

FORENSIC BIOLOGY EVIDENCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT MANUAL

Case Files		
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Case Files

1 Guiding Principles and Scope

- 1.1 Each Forensic Biology case has an associated “case record” that consists of all examination, administrative and supplemental documentation generated or received for the case. The term “case file” and “case record” may be used interchangeably. Forensic Biology Hardcopy case records may include more than one case file. LIMS case records will contain initial testing and all subsequent testing within the same case record.
- 1.2 Analysts should ensure that the documents within case records (whether hard copy or LIMS) are uniquely identified according to laboratory policy and/or procedure. The unique identifier may be the entire case number (e.g., FB17-12345) or just the numerical portion of the case number (e.g., 17-12345).
- 1.3 This document describes the general process for how **case records** are compiled and maintained.

2 General Guidelines

- 2.1 In pre-LIMS work, the hardcopy case record is the primary location for records related to a particular case. For any pre-LIMS case records that have been digitized, the electronic record (maintained on the Forensic Biology Main drive) will fill the primary location for these cases and the hardcopy the secondary role for the record. For evidence received post-LIMS, the LIMS is the primary location for records related to the case, and any hardcopy associated case records fill a secondary role.
- 2.2 For full instructions on how to compile a case record, see the Case Management section of the LIMS Process Manual.

3 Case File Contents

- 3.1 Case files are comprised of administrative records, technical (examination) records and supplemental records.
- 3.2 Case files created by a contract laboratory will not contain much of the information listed below. The administrative paperwork, analytical paperwork, report format, etc. will differ from case files created by the Department of Forensic Biology.
- 3.3 Suspect files are arranged in the same format as evidence files.

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- 3.4 **Administrative records.** Administrative records are information not resulting from evidence examination, for example, vouchers and requests for lab testing. All administrative documentation **must** be identified for association to the case record with the appropriate case number.

Administrative records include, but are not limited to:

- 3.4.1 Communication Log Reports
- 3.4.2 Scheduled analysis report
- 3.4.3 Copies of NYPD paperwork: 61 form (NYPD complaint report), request for laboratory examination forms, ECT collection forms (if present), evidence vouchers (documentation of evidence collected), contracts with outside jurisdictions
- 3.4.4 Miscellaneous correspondence, such as, **copies** of sexual assault kit paperwork or memos to and from outside laboratories.
- 3.4.5 Autopsy case worksheet
- 3.4.6 Chain of custody reports
- 3.4.7 DNA extract tracking reports
- 3.4.8 Forensic Biology laboratory case report
- 3.4.9 CODIS paperwork

- 3.5 **Examination records.** Examination records contain information related to evidence testing. All pages of examination documentation must have the case number, dates the testing was done, the handwritten initials/name or electronic equivalent of the interpreting/reporting analyst for the case, and page numbers(double sided pages must contain page numbering on both sides of the page). The handwritten initials/name or electronic equivalent of the analyst performing a particular test must be present on the pages representing that analyst's work. For functional reports generated within the LIMS, the names of analysts, witnesses, and reviewing supervisors are considered electronic signatures, and are traceable within the LIMS system. **Examination records include, but are not limited to:**

- 3.5.1 Exemplar processing notes
- 3.5.2 Examination notes and photos documenting the evidence examinations
- 3.5.3 Serology notes
- 3.5.4 DNA extraction notes
- 3.5.5 Quantitation notes

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- 3.5.6 Amplification notes
- 3.5.7 Electropherograms
- 3.6 Page numbers are placed (whether by hand or electronically by LIMS) at the bottom margin of the pages on the examination documentation of the case record, starting with the bottom page. The page numbering is continued if additional analyses are done after a report has been issued and/or if there is more than one record for a case. It is recommended to not start page numbering over with page one in a second case record.
- 3.7 **Supplemental Records.** Supplemental records are records that contain summary information derived from testing recorded in the examination records and/or feedback recorded in the form of digital sticky notes or case report dialogs from the technical reviewer. Supplemental records are used to aid case analysts in their interpretations and report writing. All pages of supplemental records, with the exception of digital sticky notes and case report dialogs which are not maintained beyond technical review, must have the case number, the handwritten initials/name or electronic equivalent of the interpreting/reporting analyst for the case, and page numbers. **Supplemental records include, but are not limited to:**
 - 3.7.1 Results table
 - 3.7.2 Statistics worksheets
 - 3.7.3 STRmix™ analyses
 - 3.7.4 CODIS match estimation worksheets
 - 3.7.5 Standard Inconclusive Forms