

FORENSIC BIOLOGY EVIDENCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT MANUAL

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Reports

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND SCOPE

Case reports bring together all of the analytical results and conclusions found in the case notes. Reports must be clear and accurate, and avoid overly technical terminology and misleading statements.

If it becomes necessary for an additional report to be authored by a criminalist who did not author the previous case report, nor were they the prior Technical Reviewer of the case, the CASE RECORDS REVIEW-PREVIOUSLY REPORTED RESULTS form must be completed and placed in the case file by the author of the additional report.

A. General guidelines

1. Overly technical terminology or misleading statements must be avoided. The conclusions in each report must be supported by the analytical data.
2. Each reviewer must document the completion of the technical and administrative reviews.
3. DNA reports must include the following:
 - a. Case identifiers
 - b. List of evidence received
 - c. Description of the methodology
 - d. Loci tested and/or Amplification Test Kit used
 - e. Results and conclusions
 - f. An interpretive statement, either quantitative (statistics) or qualitative
 - g. Report date
 - h. Disposition of evidence
 - i. Signature and title of person accepting responsibility for the content of the report
 - j. Appendix containing explanatory statements and definitions of terms.

These requirements are met in the sections of the report: top block, RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS, EVIDENCE RECEIVED, DISPOSITION, signature block, and APPENDIX.

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Serology or additional reports may not require all of the above.

4. Report templates are available and should be used. These report templates have many pre-written statements which are applicable to most cases and save valuable time by eliminating the need to write the same sentences repeatedly. There are different template reports depending on case type and testing performed (Serology, DNA, suspect, missing persons, etc.); make sure the correct template is used for the type of case analyzed. Pre-written statements cannot cover every possible case scenario and should be modified as necessary for accuracy.

B. Evidence reports versus suspect (exemplar) reports

1. The DNA typing of evidence is often completed long before a suspect is identified or an exemplar is provided from an identified suspect. Sometimes, more than one suspect is developed on a case, such as when the initial suspect has been eliminated (especially with pattern cases). It is also possible for a suspect whose blood was collected for one investigation to end up linked to a totally different case. *For these reasons, an evidence report stands alone, without inclusion of any suspect DNA typing results.*

The evidence report describes the examination of any evidence that was submitted, DNA typing results from the evidence and victim(s), and the statistical statements of the DNA typing results of the evidence.

The evidence report may have the name, arrest number and/or NYSID (New York State Identification) number of an identified suspect in the top block of the report.

2. If an evidence case is linked to another evidence case or pattern, *the link between the cases is described in the evidence report(s)*. When making comparisons to other cases in the pattern, list the linked cases (case number, victim, complainant, and/or entity names, and all report dates or LIMS Report IDs) in the summary.
3. If a suspect is linked to a case or pattern, *the link between the suspect and the evidence is described in the suspect report*. If the suspect is linked to only one case, the precinct and complaint number information can be included; if linked to a pattern, the information may be left out.

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- a. Where a suspect sample is being compared to DNA profiles in multiple cases, each suspect report (suspect to case 1, suspect to case 2, etc.) should be able to stand on its own if the cases are of vastly different types (e.g., a burglary and a sexual assault) or reporting comparisons from different test types (e.g., Identifiler 28 cycles vs. Identifiler 31 cycles or autosomal vs. mitochondrial).
 - b. If the multiple cases are part of a “normal” pattern, a single suspect report will address the matching cases simultaneously. List all cases where comparisons are being made (case number, victim, complainant, and/or entity names, and all report dates or LIMS Report IDs).
4. A table of DNA results may be included in the suspect case record as needed. This table includes the DNA profile of the suspect along with the relevant DNA typing results from the linked previous cases. Generally, the table will include deconvoluted mixtures (mixture and the deconvoluted profile) and single-source samples matching the suspect. A non-deconvoluted profile that the suspect is positively associated with does not need to be in the table, as the data will be displayed on the table in the FST report. If the evidence results are clean types, the DNA profile of the victim(s) may not be necessary. For samples typed in PowerPlex® Fusion, a table of DNA results is not needed in the suspect case record as the comparison will be displayed in the STRmix™ report.
 5. Evidence reports and conclusions should be completed by the analyst before a suspect comparison report is completed. **Careful case management is required to ensure that the suspect report contains an accurate report identifier (LIMS REPORT ID, if applicable, or report date) for the evidentiary case report to which comparisons were made.**
 6. If a suspect is excluded from a particular case or case(s) the suspect report is issued as described in Step 5, above. For high priority suspect cases, suspect comparison results should be conveyed by a Criminalist IV or above to the NYPD or District Attorney’s Office.
 7. If a suspect is subsequently found to match a case, an additional report is issued using the format described in 3 above.

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8. For pseudo exemplars, in most cases, only one or two items are submitted for an individual. Testing may be done on some or all of the items. . Independent of the detection of a match, the ensuing single-source result scenarios are resolved as follows:

SINGLE-SOURCE RESULTS			
	Scenario	Comparison and Reporting	LDIS Y/N
1	Items generate one DNA profile	Compare the DNA profile to LDIS and directly to any case(s) specifically indicated. Issue report clearly stating that DNA profile was obtained from a pseudo-exemplar. Request oral swab in report.	Yes
2	Items generate two or more different DNA profiles	Compare all DNA profiles to LDIS and directly to any case(s) specifically indicated. Issue report clearly stating that the DNA profiles were obtained from pseudo-exemplars and the types were not consistent with each other. Request oral swab in report.	No
3	Not all tested samples yielded a result; one or more of the samples are negative.	Depending on the results of the samples yielding a result, follow Scenario 1 or 2 above. Request oral swab in report.	Follow Scenario 1 or 2 above.
4	None of the samples yielded a result; all samples are negative.	Issue a negative report. Request oral swab in report	N/A

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The detection of a mixed DNA profile in a pseudo-exemplar clearly raises concerns about the validity of the association of the individual to the item submitted as the pseudo-exemplar. It is possible that the individual is a source of some component of the mixture or perhaps is not the source of any part of the mixture. Because of these possibilities, such results will not be the basis of any comparisons. **Therefore, if a mixture was detected on a pseudo-exemplar, report that “further interpretation will not be done” with the mixture. .” Additionally, request an oral swab in report.**

When reporting results on pseudo-exemplars it should be clear from the report that the result was not from a buccal- or blood-sample. Depending on the results obtained, there may need to be additional statements about mixtures. In all pseudo-exemplar reports, a request for a true exemplar (oral swab) must be made. See the template report for the wording to address these situations.

9. For a kinship (paternity, maternity, etc.) case, a single report is generated using the paternity report template. Both FB numbers are used on the report and a copy of the report is kept with each case record.

C. Additional and Amended Reports

1. If an additional report is generated, this will be noted immediately prior to the RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS section using the following standard statement:

ADDITIONAL REPORT

This is an additional report. For previous examinations, evidence submitted, and disposition, see report(s) dated (insert date or dates of all prior reports).

In instances where additional reports are generated, the analyst who worked on that portion of the case will sign the most recent report. The RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS section generally discusses only the new analyses. If the new data includes additional genetic testing, the report may be cumulative, including the new genetic testing results plus the genetic testing results from past reports.

2. If an amended (corrected) report is generated, this will be noted immediately prior to the RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS section using the following standard statement:

AMENDED REPORT

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This is an amended version of the report dated (insert date of original report). *An additional sentence describing the nature of the correction must be included.*

In instances where amended reports are generated, the original reporting analyst will sign the most recent report. The entire report, including the amendment, is generated.

D. Top block

Each report will be on the most current version of the department letterhead and will have specific identifying information in the top block. Not all of the following are available for each case. The information may vary depending on the case type and/or whether the case is an NYPD submitted case.

- a. Report date indicating the date the final report was generated
- b. Name of deceased, victim, complainant, or entity
- c. FBio case number
- d. ME (Medical Examiner) number
- e. Physician that conducted the autopsy and autopsy date
- f. Name of suspect
- g. Arrest number and/or NYSID number of suspect
- i. NYPD complaint number

E. Results and Conclusions

The Results and Conclusions section contains a summary of results and/or conclusions and the interpretive statement (quantitative or qualitative) that provides weight to any associations made.

Before writing results and conclusions, ask yourself **“WHAT DOES THE READER OF THE REPORT NEED TO KNOW?”** Then write short, clear statements answering those questions.

The template reports contain many pre-written sentences to guide the explanations and interpretation of results.

The first part of Results and Conclusions should be a brief synopsis of the analytical results; it should **answer the questions** that were posed by the submission of the physical evidence, such

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as: Is there blood? Could it be the victim's? Are there samples foreign to the victim? Is there semen? Was the DNA profile of the semen donor determined? Are there any other body fluids?

The synopsis should also contain information, where applicable, regarding database comparisons or suitability of entry of profiles into DNA databases.

1. Positive associations of evidentiary or suspect DNA profiles to DNA profiles in local databases are reported in the applicable case report.
2. Negative results on database searches of evidentiary or suspect profiles should be reported in a case report only in the following circumstances:
 - a. The search is a one-time event and the evidentiary or suspect DNA profile will not be entered into the local databases, and/or
 - b. A suspect sample was submitted specifically for comparison to local DNA databases.
3. Case reports must identify the DNA profiles that are suitable for entry into DNA databases, and which level of database/CODIS the profile will ultimately reside.

Other things to consider:

1. For the majority of the DNA cases, the following manner of reporting serological results is sufficient:
 - a. Presumptive testing for blood was positive on the knife .
 - b. Spermatozoa were identified on the vaginal swabs.
 - d. Presumptive testing for saliva was positive on the shirt.
 - e. No blood was detected on the pants or shoes taken from the “suspect.”
 - f. The standard forensic paternity conclusions.

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2. DNA results are dealt with in the RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS section as well, for example:

a. For evidence samples tested in Identifiler[®] and Yfiler[®], reports will list the amplification test kit used within the results of each sample reported. For evidence samples tested in Fusion[®] and Yfiler[®], reports will list the amplification test kit used once at the beginning of the section before reporting all sample results.

Identifiler[®] reports:

STR DNA typing using AmpF/STR[®] Identifiler[®] PCR Amplification Kit was performed on the samples listed below.

Fusion[®] reports:

STR DNA Kit used: PowerPlex[®] Fusion

Sample: [sample name]

Number of contributors: 1

A 15-locus DNA profile from a male, Male Donor A, was determined.

Sample: [sample name]

Number of contributors: 2

The DNA profiles of the individual contributors to the mixture(s) could not be determined; however, the results are suitable for comparison.

b. List samples that do not yield enough DNA for typing.

Identifiler[®] reports:

No human DNA suitable for STR DNA typing was detected on the following samples.

Fusion[®] reports:

Sample(s): [list all applicable samples]

No human DNA suitable for STR DNA typing was detected.

c. List samples where typing was attempted with no alleles detected.

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Identifiler® reports:

STR DNA typing using the AmpF/STR® Identifiler® PCR Amplification Kit was performed on the samples listed below; however, these samples are not suitable for comparison due to no alleles detected.

Fusion® reports:

Due to laboratory interpretation policies, no interpretations or comparisons were made to this sample due to no DNA profile/result detected.

- d. List samples that were extracted but not typed (such as multiple samples from a single item).

Identifiler® reports:The following samples were extracted and a sufficient concentration of DNA was obtained, but STR DNA typing was not performed:

Fusion® reports:

Sample: [sample name]

This sample was extracted and a sufficient concentration of DNA was obtained, but STR DNA typing was not performed.

- e. List samples with no foreign DNA (intimate samples such as body swabs, underwear, etc.).

Identifiler® reports:

STR DNA typing using the AmpF/STR® Identifiler® PCR Amplification Kit was performed on the samples listed below. A DNA profile was determined and matches the DNA profile of *Jane Doe*.

Fusion® reports:

Sample: [sample name]

Number of contributors: 1

A 15-locus DNA profile from a male was determined. This DNA profile matches the DNA profile of *John Smith*.

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3. Clearly differentiate between similar items so that there is no confusion regarding which test results and conclusions apply to which items. For example, for items that can be differentiated by color or other descriptions:
 - a. Human blood was found on the blue shirt. No blood was found on the green shirt.
 - b. Human blood was found on the samples from the “doorway” and “hall.”
4. Avoid the exclusive use of item numbers alone when reporting samples tested since that forces the reader to look elsewhere to find out what is being described. However, item numbers may be used in conjunction with the item descriptions for instances when similar items are submitted and the item description alone will not suffice in differentiating one item from the other. Notations used by the collecting officer to identify samples may be useful to differentiate between many items as well.

grey duct tape (item 1)
grey duct tape (item 2)
5. If items were removed from an object, location or person, it may be useful to put that information in the summary. Quotation marks may be used to indicate wording that has been copied EXACTLY as it is written elsewhere, including any misspellings or abbreviations:
 - a. swab of “bedroom door.”
 - b. shirt from “the defendant.”
 - c. swab of “S&W...trigger/trigger guard”
 - d. swab of “Hi point...trigger/trigger guard”

If there is conflicting information in the voucher, request for laboratory examination, and/or crime scene report, it may be impossible to determine which is correct; in that case, do not include any information.
6. Trace evidence (hairs, fibers, etc.) collected while examining evidence should be mentioned in the summary:

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- a. Trace evidence included with the following items was not examined and will be returned with the evidence:
7. All items submitted must be mentioned in the report. If nothing of evidentiary interest was found on an item:
 - a. Spermatozoa were not identified on the cervical swabs.
 - b. No semen was detected on the underwear.
 8. Quantitative (statistical) statements are often part of the summary. They are calculated for samples when an exemplar (victim/elimination/suspect) is submitted for comparison, and that comparison is probative and/or the individual is not expected to be found on that item:
 - a. victim on suspect's shirt
 - b. suspect included/excluded on weapon
 - c. Statistics are not calculated for expected inclusions such as epithelial cells from a swab giving a profile consistent with the donor of the swab. (e.g. victim on her own vaginal swab)
 10. After a summary is written, review it carefully. Does it answer all of the questions? Is it clear? Are all submitted items accounted for?

F. Examinations

The examinations section contains a description of the methodology and the loci tested. **This section does not appear in case reports with an "Appendix" section that contains equivalent information.**

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Standard explanatory statements are in the template reports; use the correct explanatory statement for the type of genetic markers you used. The explanatory statements consist of several paragraphs; choose those that apply to the results in the case, deleting any paragraphs or loci that don't apply.

The explanatory statement can be further modified to reflect the analyses performed in a specific case, if necessary.

G. Evidence received

This section lists all evidence received, whether from a submitting agency or from an autopsy.

All items signed into the case, whether or not they were examined, are listed in the EVIDENCE RECEIVED section.

The Evidence Received section should list the item number, voucher number, date received, and description of each item.

1. If items were removed from an object, location or person, it is useful to put that information in the description. Use quotation marks to indicate an exact copy of information written elsewhere.

ITEM	VOUCHER	DATE REC'D	DESCRIPTION
1	E111111	4/15/99	swab of "bedroom door"
1	E222222	4/21/99	shirt
1	—	4/10/99	blood sample from victim

2. If several items are submitted as one, give all items individual item numbers.

ITEM	VOUCHER	DATE REC'D	DESCRIPTION
1.1	E111111	4/15/99	cigarette butt
1.2			cigarette butt
1.3			cigarette butt

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On the voucher, the cigarette butts were identified as "item 1". Upon opening the package, there were three; they were given the identifiers 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3.

3. Indicate submitted items that weren't included on the voucher in the examination notes and may be listed as follows:

ITEM	VOUCHER	DATE REC'D	DESCRIPTION
1.1	E111111	4/15/99	shoe
1.2			sock (not listed on voucher)

4. If upon opening the items it was discovered that the description on the voucher was incorrect (for example, a tank top was submitted, but the voucher says "T-shirt"), put the correct description in the EVIDENCE RECEIVED section and fill out a LIMS Discrepancy form.
5. List items submitted to the laboratory but not examined. These items should be marked as (not examined).

ITEM	VOUCHER	DATE REC'D	DESCRIPTION
1	E111111	4/15/99	shoes (not examined)

6. Missing items listed on the voucher but not present upon opening the packaging for examination should be noted in a LIMS Discrepancy form by the examining analyst and should be marked as (not submitted).

ITEM	VOUCHER	DATE REC'D	DESCRIPTION
1	E333333	7/23/16	shirt (not submitted)

H. Disposition

1. This section describes what has happened to the exemplars, vouchered evidence, post-mortem evidence, and samples removed from the evidence.

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2. Always keep victim exemplar from a sexual assault kit. If no buccal sample was submitted in a sexual assault kit, keep the saliva sample or other suitable item, such as an orifice swab negative for PSA. (Exemplars from vouchered sexual assault kits are retained; all other contents are returned to the Evidence Unit.)
3. All sexual assault kit items from post-mortem samples are returned to the Evidence Unit. Any post-mortem samples that are not a part of a sexual assault kit will be retained.
4. Neither vouchered evidence nor samples from vouchered evidence are retained. DNA extracts are retained.
 - a. Example of how to list retained items

The following items will be retained in the laboratory:

DNA sample from Jane Doe
Post mortem items 2 and 3 from victim
DNA extracts from samples and controls tested

5. List any items/samples consumed during the analysis. The consumed items/samples will be tagged with an "*" following the item description in the evidence received section. The following statement should be used to reference the "*" in the disposition:

The sample(s) collected from this item and/or the submitted swab was consumed.

6. State when items have been transferred to the Evidence Unit:

The remainder of the evidence will be returned to the OCME Evidence Unit.

I. Signature block

Each report has two signatures

1. The reporting analyst for the case, and

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2. The administrative reviewer

Reports generated within the LIMS are electronically “signed” after validating the user’s credentials.

J. Comparison only reports

A “comparison only” report provides the results of a comparison in the absence of any additional DNA typing. For example, this could include the comparison of a previously typed exemplar from a suspect file to additional results in the evidence file or comparison of a previously typed exemplar to a second evidence case. Because no additional testing was performed on the suspect exemplar, a disposition section is not necessary in that additional suspect report. Disposition information is documented in previous reports and referred to in the “Additional Report” statement.

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