

SEMINOLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FORENSIC LABORATORY SERVICES EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY UNIT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES	NUMBER: EV-SOP9
	RESCINDS:
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I. PURPOSE:

This document is to establish procedures for the intake, storage, accountability, safe handling and proper disposal of all drugs submitted to the Evidence Unit.

II. SCOPE:

This directive applies to employees of the Evidence Unit of the Forensic Laboratory Services Division for ensuring safety, accountability, and ensuring compliance with protocols for items submitted to the unit and handled within the unit.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Air Purifying Respirator*
Any full or half-face respirator, designed to work with or without cartridges, capable of filtering out certain identified contaminants.
- B. *CAFWeb*
Computer Aided Forms Entry – Seminole County Sheriff’s Office computer program which allows for information to be shared on a real time basis.

- C. *Chain of Custody*
The continuous and recorded link established from one person to another when evidence is collected, submitted, examined or transferred from one location to another.
- D. *Evidence Manager*
Person assigned the responsibility of directing and controlling the Evidence Unit within the laboratory. The Manager reports to the Laboratory Director.
- E. *Destruction*
The action or process of doing away with so that it no longer exists or cannot be utilized; demolish.
- F. *Dispose or Disposal*
The broad term for getting rid of property and evidence in accordance with Florida Statutes, which includes returning the item to the rightful owner, destruction, agency use and donation to a charitable organization.
- G. *Documentum*
An electronic management content system utilized by the SCSO Laboratory to store case records and other documents.
- H. *EvidenceWeb*
A computerized evidence control system used by the Evidence Unit allowing laboratory personnel to track the location and movement of evidence as well as generate electronic reports to manage evidence.
- I. *Evidence*
Any substance, testimony, writings or material object found, recovered or received which offers proof in connection with a criminal incident. All property within the custody of the Evidence Unit must be handled as evidence. Therefore, the term evidence may be used within this document in reference to property and evidence.
- J. *Evidence Supervisor*
The Evidence Supervisor is the Evidence Custodian, and is responsible for the physical control of in-custody evidence and property and has the authority for the day to day supervision and operation of the property and evidence function. In addition, the Evidence Custodian is able to perform all tasks of an Evidence Specialist.
- K. *Evidence Specialist*
A person assigned to the Forensic Laboratory Services Division who works under the supervision of the Evidence Supervisor, and who is responsible for the reception, documentation, storage, and release of property and evidence held by the Evidence Unit.
- L. *High Liability Items*
High liability items include all guns, controlled substances, currency, and jewelry of significant value. Access to high liability items will be restricted as set forth in these procedures.
- M. *MedReturn Drug Collection Drop Off*
A secured metal container provided by MedReturn, LLC that allows for a safe, secure and environmentally friendly way to collect unwanted or expired household medications, including prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs and unused pharmaceuticals.
- N. *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*
Garments worn by Evidence Specialists to protect against exposure to hazards. In the Evidence Unit,

PPE consists of gloves, arm covers or gowns, aprons, air purifying respirators, and goggles.

- O. *Property Status*
The status indicated in the Property screen of CAFEweb that indicates how each individual item of evidence or property is to be categorized such that the Evidence Specialist knows the appropriate action to take for each item.
- P. *Safekeeping*
Property of a person that may need to be secured either because the item may present a threat to someone, or the person is unable to take custody and secure the property due to circumstances beyond his/her control.
- Q. *Training Drugs*
Evidence that is no longer needed for a criminal case and has been retained specifically for use in undercover operations and/or K-9 training activities.

IV. GENERAL PROCEDURES:

- A. *Intake Requirements for Drug Submissions*
 - 1. Evidence Specialists assigned to the Evidence Unit will ensure protocols established for the submission of all drug evidence are strictly adhered to by themselves and all submitters to the Evidence Unit.
 - 2. Items to be analyzed by FDLE, must be submitted according to FDLE evidence submission guidelines. Tablets, capsules and powders must be submitted in a clear plastic “zip lock” evidence bag, with the authorized pre-printed label. The label must be filled out in its entirety to include descriptions, weights, counts, and case and item information.
 - 3. All tablets, capsules and powders, or any other item that can possibly contain Fentanyl, after proper packaging, will be labeled by the submitter with a provided warning sticker, and must be placed in a separate locker, segregating the item from any other evidence being submitted on a case. (This does not apply to medications submitted in their prescription bottles that are not evidence, i.e. submitted for destruction only).
 - 4. All Evidence Specialists will be trained in the use of PPE and utilize required PPE daily when clearing lockers. The appropriate PPE includes an N95 (or higher protection) mask with goggles or full face shield respirator, Nitrile 4 mil gloves, and sleeves to cover the arms.
 - 5. The lockers will be cleared by two Evidence Specialists. One Evidence Specialist will clear the lockers and the other will observe and be available to assist should a medical need arise.
 - a. All Evidence Specialists will receive NARCAN and CPR/AED training.
 - b. Should a medical need arise, the victim will be removed from the environment.
 - c. First aid will be rendered if necessary, and EMS will be activated.
 - d. The item that potentially caused the incident will be isolated by someone who has donned appropriate PPE (this may include HAZMAT personnel).
 - 6. When tablets, capsules or powders are removed from a locker, they will be placed into another clear plastic bag for safe handling and storage. The bag will be zip closed. This bag is not considered part of the official labeling or packaging for court or integrity purposes.

7. Any locker containing tablets, capsules or powders will be de-contaminated with an Oxi-clean solution. If any other items are in the same locker, those items must also be decontaminated with the Oxi-clean solution or placed in a protective outer bag. Any surface touched by the original package containing tablets capsules or powders will be decontaminated with the Oxi-clean solution.
8. PPE will be utilized whenever an Evidence Specialist needs to open the exterior clear plastic (transport and storage) bags, including when the initial bar-code label is placed onto the interior package.
9. After drug items have been secured safely the Evidence Specialists may continue the intake process without PPE. PPE will be disposed of in the appropriate red bio-hazard bags.
10. Drug items that are plant material must be submitted in paper bags or envelopes.
11. All items will be submitted with a Chain of Custody form. Laboratory request forms are not submitted with drug evidence unless there are extenuating circumstances that require an exception. Items will not be sent to FDLE until a FASTRAC form is submitted by the State Attorney's Office. Exceptions are approved by the Evidence Manager or Evidence Supervisor.
12. Evidence Specialists will correct any submitter who fails to appropriately follow these protocols as outlined in *Evidence Standard Operating Procedure – Submission and Receipt of Evidence and Property*.

B. *Storage of Drug Items*

1. All drugs are considered high liability items and must be stored in accordance with procedures outlined in *Evidence Unit Standard Operating Procedure – Security and Quality Control* and in *Evidence Unit Standard Operating Procedure – Storage & Handling*.
2. Drugs submitted for destruction, will be stored in the DP (Destruct Pending) room. The DP room will remain secure at all times in accordance with procedures outlined in *Evidence Unit Standard Operating Procedure – Security and Quality Control* and in *Evidence Unit Standard Operating Procedure – Storage & Handling*. Security seals and barcode labels are maintained on all items stored in the DP room.
3. Drug items contained in food are stored in a locked freezer and secured according to *Evidence Unit Standard Operating Procedure – Security and Quality Control*.
4. The Sheriff's Office building main lobby, has a MEDBOX (drugs disposal box for the public), under constant camera surveillance. The MedReturn Drug Drop Off bin is periodically cleaned out by Evidence Specialists and placed in a cardboard box as outlined in *Evidence Unit Operating Procedure – Storage & Handling*. The box is sealed for destruction, two Evidence Specialists sign and date the red seal and the box is placed in the DP room. The key for the MEDBOX will be stored in the DP room, which requires two people to gain access.
5. The High Liability room that contains drugs, and the Homicide room which contains drugs, will be equipped with an air filtration system with HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filters. The county facilities group maintains the maintenance of, and replaces the filters for, these units.

C. *Training Drugs*

1. The Evidence Unit maintains a quantity of drugs in the High Liability room that have been requested to be maintained for the purpose of conducting training, or to be utilized in undercover drug investigations. Drug items that are no longer required for court, can be requested to be stored for that purpose, by a memorandum from the Lieutenant of the City County Investigative Bureau (CCIB) to the Evidence Manager. The case number, quantity, type and item numbers of the drugs to be stored, will be listed in the request memorandum.
2. When items have been approved to be retained as training drugs, the file will be designated as a Training Drugs case by adding the verbiage "Training Drugs" to the Title field of the Case File name Properties in Documentum. The Evidence Specialist will update EvidenceWeb with the new location, "TRAINING DRUGS" and affix a new barcode label to the evidence that reflects the new location and store the item accordingly.
3. Any request to check out Training Drugs from the Evidence Unit requires a written request from the requestor's Lieutenant to the Evidence Manager or designee. The request will inform the Evidence Unit as to whether or not the item will be returned, transferred to another agency, or submitted as evidence in an additional case.
 - a. The request will be reviewed and either approved or denied.
 - b. The documentation of the request will be imported into the case record in Documentum.
 - c. If approved, an appointment will be made by the requestor's designee and the transfer will be documented as any other evidence transferred.
 - d. Items will be returned to the Evidence Unit immediately after the training evolution or operation and will not be stored in another location. If the items are not recovered in the operation, documentation of the loss will be reported to the Evidence Unit. If the items are submitted to evidence in another case, that will also be reported to the Evidence Unit.

D. *K-9 Training Drugs*

1. The Sheriff's Office periodically receives K-9 drug training kits from the Drug Enforcement Agency for issuance to K-9 deputies at the Sheriff's Office. This procedure addresses the handling of these items. This process will be undertaken by an Evidence Specialist and either the Evidence Supervisor or Evidence Manager.
2. The Evidence Unit receives these kits from the DEA usually by FEDEX. Upon the arrival of the package, the outer package will be opened and the inner packages' seals will be inspected and will be verified that they are intact by an Evidence Specialist and either the Evidence Supervisor or the Evidence Manager.
3. The weights of the drug samples are listed on the packaging in three ways: the samples, the samples with inner packaging, and the samples with inner and outer packaging. The samples with the inner and outer packaging will be weighed and the weight will be compared and verified with the listed weight by the Evidence Specialist and Evidence Supervisor or the Evidence Manager.

4. A CJIS report will be created to track the items. Each sealed package will be entered into Café. Packages will be labeled DEA 1 (a through e) respectively, and will make up one kit that will be issued. Packages labeled DEA 2 (a through e), will comprise a second kit that will be issued. (It may be necessary for the Evidence Supervisor or Evidence Manager, to have the kits be weighed and broken down further for issuance.) Should this be necessary, two people will undertake this task, an Evidence Specialist, and either the Evidence Supervisor or Evidence Manager. The smaller kits will be identified with their own barcode labels to track issuance and return. The original packaging from DEA will also be submitted into evidence under the same case number. The property status for all of these items will be safekeeping. The location “Training Drugs” will be utilized to store the packages until issuance. (The case number being utilized for this process at the time of the writing of this policy is 2017CJ003332, and may be utilized as a reference for future reports.)
5. The Sergeant or Lieutenant of the K-9 Deputy will email the Evidence Unit to notify which Deputies are authorized to receive a drug kit. An appointment will be made with K-9 Deputies to come and sign out their training drug kit. When the kit is turned over, the location “K-9 Handler” will be utilized in the EvidenceWeb system. The kits’ contents will be weighed and verified upon issuance and upon return.
6. DEA will advise the K-9 handlers’ supervisor when it is time for the drugs to be replaced. The K-9 handlers’ supervisor will notify the Evidence Unit. A form is given to the Evidence Unit to utilize to document the drugs have been destroyed. Each K-9 deputy will make an appointment with the Evidence Unit to return their kits. The kits will be weighed and verified accurate. The Evidence Unit will return the kits to the Training Drug location until all of the kits have been received. All of the kits will then be recombined, and placed on the next order for drug destruction. The DEA-12 form may then be filled out and provided to the DEA for the issuance of new kits to the Seminole County Sheriff’s Office.

*Note: A preliminary DEA-12 form may be filled out for the DEA with a promise date of when the returned drugs will be destroyed if an incineration is not scheduled prior to the need to replace the kits. If this occurs, the final DEA-12 must be forwarded to the DEA upon the incineration of the old kits.

E. *Disposing of Drug Evidence*

1. A court order must be obtained as described in *Evidence Unit Standard Operating Procedure - Disposal of Evidence* before drug evidence can be destroyed.
2. Drug evidence must be disposed of by incineration at a facility approved for the disposal of such items as described in *Evidence Unit Standard Operating Procedure - Disposal of Evidence*.

V. **LIMITATIONS – WEIGHING NARCOTICS:**

- A. Evidence Specialists only weigh narcotic evidence in order to meet the evidence submission criteria for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and to confirm the weights for the training drugs as described above.
- B. Weights that are taken by the Evidence Specialists are only an approximate weight.
- C. Evidence Specialists do not report the weight of narcotic evidence.

VI. **RELATED LITERATURE:**

- A. Enforcement Policy E-47 Investigative/ Training Aids

- B. <https://www.fentanyl-safety.com> PPE recommendations
- C. Ohio BCI Criminal Intelligence Bulletin “Cleaning Fentanyl Spills with OxiClean TM” (August 17, 2017) www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov
- D. *Evidence Unit Standard Operating Procedure – Security and Quality Control*
- E. *Evidence Unit Standard Operating Procedure – Storage & Handling.*

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