any additional circumstances are encountered that requires special submission consideration.

All evidence must be properly sealed at the time of submission. A proper seal consists of:

- tamper evident tape across the opening of an envelope, can, box or bag in which the container is reasonably secure from access to, or loss of, the contents
- heat sealed plastic bags

In all instances, the proper seal must be initialed/signed by the individual making the seal. Optionally, the date can be added.

All evidence must accompany the *Request for Laboratory Examination Form (DCPSL-N)*, completed and signed by a submitting agency representative.

Type of Evidence	Submission Guidelines
Controlled Substances	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indicate the suspected controlled substance type on the <i>Request for Lab Examination form</i>. 2. Describe the exhibits (i.e. powder, liquid, vegetable matter, mushrooms, tablets) <i>and</i> where they were recovered from (i.e. toilet, Defendant #1, Defendant #2, thrown from car) on the <i>Request for Lab Examination form</i>. 3. Indicate if a sale or possession is involved (charges) and if Federal charges are pending on the <i>Request for Lab Examination form</i>. 4. <u>Powders/Solid substance</u>: Submit in sealed plastic bags or envelopes in a manner that will prevent the substance from leaking. 5. <u>Dried Plant Material (vegetable matter, mushrooms)</u>: Submit in sealed plastic bags or envelopes that will securely contain the material. 6. <u>Fresh (Green) Plant Material (Suspected Marihuana)</u>: Due to limited drying capacity, please dry any fresh (green) vegetable matter prior to submission. Leaves must be removed from the stalks. Do not submit stalks, roots or dirt. Submit in paper or cardboard. Clearly indicate on the paperwork that the plant material is fresh/wet/green. 7. <u>Fresh (Green) Plant Material (Suspected Khat)</u>: Submit as quickly as possible in

	<p>paper or cardboard, and indicate the suspected contents on the <i>Request for Lab Examination form</i>. The active ingredient degrades rapidly.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. <u>Tablets/Capsules</u>: Submit in sealed plastic bags or envelopes that will securely contain the pharmaceuticals. Do not open or count factory sealed packaging. 9. <u>Liquids</u>: Submit in a sealed (air-tight) container to prevent leakage. 10. <u>Hypodermic syringes</u>: Not Accepted or Tested. DO NOT SUBMIT. <p>NOTE: Controlled substance possession cases, confidential informant buys and sales with no known defendant that are not requested for analysis by the District Attorney's Office are not routinely tested. Please contact the Laboratory if special consideration is needed.</p>
<p>Ignitable Liquids</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All fire debris or evidence suspected to contain ignitable liquid residues must be submitted in a container specific for this purpose. Examples of acceptable containers for suspected ignitable liquid residue analysis include: clean metal paint cans, Ampac (Kapak) Bags or nylon plastic style bags. Contact the Laboratory for recommended brands of acceptable bags. Common plastic bags, glass containers, and paper packaging are not acceptable and will not retain ignitable liquid residue. 2. Liquids must be submitted in air tight appropriate containers to prevent leakage. Appropriate containers include: glass bottles, metal cans and plastic containers certified for ignitable liquid use. Only submit a small portion of the recovered liquid. <p>NOTE: All cases received properly sealed for ignitable liquid residue analysis will routinely be examined. It is at the discretion of the Laboratory to deny analysis on improperly sealed fire debris evidence.</p>
<p>Firearms</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimize handling and wear clean gloves if DNA analysis is going to be requested. 2. Recovered cartridge cases are routinely evaluated for entry into NIBIN. 3. Only semi-automatic firearms are routinely evaluated for entry into NIBIN. Revolvers, single shot firearms, shotguns and bolt/pump action rifles do not meet current Laboratory criteria for entry into NIBIN. 4. Do not submit a firearm through the lockers unless it has been made safe, which includes a zip-tie or paper through the action, and a signed <i>Unloaded Verification</i> sticker on the outside of the sealed packaging. If the firearm cannot be unloaded or the safety cannot be verified, clearly mark the evidence as possibly loaded. Orange placards are available in the locker area. Do not disassemble the firearm. 5. For firearms submitted at the Lab's intake window, a signed <i>Unloaded Verification</i> sticker should be used on outside of the sealed evidence package. If the safety of the firearm is in question, (i.e. no signed sticker and can't visibly see the condition of the firearm), the submitting officer will need to secure the firearm prior to submission. If the submitting officer is not willing to open the evidence to verify the safety and make it safe, then the firearm will not be accepted into the lab. If the firearm cannot be unloaded for safety reasons, the agency must inform the Lab staff at the time of intake.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. The firearm, ammunition, fired bullets and cartridge cases shall all be packaged separately. 7. Serial number restorations will be performed on defaced firearms upon request. 8. The Laboratory does not accept firearms for the purpose of safe-keeping. 9. All firearms must be submitted in sealed packaging: using a box or a heavy duty plastic bag. Acceptable plastic bags are available in the locker area. 10. Do not submit bulk ammunition. <p>NOTE: Priority is given to those firearms specifically requested by the District Attorney's Office and Detectives/Investigators. Please contact the Laboratory if special consideration is needed.</p>
<p>Biology/DNA</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All cases submitted for DNA analysis must be accompanied by a completed <i>DNA Request Form</i> for CODIS eligibility purposes. 2. A request from the District Attorney's Office or US Attorney's Office is required for firearms and controlled substance packaging for all <u>possession</u> only related charges. Due to Federal guidelines, a DNA profile obtained from a firearm or controlled substance packaging associated with a possession only charge does not qualify for submission to the DNA databank. 3. Found firearms and firearm components (e.g. magazines, fired cartridge cases, and ammunition) are not routinely analyzed for DNA. 4. Swabbings of automobile areas from stolen vehicles must be accompanied with known elimination samples from the primary owner(s)/driver(s) before DNA analysis will be performed. This does not apply to vehicles directly associated with a violent crime. 5. Abandoned known samples submitted to the lab for DNA analysis must consist of an item that was in possession of and then abandoned or discarded by the person of interest in the presence of law enforcement. Examples of these types of items include cigarette butts, water bottles, and cups. 6. Items of evidence that consistently produce unusable or poor DNA results are not routinely analyzed at the lab. These include but are not limited to firearms components such as magazines, ammunition, and fired component evidence. 7. Initial analysis will begin with the specified number of samples per case type listed below. This does not include exemplars. If additional analysis is required, a separate request must be made. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="padding-left: 40px;">Homicides/Sexual Assaults/Requests-maximum of 5 items/swabs <li style="padding-left: 40px;">All other cases-maximum of 2 items/swabs 8. Evidence submitted for Biology/DNA testing must be in sealed paper or cardboard type packaging. Ensure that the item is air-dry before packaging. Package and seal each item separately. 9. Tissue (human remains) or liquid evidence can be submitted in appropriate plastic/glass containers. These are to be further secured in a sealed plastic bag to prevent any leakage. Clearly indicate on the paperwork that tissue/liquid is present. Keep refrigerated until submitted. This type of evidence must be submitted at the Lab intake window (NO lockers). Long-term storage is not

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	<p>available at the Lab so these items will be returned following analysis.</p> <p>10. Knives or other sharp objects are to be submitted in a manner to prevent injury when handling. (i.e. sealed cardboard box).</p> <p>NOTE: Homicides, Sexual Assaults and requests from the District Attorney’s Office or US Attorney’s Office will be given priority for analysis. Please contact the Laboratory if special consideration is needed.</p>
Trace	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clothing associated with a hit & run should be dry and individually packaged in paper. 2. Items being submitted for comparison must be packaged separate from each other. (i.e. recovered paint chips and paint from known object, impressions and footwear, cosmetic smears and suspect cosmetic, duct tape pieces and roll of tape) 3. Submit all recovered pieces for a fracture match comparison in separate packaging. Do not attempt to re-assemble. 4. Submit duct tape as recovered. Do not attempt to separate tape pieces that are stuck together. Be sure the duct tape is packaged separately from all other items. 5. Impression photographs must include a scale and be printed as close to actual size as possible (1:1). Submit casts if available. The suspected footwear/tire must be submitted for comparison analysis to be performed. <p>NOTE: Items submitted for trace analysis will be evaluated by the section supervisor to determine the most appropriate testing to be done.</p>

Current Revision		
Date	Author	Comments
1/16/2018 3:27:13 PM	Schmitz, Michelli A.	Clarification in Biology/DNA on # of swabs initially tested and in Firearms on the submission of safe firearms.