

**AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT
QUALITY ASSURANCE SECTION
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

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Chapter 1 SCOPE OF OPERATIONS

1.1 Quality Assurance Specialist Overview

This document specifies procedures for processing analysis requests and delivery of evidence to the laboratory sections for analysis. It is not possible to anticipate every situation that may arise or to prescribe a specific course of action for every case; therefore, the Quality Assurance Specialist (QA Specialist) must exercise good judgment based on experience and common sense.

1.2 History of the Case Management Position

The Case Management position was authorized in 2012 to assist the laboratory analysts by managing the laboratory assignments and transport of evidence.

1.3 Mission Statement

No Supplemental Requirements

1.4 Goals and Objectives

No Supplemental Requirements

1.5 Code of Ethics

No Supplemental Requirements

1.6 Organization and Staffing

The Quality Assurance Specialist reports to the Quality Assurance Manager.

1.7 List of Locations, Addresses and Phone Numbers

No Supplemental Requirements

1.8 Organizations Chart

No Supplemental Requirements

1.9 Section Descriptions and Responsibilities

No Supplemental Requirements

1.10 Hours of Operation

No Supplemental Requirements

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1.11 Manuals

No Supplemental Requirements

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No Supplemental Requirements

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No Supplemental Requirements

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No Supplemental Requirements

1.15 Purchasing Supplies and Services

No Supplemental Requirements

1.16 Management Review System

No Supplemental Requirements

1.17 Equipment and Supply Inventory

No Supplemental Requirements

2 FACILITY DESIGN AND SECURITY

2.1 DIVISION PHYSICAL PLANT/SPACE AND DESIGN

No Supplemental Requirements

2.2 Section Security (ISO 5.8.4)

- The Quality Assurance Specialist operates from the second floor evidence intake room. Access to this area is restricted to the Quality Assurance Specialist, Top Management and the evidence room personnel. No evidence will be left unsecured in this area.

3 Quality Assurance

No Supplemental Requirements

4 Laboratory Records

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No Supplemental Requirements

5 Evidence Procedures

Practices

- **DPS liaison**
 - All requests must have a Department of Public Safety (DPS) submission form and a lab analysis request in the LIMS system prior to transport to DPS by the QA Specialist. If one is received without the other the requestor is notified by the QA Specialist indicating the need to complete the required steps in order to have the evidence transported. If the request is turned in without the DPS form, the requestor is given a two week deadline and then the requestor is notified and the request is administratively closed. Documentation of the communications and reason for the administrative closure will be included in the case file.
 - When the DPS submission form and LIMS analysis request are completed, the QA Specialist will request the evidence from the Evidence Control Unit, who will deliver it to the Central Evidence Locker (CEL) for retrieval. Custody of the evidence will be updated to indicate custody of the QA Specialist until it is delivered to DPS.
 - Items are usually delivered to DPS on Wednesdays as the schedule permits. The FQAS contacts DPS before leaving to deliver in order for them to have time to pull all items being returned to the Austin Police Department. The FQAS returns all items submitted by the laboratory.
 - The receipts given by DPS are attached to the case file upon return from delivery and the CM (Case Manager) assignments are admin closed only after the receipt is scanned. In general, the receipt is scanned to the documents section under the "all" documents designation. When the request is from the Blood Alcohol Analyst, the receipt should be scanned under the BAC report located under tab 7 within the case. If there is no report, it reverts to the "all" in the document section.
 - If the item being returned was not submitted by the laboratory, the FQAS will assist DPS in determining the correct return information, but will typically not transport the evidence.
 - All returned items will be transferred in LIMS to the custody of the FQAS and then transferred to the CEL. Items that are refrigerated by the lab, even if not refrigerated by DPS will be returned to the CEL refrigerated section. Evidence too numerous or large to fit in the lockers will be returned directly to the Evidence Room Staff.

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- **Drug Analysis:**
 - **Analysis Requests**
 - a) All Drug analysis requests come in as priority 3 except for the Rocket Docket cases, which are designated a priority 1. For requests made by a Detective or the District Attorney's office, the priority will be updated by the FQAS to reflect the request. Any questions regarding the status of a specific assignment will be routed to the Chemistry Supervisor, via LIMS, for clarification. All evidence is requested by the FQAS on a daily basis as schedule permits.
 - **Assignment Item Confirmation**
 - a) If all narcotic items have not been requested, the unrequested items will be linked to the case prior to requesting from evidence room, as they are often packaged together. Items requested will be researched using the Versadex property report to determine if it contains drug items, indicated by NL ##### storage location.
 - **Duplicate Versadex Entries**
 - a) Entries that are selected for analysis by a requestor will be deleted with a note attached in the narrative section of the case in LIMS as a case event (CE) and should list the reason for deletion and the item number(S).
 - **Evidence Requests**
 - a) Once the above steps have been completed, the DC assignment status is changed from "0" Assigned to Section to "R" Requested from Property.
 - b) When the evidence is retrieved from the CEL by the FQAS, custody is transferred to the FQAS and the packaging is checked for proper seal. LIMS barcodes are printed and attached at the top of the chain of custody or as close as possible.
 - c) The evidence will be checked for completeness and any additional analysis required on the items. Once the evidence has verified, the assignment status will be changed to "E" "Ready for Examination."
 - **Evidence Delivery**
 - a) Drug Evidence will be delivered to the Chemistry Section Drug Vault.
 - b) APD cases will be placed in one location separated by size and placed in order by the lab number.
 - c) Outside Agency Cases will be placed into bins or shelves labeled for that agency.
 - **Evidence Return**
 - a) Drug Evidence will only be picked up from the chemistry bulk storage vault.
 - b) Evidence that is ready for transfer to another section will be picked up from box labeled ready for transfer. The analyst will route a message to the FQAS when they have placed the evidence in the box.

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- c) Items of evidence ready for return to outside agency will be placed by analyst in the agency labeled return bin or note posted on item on agency shelf that item is for ready for return.

- **BAC analysis requests:**

- **Analysis Requests**

Most blood alcohol analysis requests are entered by the FQAS using the Prelog system, creating a BAC assignment. This is performed on Monday and Friday as scheduling permits. This process may be suspended if the capacity of the laboratory refrigerator is at maximum.

- a) Any cases remaining in the Versadex transcription queue are transcribed by the FQAS.
- b) If there is a problem with the offense number due to officer error that is correctable, it will be researched by the FQAS in Versadex and corrected. Corrections of the offense number will be noted in LIMS under the narrative section as a case event (CE). This also includes incomplete lab quality seal corrections. The notation must include the lab item number and the Versadex tag number as well as a short description of the evidence (i.e. blood tubes).
- c) If the correction requires officer action, the officer is emailed and the evidence is placed in the FQAS's locked refrigerator. If the officer does not respond and the correction is not made within a month of notification, the officer's sergeant is notified as well with escalation as needed to correct the issue.
- d) After requests are completed, the items are transferred to the custody of the FQAS. LIMS labels are printed and affixed above the chain of custody if possible. Once all case notes have been entered, the items are transferred to the DRUG BLREF and delivered to the Blood Refrigerator located in the Chemistry lab.
- e) Once evidence has been delivered to the chemistry lab, the assignment status should be changed to "E" "Ready for Examination."

- **Evidence Transfer**

- a) All blood alcohol evidence is retrieved from the CEL by the FQAS and transferred to the laboratory refrigerator.
- b) Evidence will be placed in lab refrigerator in order of lab number.

- **Evidence Return**

- a) Blood alcohol specimens that require transfer to an outside lab for additional testing will be picked up from box in refrigerator that is designated for this purpose.

- **Crime Scene Evidence**

- **Analysis Requests** are received in LIMS either through Prelog or by entry by laboratory personnel.

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- **Evidence Delivery**
 - a) Crime Scene evidence is requested by the FQAS as time permits using the CSL/0 assignment queue in LIMS. If the evidence was collected by a Crime Scene Specialist the case is assigned to them.
 - b) Any assignment requiring DNA swabbing with exception of high profile cases (i.e. Murder or Officer Involved) are routed to the Crime Scene QA Supervisor via LIMS for approval and the status is marked "D" DNA pending. When approved, the email is attached into the document section, a note is put in the comments for the CSL staff to swab for DNA, and the assignment status is marked "R" requested.
 - c) When the evidence is picked up from the central evidence locker by the FQAS, custody is transferred to the FQAS and the packaging is checked for lab quality. LIMS barcodes are printed and attached at the top of the chain of custody or as close as possible.
 - d) The cases are checked for evidence delivery completion and any other analysis required on the items. If the items have other analysis requested, labels are affixed to the evidence as a flag for the Crime Scene Lab Personnel. The two flags used are for DNA swabbing to be performed by the Crime Scene Lab and for the transport of items from the Crime Scene Lab to the Firearms lab for testing.
 - e) If the case is assigned to a Crime Scene Specialist, the specialist is notified via the LIMS routing system when the evidence is ready and their name is placed on the evidence.
 - f) All evidence is transferred to and then delivered to the Crime Scene Evidence vault by the FQAS.

- **Evidence Return**
 - a) Evidence that is ready for transfer to another section will be picked up from the box labeled ready for transfer. The analyst will route a message to the FQAS when they have placed the evidence in the box.

- **DNA Evidence**
 - **Analysis Requests**
 - a) All DNA evidence is requested by the DNA Analysts.

 - **Evidence Delivery**
 - a) Requested evidence is retrieved from the central evidence locker by the FQAS.
 - b) The evidence custody is transferred to the FQAS.
 - c) Packaging is inspected and the items are checked against what was asked for. LIMS barcodes are printed and attached at the top of the chain of custody or as close as possible.
 - d) If the case is complete, the case status is marked "E" ready for examination. If the case does not have all the items the status remains "R" requested until all items are delivered by evidence.

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- e) Once the receiving is complete the DNA lab is notified and their representative picks up the evidence from the FQAS.
- f) Most DNA evidence is transferred from person to person.
- **Evidence Return**
 - a) All evidence transferred to the evidence control section will be transported by the DNA laboratory personnel.
 - b) Evidence submitted by outside agencies will be transferred to the FQAS for return to the submitting agency.
- **Firearms Evidence**
 - **Analysis Requests** are received in LIMS either through Prelog or by entry by laboratory personnel.
 - **Evidence Delivery**
 - a) Firearms lab evidence is requested by either the analyst or the FQAS.
 - b) Evidence picked up is transferred into the custody of the FQAS.
 - c) The evidence is received and it is checked for proper lab packaging standards and to make sure all the evidence requested for each case has been delivered by the evidence room.
 - d) If the evidence has all arrived the case status is marked “E” ready for examination. If the case evidence is not complete, the status remains “R” requested until all the evidence is delivered to the central evidence locker.
 - e) When the evidence is ready to for analysis it is transferred to the Firearms Storage and then delivered to the Firearms Storage.
 - **Evidence Return**
 - a) The evidence is transported to the CEL by firearms section personnel.
- **Latent Print Evidence**
 - **Analysis Requests** are received in LIMS either through Prelog or by entry by laboratory personnel.
 - **Latent Print Queue**
 - a) The latent print queue with the designation LP- comparison, Priority 3, Status 0 is managed as schedule permits by the FQAS.
 - b) The type of case is noted in the comments box above the requester's AP number (i.e. BOR, BONR, Assault).
 - c) The priority is changed to 8 – detective requested.
 - d) The evidence selected in the assignment must be latent prints, if it is other evidence and there is no “CSL – process for prints” request, the requester is notified of the need for the second request and that their LP Comparison request will be pending CSL processing for prints. The status on this is marked “L”. If there is a CSL – process for prints request on the item, the status is also marked “L”, but no notification to the requester is made.

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- e) There must be a suspect listed with their APD CD number listed or the SID (DPS state number) in order for the Latent Print Unit to pull a comparison 10-print card. If no APD CD number is listed, the detective is notified and the case is suspended pending more information and the email will be noted in the narrative section of the case in LIMS or attached in the document section under "all". The status on these is changed to "S". When the detective provides this number to the FQAS, the number will be added to the LIMS case under names and the assignment status will be changed to "0".

- **Evidence Delivery**
 - a) Latent Print envelopes are picked up from two areas, the CEL and from the Crime Scene Evidence Vault. The CEL holds all of the evidence from outside the lab; the Crime Scene Evidence Vault has a designated drop box for all latent print evidence submitted from within the lab. All latent print envelopes have the Forensic Analysis requests entered by the FQAS with a designation of ADM. This is performed on a daily basis as scheduling permits.
 - b) All cases in the Versadex transcription queue are transcribed by the FQAS.
 - c) If there is a problem with the latent print envelopes due to officer error that is correctable, it will be researched in Versadex and corrected. Offense number and incomplete lab quality seal corrections will be noted in LIMS under the narrative section as a CE. The notation must include the lab item number and the Versadex tag number as well as a short description of what the evidence is (i.e. latent prints). No white-out or correction tape is to be used for corrections on evidence. A single line with initials so that the original number can be read is all that is necessary.
 - d) If the correction requires officer action, the officer is emailed and the evidence is returned to the CEL. If the officer does not respond and the correction is not made within one month of notification, the officer's sergeant will be notified. Further escalation will be taken as needed to get the evidence corrected.
 - e) All errors and/or omissions by the lab staff will result in notification of the staff member and the evidence will be left in the corrections box within the Crime Scene Evidence Vault until the staff member makes the correction. The evidence coming from Crime Scene will be inspected before leaving the vault so custody will not be transferred until the errors are correct.
 - f) When all items have requests are complete, the evidence will be transferred to the custody of the FQAS. Lab labels are printed and affixed above the Offense# line and centered on all items received from outside the lab. Once all case notes have been entered, the items are transferred to the LP REV and delivered to the latent print unit.

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- **Outside Agency Evidence**

- **Submissions**

- a) All outside agency analysis requests and evidence should be received through the FQAS by appointment and delivering the evidence and case paperwork to the FQAS evidence intake.
- b) Submissions are received by scanning the bar code on the submitting agency's paperwork.
- c) All evidence must be properly sealed and initialed.
- d) Information regarding the county, case type, agency ID, and submitted by boxes is entered into LIMS.
- e) All Hays county cases (including San Marcos, Kyle and Buda) submitted for drug analysis will be designated priority "H".
- f) Verify the email address in the distribution section of LIMS.
- g) Print and attach the LIMS bar code label to all evidence. The receipts generated are given to the person submitting the evidence.
- h) Each item of evidence must be marked for identification (i.e. initials) by the submitting person.
- i) All file items should be transferred to "Electronic file, hardcopy does not exist". All evidence will be transferred to the section it is going to and the status changed to "E", ready for examination. With the exception of DNA which does person to person transfers.
- j) Cases submitted for LP, FA or DNA analysis must be accompanied by a completed payment authorization from the submitting agency.

- **Evidence Returns**

- a) Evidence will be picked up from the sections when analysis is complete or returned by section personnel to the FQAS for return to the outside agencies.
- b) The evidence is transferred to the FQAS's custody and then stored until the agency representative can come pick it up. Transfer all items to the outside agency by using the ET OA LIMS custody and make sure to check the box to capture the signature and print a receipt for the receiving agency. The receipt is given to the Outside Agency Representative once the transfer is complete.

6 Laboratory Safety

No Supplemental Requirements

7 Personnel

No Supplemental Requirements

8 Computer Resource Management

No Supplemental Requirements

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9 Forms

No Supplemental Requirements