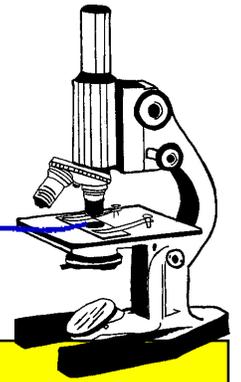


**A CURRENT
EDUCATIONAL
BULLETIN FOR
SUBMITTING LAW
ENFORCEMENT
AGENCIES**

A Closer Examination From The Benchtop...

UNDER the SCOPE



MISSOURI STATE HIGHWAY PATROL • CRIME LABORATORY DIVISION

**PHONE: 573-526-6134
FAX: 573-751-9922**



**DO NOT SUBMIT USED DRUG
FIELD TEST KITS WITH
EVIDENCE. THE DRUG
CHEMISTRY SECTION DOES
NOT NEED THESE USED KITS
FOR DRUG ANALYSIS.**

**FOR FIREARM DISTANCE
DETERMINATION (MUZZLE TO
GARMENT) TO BE
PERFORMED, THE SUSPECT
FIREARM AND AMMUNITION
MUST BE SUBMITTED ALONG
WITH THE ARTICLE OF
CLOTHING IN QUESTION.**

**IF YOUR CASE HAS PLED
OR IS NO LONGER ACTIVE,
CALL THE LAB TO HELP
US UPDATE OUR
INFORMATION. IT COSTS
THE LAB VALUABLE TIME
AND RESOURCES TO
COMPLETE A CASE THAT
DOES NOT NEED TO BE
WORKED.**

**HAVE YOUR LAB NUMBER
AVAILABLE WHEN YOU
CALL TO ASSIST US IN
LOCATING YOUR CASE.**



**JANUARY, 2005
VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 1**

Help Us Help You

The MSHP evidence control staff are the first people to have contact with our submitting agencies, usually with evidence submission. Likewise, they are the ones in the final step of sending a completed report and returning evidence to you. Without a doubt, they play an integral part in every case. Consequently, the lab evidence control staff has several key recommendations for you to adopt that can greatly assist the lab in providing the best service to your agency.

Repackaged evidence—If a specimen has been in the laboratory for prior examinations and needs additional testing, resubmit the specimen in its original container. The evidence control staff assigns a unique lab number and container number to each separate package. These numbers are kept consistent throughout the entire working process, even if a container is resubmitted multiple times. Repackaging may seem like an easier way to consolidate and resubmit only what is needed in a container, but doing so actually results in many complications for the lab.

Lab Analysis Request (LAR or SHP-411)—Lab personnel do not have access to police records or reports; therefore, always fill out the Laboratory Analysis Request form in FULL detail. Evidence control personnel and criminalists need to have specific details, including from whom or where particular evidence was collected.

Additionally, a detailed description of the incident permits the criminalists to determine which specimens may have more probative value than others. Even the smallest detail of a scenario can assist us in working a case. Criminalists cannot gain much information if an officer writes "sexual assault—perform usual exams" on the form. Use the back of the form if additional space is needed.

Evidence packaging—Only relevant evidence that needs to be tested should be placed in a container. For example, ashes and coins from a vehicle ashtray are not needed to analyze the marijuana cigarette butt also found in the ashtray.

Do not package different types of evidence together, since storage conditions may vary from one piece of evidence to the other. For example, keep toxicology evidence separate from DNA. Even evidence assigned to the same discipline should be packaged separately. Ideally, each individual item should receive its own separate container. Properly seal all evidence, and label the contents on the outside of the container to assist the evidence control staff in determining the best storage environment.

Appointments—If possible, all agencies should make an appointment before travelling to the lab. Appointments are a convenient way to allow agencies to submit and/or pick up evidence with minimal waiting.

Possible examinations—Know what exams are possible before you submit evidence. When

logging in evidence, the evidence control staff frequently encounters requests for analyses that cannot be conducted, such as DNA paternity testing, video enhancement, or urine alcohol testing. If you are unsure whether a specific type of exam can be performed, contact the lab before evidence submission.

Evidence pick-up—Our evidence locker space is limited, and the lab is not obligated to store your evidence for long periods of time. Therefore, always pick up evidence as soon as your agency receives a completed lab report.

Agency changes—Inform our staff of any changes involving your personnel who receive lab reports. Dissemination of lab report information may be compromised if we do not have accurate information, such as a current mailing address or the name of a new sheriff/police chief, etc.

Satellite/General Headquarters Labs—When officers submit a case at a satellite lab, they often are not aware of the types of testing that occurs there. Recognizing where particular exams are performed may assist you in determining how you wish to package your case.

The MSHP satellite labs at Macon, Park Hills, Springfield, St. Joseph, and Willow Springs perform only certain types of analyses: blood for ethanol content only, beer and liquor for ethanol content, marijuana, and drugs.

Evidence requiring other types of analysis, such as DNA, latent prints, firearms, toolmarks, trace, and toxicology, may be submitted to a satellite lab, but the evidence is further relayed to the General Headquarters Lab in Jefferson City.

All satellite labs hold the same accreditation status as the General Headquarters Lab. The aforementioned recommendations for the main lab also applies to the satellites.

Training—For our submitting agencies, Supervisor Carol Carter offers a free 30 minute presentation on evidence packaging and submission. She will travel to your department to discuss evidence container sealing and submission, as well as the services and supplies offered free of charge from the MSHP Crime Lab. If you wish to schedule a presentation, contact Carol at 573-526-6134, ext. 201, or e-mail at carol.carter@mshp.dps.mo.gov.

A Final note—From the beginning of the evidence process to the end, the lab provides a public service to our submitting agencies. Your cooperation with repackaged items, the analysis request form, appointments, punctual evidence pick-up, and accurate agency information not only assists the lab personnel, but ensures the best possible information from your evidence in a timely fashion.

If you have any questions about lab procedures or evidence submission/retrieval, contact the lab, refer to the MSHP Forensic Evidence Handbook, or visit the lab page of the Patrol website at www.mshp.dps.missouri.gov.