



# MNPD Crime Laboratory

## Evidence Receiving Unit Standard Operating Procedures



Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County  
Police Department



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## 1 Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to provide general working guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOP) for the technicians assigned to the Evidence Receiving Unit (ERU) of the Metro Nashville Police Department Crime Laboratory (MNPDC-CL). MNPDC-CL staff may also refer to this SOP for general evidence topics. The ERU SOP provides uniform procedures for evidence management within the MNPDC-CL and MNPDC-CL-ERU but is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of the duties that may be assigned to members of the Evidence Receiving Unit. The infinite variables involved in modern forensic science methods preclude the formulation of a procedures manual extensive enough for application to all situations that may be encountered. When necessary, further assistance in determining the proper procedures for any aspect of evidence management as applied to the MNPDC-CL may be obtained by consulting MNPDC-CL Management Team, the Lieutenant of the MNPDC Evidence Storage Division (ESD), or researching appropriate reference materials.

Some procedures have safety practices that are required and others require special safety precautions. MNPDC-CL-ERU will observe and practice good safety habits at all times (See: [MNPDC-CL Safety Plan](#)).

## 2 Objectives

The central objective of this SOP is to provide uniform procedures for evidence management within the MNPDC-CL-ERU. General evidence procedures for the MNPDC-CL forensic disciplines are outlined in this SOP.

The Laboratory Information Management System - JusticeTrax LIMS-Plus, hereafter referred to as LIMS, will be used in all processes when documenting evidence chain of custody (COC).

## 3 Safety

### 3.1 General Rules

PPE such as: masks, gloves, and goggles are available for ERU staff to protect them and prevent any contamination.

While in the Evidence Receiving Unit, laboratory coats can be worn while processing evidence to protect technician's clothing and as PPE.

No open-toed shoes shall be worn.

Gloves will be worn at all times when handling, transferring and entering evidence.

All work areas should be cleaned with disinfectant after entering evidence and at the end of each workday.



Accidents or exposure to chemical/biological hazards will be handled according to the laboratory safety protocol. NARCAN is available in ERU in the event of Fentanyl exposure (See: [MNPD-CL Safety Plan](#)).

## 4 Audits

### 4.1 General

An audit is done to ensure that records are correct and properly annotated. The ERU will participate in MNPD-CL internal and management audits once yearly.

Additionally, the evidence vaults will be audited on an annual basis to reconcile correct evidence location and proper evidence seals are intact. These audits will be retained in Quality Management Software in the "Audit-ERU Evidence Vaults" workflow.

### 4.2 Management Change

If the ERU Supervisor leaves or is transferred, an audit will be conducted jointly with the new ERU Supervisor and the Crime Lab Quality Manager. This audit is done to ensure that records are accurate and that evidence is present and properly annotated.

## 5 Evidence Management

### 5.1 Evidence Receiving

Evidence is received through the incoming Evidence Receiving Unit window by delivery from the main MNPD Evidence Storage Division (MNPD-ESD). An ESD officer will bring latent print envelopes, BAC kits, cartridge cases, and NIBIN compatible firearms to the MNPD Crime Lab on a Daily basis. Additionally, evidence is delivered to the MNPD-CL on the basis of service requests (MNPD Form 282) as described in the [Quality Manual](#).

Upon arrival, ERU technicians will ensure the evidence meets all the following requirements:

- Evidence container is appropriately sealed, Boxed guns require a seal on each flap, and marked "made safe" (or similar language). A note will be made in the casefile if evidence is received improperly sealed. Any deviations between information documented on the 110/282 and the evidence submitted will be documented in the casefile.
- Evidence container(s) must have the MNPD incident number and a description of container content(s). \*\*Note: some ME items may be too small for a full description. The RMS barcode is acceptable in place of the description.\*\*
- The description and incident number on the evidence container must match the RMS barcode label, as well as the MNPD form 110, and MNPD form 282 if available.
- Drugs must be double bagged.



- Evidence submitted for DNA testing must be in a paper bag(s) or boxes (Pre May 1, 2015 DNA items are case by case regarding plastic packaging. We cannot control how items were packaged before the Crime Lab was created).
- Drug evidence from a syringe is to be approved by the DA for analysis with a letter from their office.
- Verify all evidence on the 282 is received, do not accept partial cases. Send back the partial evidence if all evidence listed is not received.
- Drug evidence received from ESD in a proximal bag should have a proper seal with initials and date. The evidence inside the proximal must be able to be seen so the front and back information as well as the RMS barcode are able to transfer. If the information is not able to be seen, it should be rejected back to ESD for correction. See the [Evidence Packaging Guidelines](#)
- If drug evidence is received at the ERU window and needs a proximal bag, ESD can make the correction (up to 3 cases) and apply a proper seal.
- Ensure no evidence is wet; this includes Firearms, cartridge casings, DNA, Drugs, Tox or Latent envelopes. If any evidence appears wet inside the bags it is to be rejected back to ESD for drying.
- ESD changed some of their plastic bags and the seal had a black self-adhesive for the user. As a mechanism to identify tampering, the area of the adhesive is black/white with lettering imprinted into the adhesive. Access into the container through the seal would cause the lettering on the seal to misalign. Due to the placement and color of the self-adhesive, users have been applying initials/date underneath the seal instead of across the seal. This will be acceptable in order to see the initials applied.
- Ensure bagged firearms have a zip tie through the firearm to be made safe, if zip tie is not present, send back to ESD for correction. If zip tie is broken but still visible through the ejection port of the slide, it can be received by ERU personnel. If zip tie is broken and cannot be seen through the ejection port of the slide, it will be sent back to ESD for correction. ESD officers cannot open the evidence to put zip tie through evidence.

An evidence container cannot have more than one RMS barcode if it is dated after 09/01/2015. If it has multiple barcodes on one bag after this date, it is to be rejected and returned to ESD for correction. This does not apply to firearm boxes that have 2 of the same number barcodes; one on the top of the box and one on the end.

When an item is returning to the Crime Lab for additional testing and a discrepancy is found with the evidence, the following steps will need to be done: (Clarification of discrepancy)

- Take pictures of the evidence as received into the ERU, upload the pictures into LIMS.
- Document the discrepancy in LIMS under the Evidence tab in the Notes section



- File a Deviation Request in Quality Management Software documenting the event listing all the facts in detail (Pull COC information from LIMS to attach) as to what occurred for the discrepancy.

## 5.2 Transferring Evidence in RMS To/From ERU Custody

The MNPD-ESD maintains COC records in the Record Management System (RMS). Once evidence arrives at the MNPD-CL ERU window, it (the evidence) is checked for errors by an ERU Technician. Then, the ESD Officer will transfer the evidence into the ERU Technician's custody through the RMS Barcode Control System. The RMS will generate an Evidence Transaction Sheet documenting the transfer. Each technician will receive their own Evidence Transaction Sheet documenting the evidence in their custody.

The Evidence Transaction Sheet that lists all the evidence brought for the day to the MNPD Crime Lab is called the Transit sheet. Items that are rejected and sent back to ESD for correction will be documented on this Transit sheet as being returned to ESD for correction and why it was rejected. The ESD officer will then sign the first and last pages of the Transit report to be scanned to the L:drive.

5.2.1 Evidence Transaction Sheet The Evidence Transaction Sheet lists the barcodes, MNPD incident numbers, and COC transfer date/time for the evidence transferred into each technician's custody. The ERU Technician will reference their Evidence Transaction Sheet to create Crime Lab cases in the LIMS.

The sheets are used to quality check the technician's entries into LIMS, then scanned to the L:drive for ERU record keeping.

### 5.2.2 Evidence Returned to ESD after Analysis

Once forensic analysis is completed, evidence will be returned to MNPD ESD for long-term storage. Evidence returned to MNPD-ESD from the ERU is done through the LIMS as well as the RMS. Once the ERU Technician checks it out of the MNPD-CL custody from LIMS, it is then transferred into RMS by the ESD officer to a "Transit" location and returned to MNPD-ESD.

Latent print evidence is stored in the latent evidence vault within the LP Unit and does not return to MNPD ESD through the ERU.

Toxicology evidence is retained in secured storage in the Toxicology laboratory, and long term storage in the ERU primary vault. It is then handled/stored/disposed as per the Toxicology Unit TPM.





### 5.2.3 Optional Chain of Custody Entry

Should a ERU technician(s) be unavailable to accept daily evidence, the ERU Supervisor or another technician can accept the evidence and put into the Primary Vault Holding location. Once the technician(s) is available to enter the evidence the chain will show as follows after the case is entered (and pictures are uploaded, etc.).

1st COC Entry: ESD Officer (RMS Time) > Receiving Technician-Lab Reps(RMS Time) > Primary Vault Holding (RMS Time)

The second transfer: Primary Vault Holding (Current Time) > Entering Technician (Current Time) > To vault Location (Current Time)

Each case is entered and TRANSFERRED before starting the next case.

This option is also available should a ERU Technician have to leave their evidence in Holding for an emergency, sickness, etc. another ERU Technician can take custody of the evidence to enter in their absence.

### 5.3 ERU Incoming Evidence Storage

After evidence is submitted to the ERU and entered into the LIMS:

- The technician who received the evidence will scan the evidence barcode, his/her identifying barcode, and the barcode of the storage location in the appropriate ERU evidence vault to complete a transaction.
- The technician will ensure that the evidence COC reflects all transfers and appropriate documentation in LIMS, including the correct storage location.

At no time will the evidence be subdivided, itemized, or opened by the Evidence Receiving Unit staff.

### 5.4 Evidence Transfer to MNPd-CL Examiners

Upon receiving notification that a service request has been assigned to them, examiners\* from the forensic units will obtain the requested evidence items from the ERU. To assist with scheduling, a request for evidence pick-up may be made to the ERU by e-mail to the ERU email address. An ERU technician will pull all evidence listed in the email request and place the items on a holding shelf, location Primary Vault-Holding, and notify the examiner it is ready to pick up. The evidence will stay on the holding shelf until the examiner arrives to pick up the requested evidence.

\* "examiners," in this context, to include technicians, examiners/scientists, and supervisors who are authorized to receive evidence in the LIMS as employees of the MNPd-CL.



When the examiner arrives at the ERU pick-up window to obtain the requested evidence, the ERU technician will retrieve the requested item(s) of evidence in the ERU vault(s) and initiate a transfer in LIMS from the vault location to themselves by scanning the appropriate user barcodes.

The item(s) of evidence will then be transferred from the ERU technician to the requesting examiner in LIMS by scanning the appropriate barcodes and entering their verifying PIN numbers.

Both the examiner and ERU technician should verify the case information and transaction prior to using the “Apply” button to record the transaction. Both ERU technician and scientist should verify count of items before transaction is complete.

**\*\*Note:** When Examiners are accepting their evidence, the ERU technician needs to ensure the Examiner checks their evidence for proper seals, etc. before the transfer is complete. Once the transfer is complete, the evidence is now in the custody of the Examiner and any discrepancy with the evidence or seal will now have to be documented by the Examiner in Quality Management Software as a QSN by the examiners and his or her unit.\*\*

## **5.5 Evidence Transfer from Examiner to the ERU**

When the examiner returns evidence to the ERU, the item(s) are transferred using scanned barcodes from the examiner to an ERU technician and entering their verifying PIN numbers.

Both the examiner and ERU technician should verify the case information and transaction prior to using the “Apply” button to record the transaction.

The ERU technician will scan the evidence item(s) from themselves to the appropriate ERU vault “return” location.

The ERU technician will ensure that all evidence is properly sealed with integrity tape, initialed and dated. If evidence is accepted upon return and an improper seal is noticed, the Examiner will be asked to return to ERU to apply a proper seal.

## **5.6 Intra-Laboratory Transfers**

### **5.6.1 Bar Code Transfer**

Items of evidence can be transferred from one examiner to another within a unit by scanning the barcode ID of both individuals and entering their assigned PIN numbers, then scanning the item(s) barcode(s) thus keeping the chain of custody.



## 5.7 Evidence Transfer to Agency Representative

Items of evidence can be transferred from custody of the Crime Lab to an Agency Representative for transport to a private lab, to court, or for Fedex shipping. The transfer is handled by choosing an Agency Representative in the transfer instead of using a barcode and pin in the second line of transfer as with an examiner. It is also notated in the notes section where the evidence is being sent out to; Example: shipping out to private lab, Detective taking to TBI. The ERU technicians will also affix barcodes to the proximal containers to help with the transfers.

An example of the Chain of Custody for a transfer of evidence to an Agency Representative is below:

Vault Location > ERU Technician > Agency Representative

Current Date/Time    Notes: Taking to TBI (etc.)    Current Date/Time

### 5.7.1 Agency Representative Returning Items to ERU

When an Agency Representative is returning evidence to the Evidence Receiving Unit, verify that representative currently has custody of the evidence in LIMS. Once verified the transfer will look like below return:

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Agency Representative > ERU Technician > Vault Location

Current Date/Time    Notes: Returning from (enter)    Current Date/Time

If the Agency Representative that is bringing the evidence back to ERU does not have custody of the evidence in LIMS, the transfer will look like below – Two step transfer:

Agency Rep.in LIMS w/custody > Reference External COC Memo > Agency Rep.  
returning Evidence

Current Date/Time    Notes Returning from (enter)    Current Date/time

Next transfer:

Agency Rep returning Evidence > ERU Technician > Vault Location



Current Date/Time

Notes Returning from (enter)

Current Date/time

## 5.8 Evidence Sub Items Created in Laboratory

When a “parent” item of evidence has sub-item (child item) which require unique barcodes, the examiner will create and print the “child” barcode, referencing the parent evidence barcode, and affix the barcode to the sub-item of evidence.

See Unit TPM’s for specific sub-item instructions.

### 5.8.1 Forensic Biology Child Items

The Forensic Biology Unit may find items during analysis of parent item(s) that have not been documented at the Evidence Storage Division prior to coming to the MNPDP Crime Lab. These item(s) will be repackaged separately and a child barcode created. The forensic scientist will notify the requestor by email listed on the MNPDP form 282, ERU and ESD regarding the item found and the communication will be uploaded in the case file. The child item will be attached to the outside of the parent item and returned to ERU upon completion of the analysis. The item will then be returned from the MNPDP Crime Lab ERU to the ESD for an ESD officer to complete an MNPDP 110 form on that item.

### 5.8.2 Forensic Biology Preservative Extracts

The Forensic Biology unit may have preservative extracts on certain cases that will come back to the ERU packaged separately from the Parent Item. These extracts will already have a LIMS barcode but will need an RMS barcode for transfer back to ESD. A ERU Technician will create a MNPDP form 110 for the extract to generate a RMS barcode to send the item back to ESD during a normal evidence return.

## 5.9 Evidence Return to MNPDP-ESD

After analysis is completed, an ESD officer will collect the evidence from the ERU to be returned to the ESD. Transferring evidence from the Crime Lab LIMS to ESD RMS is a two-step process: The ERU technician will pull evidence from the ERU return locations in the vaults and transfer it into their custody.

Next, items will then be transferred from their custody, to an ESD officers custody (Under Agency Representative) and then to the storage location of “Reference RMS Chain” location. Once items are transferred, the ESD officer will sign for the items and a COC sheet printed. Item totals need to be verified between LIMS and RMS before the ESD officer leaves.



## 6 Records

All records will be kept electronically on a secured and backed up MNPd-CL server in LIMS.

In the event that the LIMS is not accessible, the form needed to manually transfer items into the ERU custody can be found in Quality Management Software under the ERU folder, Documents File-Bulk Intake Form. Once LIMS becomes accessible, the Bulk Intake Form will be scanned, and uploaded to the associated Crime Lab case images to document the COC.

## 7 Entering Information into the LIMS System

### Resubmissions

Evidence that is resubmitted to the lab will be transferred first into the MNPd-CL custody through the RMS system, then transferred back into LIMS using the attached MNPd-CL barcode already assigned to the evidence. The ERU technician that first processed the evidence item (initials on the barcode) will receive the evidence item on its return into the lab unless they are absent.

First it will need to be ensured that the evidence is in the storage location of “Reference RMS Chain” before being transferred back into the Crime Lab custody. If not, it will need to be transferred from the current location to the “Reference RMS Chain” using below example:

Current Location > Reference RMS Chain

Date/Time in LIMS +1 minute Date / Time in LIMS + 1 minute

**Example: If evidence shows current location of ERU Technician on 05/17/2015 12:15 the transfer needs to show below:**

<b>ERU Technician</b>	<b>&gt;</b>	<b>Reference RMS Chain</b>
<b>05/17/2015 12:16</b>		<b>5/17/2015 12:16</b>

The next step will be the transfer of evidence from Reference RMS Chain back into the Crime Lab using the chain of custody of the ERU technician accepting the evidence as it shows in the RMS system.

<b>Reference RMS Chain&gt;</b>	<b>ESD Person &gt;ERU Technician</b>
<b>Date/Time RMS sheet</b>	<b>Date and Time RMS Sheet</b>



The ERU technician will then photograph the evidence to document the return packaging.

A transfer of the evidence from the technician's custody to the vault location will be done next.

## 7.1 Multi-section evidence

Evidence that comes in with multiple 282 requests will be set up in the order of priority needed. CSI processing will be conducted prior to the next forensic unit.

## 7.2 Evidence Entry into LIMS

All evidence and requests for analysis must be associated with a Crime Lab or MNPD case in LIMS. Once a case has been created in LIMS, it can be accessed or updated at any time.

For entry of a new case into LIMS, these are the following steps:

- Click on File for *New Case*.
- Click on drop down menu for *Agency Name*-Choose the Agency (Metro Nashville Police Department)
- Enter *Case No.* The Case No. is the MNPD Incident Number.
- Click *Select*

\*\*LIMS will search the database for the case number entered. The next screen will show if the case is not found and a green box will appear for New Case to be chosen, or a yellow box for Searches, or close to go out of that screen completely.

Click on New Case (default) to begin entering the information. However, if a case under the incident number exists, cases matching Agency File # search will appear. Highlight the Case no. matching and choose Edit Case.

### *Case Info Tab*

Right click in the blank area and the following options can be chosen:

- *Message and Synopsis*: A synopsis is entered for all DNA cases. This is taken from the 282 form of the requestor. Date each new synopsis entry to separate it from the others. Right clicking in the synopsis box it will give the Audit Trail History of the field.
- *Result Release Security* is used to restrict access to certain users or unrestrict as needed.
- *Chain of Custody Report* is also under the Case Info Tab.
- *Show Electronic File* will bundle all the PDF files, pictures, and reports into one file that can be emailed to recipients. Click on the Add plus sign to choose what goes into the electronic file.

### *Add Related Case*



Under the Case Info Tab, the Related Cases section is the Add + button. There will be a list of Crime Lab numbers to come up to search from.

### *Agency Tab*

- Metro Nashville Police Department is **always** the primary agency.
- A related Agency and New Submitting Officer with related Agency can be added under this section.
- To add an additional agency: Click the green Add + button and choose from the drop down menu that appears. Choose the same agency complaint number as the original Metro complaint number entered.

### *Offense Tab*

- To add a new offense click green Add + button and choose “Add Offense.” A new screen will appear and a drop-down menu for offense will come up to choose from.
- Complete the date and Location Description of where the incident occurred.
- Click Save

### *Individuals Tab*

- Click on the green Add + button to add an Individual. Enter the information provided by the 110 or 282 form. Then click save.
- Click Save when complete

### *Evidence Tab*

- Click on the green submit button at the bottom of the tab before proceeding with the case to give it a crime lab case number. Click on the green ADD+ button for regular evidence and a new screen will appear and complete all sections available listed on the **282 or 110 form.**  
\*\*\*\* Use the green button Add with Kit + button when adding a DUI kit
- *Badge # Rep or name*– Officer Listed on Evidence submitting to ESD
- *Description*- Enter the description as it states on the 282 form or 110 form using proper grammar and punctuation.
- *Source*- The source is only used for the BA kits and is the Subject’s Name.
- *Evidence Type*- Select from drop down menu best description. For DNA use specific items: DNA Sexual Assault kits are for MLE kits, DNA Evidence Sample is for all items that are not standards, DNA Sample is for buccal swabs and/or blood spots.
- *Evidence NO*- This field will automatically populate.





- *The ellipsis (...) under the extraction type box is to enter the Precinct information. This information comes from the 110 form or 282 if 110 is not available.\*\*Enter CSI for all evidence submitted by CSI personnel\*\**
- *Intended Disp-* The location where evidence will be stored. Left blank for BA kits.
- *Notes-* Any specific notes can be entered here (biohazard, tape added to evidence to cover holes, etc).
- *If an evidence item is found to be biohazard, the ERU Technician will place a biohazard sticker on the item and make a notation in this space.*
- *Other ID-* This will be where Property & Evidence barcode is entered.

Chain of Custody is entered by clicking on the pencil on the right hand side at the bottom of the screen. A second screen will appear. The initial transfer from will be the ESD officer transferring the property in, then the ERU technician at the time of acceptance then it will be applied. A second transfer will be completed after pictures of the evidence is taken and it is ready to go to the NIBIN location, Latent Transfer box, or another location in the Primary or Drug Vault location from the ERU Technician's custody.

### *Requests Tab*

Click the green Add+ button to add a new request. Right click on a current request to Edit, Modify or Delete and existing request. Choose the option needed.

Relate all evidence and persons to this request when it is entered.

### *To Enter a request:*

- *Click the green Add + button at top*
- *The "Badge # Rep" field information is Officer/Detective listed on 282 or 110 request*
- *Ensure that the request date matches the chain of custody date.*
- *Fill in Department information (Section/Unit that will be testing the evidence)*
- *The ellipsis (...) next to the Department section is to enter the precinct information for the request. This information comes from the 282. If no 282 is available, then use the 110 precinct information. \*\*\*CSI is not used in the request section/ use a precinct for the request which can be found in RMS.*
- *Service (type of service being done/analysis)*
- *The analyst, due date, reason, and complexity section will not be filled out.*
- *Notes under requestor can be filled in if the requestor has specific requests for the scientist(s).*
- *Click Save*
- *The next screen will come up to highlight the piece of evidence to be analyzed. Highlight that piece of evidence to relate it to the request and click Save. \*\*Do not relate evidence to Latent requests\*\**





- Next, the available individuals associated with the case are listed. Highlight the individuals to relate to the request and click Save. \*\*Do not relate individuals to NIBIN requests.
- Agencies other than Metro Police Department submitting a weapon for NIBIN, ensure Metro Police Department is marked as the Primary Agency and the request has a Metro Police Department officer as the requestor.

### *Attachments Tab*

This section is to attach all case documents and pictures. The new LIMS 3.8 will automatically put the crime lab number, date, and identify who uploaded the document or picture.

### *Transferring Evidence:*

- Click on “*Transfer*” at the top or the transfer icon. A new screen will pop-up to fill in the next steps:
- “*From*” Current location of the evidence. Use current date and time.
- Add any notes needed
- “*To*” is who/where the evidence is and may require entering a secure PIN
- “*Then To*” Vault location, lab personnel, CSI, RMS, etc.
- Then scan the barcode for the evidence being transferred in the “*Evidence to Transfer*” box.
- Click *Apply* once all steps are accurate and complete.

*Note: See the LIMS help menu for additional information.*

## **8 Chain of Custody During Case Entry**

The evidence item will be in the technician’s custody while it is being entered into LIMS, and barcode applied for photographing. Once the photographs are uploaded, all documents attached to the case file, and request entered, the technician will then do a transfer of the evidence item (s) to the vault location.

ERU technicians will work only one case at a time and will not start a case that they cannot complete before the end of their shift. If work is not completed it will be put into the Primary Vault to be stored until their next working business day. BAC kits are kept stored in a refrigerator until entered and/or picked up by the Toxicology Unit. If in an emergency, due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, and a case was started, before leaving for the day the technician will transfer items to the holding location for completion the next day.



Evidence being submitted directly to the Crime Lab ERU from another agency (prior approval needed) does not have to have a form 110 completed unless that agency will be picking the item(s) up at the Evidence Storage Division. The chain of custody will show from the submitting agency officer/detective to the ERU technician. The necessary photos will need to be completed, 282 forms uploaded, then the next transfer done of the item(s) to vault location or to the unit scientist if they are standing by.

On call out situations, if the Evidence Storage Division has to deliver items to Crime Lab ERU the entry will be like a normal daily entry. The item(s) will be transferred to ERU custody in RMS and the chain of custody will be from the ESD officer to the ERU technician and the entry will be in LIMS as a usual daily.

On call out situations and items are received directly from detectives or officers from the field, 110 forms will need to be completed as these items will be returned to ESD after analysis is completed. The 110 forms will be approved as CLER (Crime Lab Evidence Receiving) but the COC in LIMS will be direct submission from the detective/or officer submitting the evidence.

## 8.1 Evidence Transfers from Vault

ERU technicians will make all necessary transfers in LIMS anytime evidence is removed from a vault location. If there is a Latent Correction done for an officer, it will be transferred into the Officer's custody with notation made for the correction and then transferred back into the ERU Vault location or Latent Print Transfer Box once completed.

## 8.2 Correcting Chain of Custody

When a chain of custody needs to be corrected, file a Chain of Custody Memorandum in the Quality Management Software documenting what the proper chain of custody should have been. The Chain of Custody Memorandum will be uploaded to the LIMS case file. The ERU Supervisor will be notified and make the necessary changes

If a DUI kit is entered and the chain states that it was put into location of Latent Print Transfer box (or any location other than Tox Ref 1), this is incorrect and a Chain of Custody Memorandum will need to be done to state that it was never in the location of the Latent Print Transfer box (or any other incorrect location) and list the correct chain in the memorandum. If an incorrect barcode is applied to an item of evidence, DO NOT REMOVE it to replace it with the correct barcode. Instead, mark an "X" through the incorrect barcode, initial beside it, then apply the correct barcode near the old one. DO NOT COVER UP the incorrect barcode. This ensures that a mislabeling is identified and protects the integrity of the evidence.

All staff are required to run the crystal report "All-Evidence in Staff's Custody with Length" report to ensure there is not any evidence left in their custody before their days off, lengthy



vacation, or time off. ERU Technicians should not have evidence left in their custody at the end of each day.

## 9 Contingency Plan for LIMS Chain of Custody Records

In the event the LIMS software or computer network is temporarily down, the chain-of-custody record will be handwritten on the [Evidence Transfer Log](#). When the computer regains function, the handwritten chain-of-custody will be added to the electronic record in LIMS and the handwritten record may be retained in ERU.

The [Evidence Transfer Log](#) shall be completed as follows:

- Agency #, Item #, Date and Time of transfer
- The location/personnel it is being moved/received from, location it is getting moved to obtain the signature and printed name of the individual it is being transferred to/from
- Description of the Evidence

The evidence will be kept in a secured location in the Evidence Receiving Unit or in the custody of the person involved in the manual chain of custody transfer. LIMS will be updated as soon as the system becomes available with the manually recorded information.

After the system has come back up and the Technician has entered the evidence in LIMS, the Lab# assigned to it will be entered onto the sheet and barcodes will be printed and affixed to the evidence.

If analysis of the evidence is urgent, a temporary Crime Lab case number will be assigned. Temporary lab case numbers will be in the same format as the schema for unique case numbers described in [Section 7 Entering Information into the LIMS System](#).

## 10 Documenting Evidence Packaging with Photographs

The ERU Technicians will take photographs of all evidence submitted to the Evidence Receiving Unit. DNA Photographs will consist of the front and back, to include the proper seal, victim's name, agency number, PR barcode, and the LIMS barcode. DNA evidence will need a white board completed with the Crime Lab number, Case number, item number, Date of photograph and initials of technician taking the photograph. All other evidence only needs the front and back of the evidence taken to document a proper seal. Photographs will then be uploaded into the LIMS case file under the Attachments tab. After the pictures are taken they are then uploaded by going to the Attachments tab in LIMS. Go to the evidence drop-down and highlight the evidence number the pictures will be uploaded to. Right click on the evidence item and choose "Add New Attachment" or "Add Multiple Attachments". Then browse for the image(s) in the camera to be uploaded to that evidence item. The pictures will be stamped with the crime lab number, person uploading image and the date uploaded.



## 11 Sending Evidence to External Agencies/Facilities

Requests for independent testing must be accompanied with a court order. This is not considered sub-contracting or contracting work because the MNPd Crime Lab is not making the request for the independent testing. The MNPd Crime Lab is not responsible for vetting the crime lab chosen by the requestor. If evidence is to be sent out of the MNPd-CL, the affected Unit Supervisor or designee will make all arrangements. For subcontracting, refer to QM 6.6.

The MNPd-CLERU assists in sending and receiving the evidence and keeping the chain of custody and related documents. These records are to be indexed/imaged into the LIMS module.

### 11.1 Inventory

Items of evidence that are to be sent will be inventoried before mailing or transfer.

\*\*Inventory in this context means ensuring that barcodes and items of description match with the request of what is to be shipped out for testing. At no time will items be opened to view sealed contents

\*\*Notes in LIMS will record packaging arrangements for all evidence being sent.

### 11.2 Packaging

Evidence will be packaged and sealed, initialed, dated and labeled according to laboratory procedure for proper packaging of evidence. The evidence shall be placed in a sturdy package or carton (proximal container) and packed with suitable material to protect the contents. The proximal container will be under proper seal, initialed, dated and secured for mailing. A biohazard label will be placed on the outer packaging to identify any biohazardous materials.

### 11.3 Delivery

Evidence will be sent to the requested location/laboratory by a delivery service that will provide tracking information, such as FedEx, UPS, or USPS. All chain of custody information will be entered into LIMS notating the location/laboratory the evidence will be transferred. The tracking information or return receipt will be scanned and kept electronically in LIMS. The lab will also retain a Request for Lab Report/Evidence form to document the transaction with the requestor. Screen shot below of transferring evidence VIA Fedex/UPS/Courier/In Person



Evidence Transfer

From	SWEET, AMANDA				
Time	03/02/2016 02:39 PM	VIA	<input type="text"/>	Note	<input type="text"/>
To	CORCORAN, LOU ANNE (Lab)				
Time	03/02/2016 02:39 PM	VIA	FedEx	Note	Tracking # goes here
Then To	<input type="text"/>				

## 11.4 Evidence Return and Inventory

When evidence is returned from the external laboratory, it will be received by the ERU and the proximal container identified as “returned” in LIMS. The ERU will notify the involved Unit Supervisor and examiner that evidence has been returned. ERU Technicians will verify that the contents of the shipment match the manifest. Should there be any discrepancies with the return shipment, it will be notated on the manifest and the unit supervisor will be notified regarding the return shipment. Each case that is affected will be marked in LIMS in the case notes under the Evidence tab screen.

Upon evidence being returned to the lab after independent testing, if the proximal container is not the same as what was used when evidence was sent (excluding FedEx, UPS, USPS), at least one supervisor must be present to assist in the verification of the contents. This will help ensure that the appropriate items of evidence are being returned. If the seals appear to be broken or not proper, evidence tape will be applied and a proper seal will be applied, initialed and dated. LIMS will be notated that the evidence came back without a proper seal, the manifest will have a notation, and the unit supervisor will be notified.

## 11.5 Remediation

If evidence is found to be missing during inventory, the involved examiner or supervisor will inquire about missing evidence from the external laboratory and start the nonconformance process through their Unit Supervisor if needed. Notes will be made in the evidence section of LIMS and a Deviation Request in Quality Management Software to upload to the case file.

## 11.6 MNPD Evidence Storage Division Return

Once the package and its evidence item are returned to the ERU, the boxed evidence will be returned to MNPD-ESD for long term storage.



## 12 Evidence Security

### 12.1 ERU Evidence Vaults

Evidence storage areas in the ERU has floor-to-ceiling solid cinder block (CMU) construction with proximity card access limited to the individuals assigned to the Unit and Top Management of the Crime Lab. Each evidence vault is designed with storage systems and features such as refrigeration and/or appropriate climate control to prevent loss, deterioration or contamination of the evidence. Temperature checks will be conducted and documented on an excel spreadsheet then saved on the L:drive. This will be done once a week for the refrigerators and freezers in the ERU vaults.

Each forensic Unit also has “in-process” evidence storage areas that examiners use for short term storage. An examiner may have a designated secured keyed storage area in the Unit vault and in the laboratory after examination, evidence is returned through the chain of custody to the ERU and ultimately to the MNPd-ESD. Exceptions to this are Latent Print Unit evidence and Toxicology Unit evidence.

## 13 Security of Evidence Receiving Unit

### 13.1 Card Key Access

Only ERU personnel and Top Management have card key access to the ERU.

Exterior and interior doors are controlled by card key access.

The storage vaults (main and narcotics) have a vault door and a day gate. Both doors require card key access. During working hours when ERU staff is present, the vault door may be unlocked. The day gate is always locked and requires card key access.

The roll down gates will be open during normal business hours of 0600-1630 if ERU staff is present. The gates are locked if no ERU staff members are in the Unit. Only the ERU employees have keys to the gates, which are locked from the inside.

### 13.2 Door Security

If there is an issue with the ERU door(s) then the ERU Supervisor or Top Management will be notified immediately. A work order will be submitted for General Services or approved vendor to come ASAP to remedy the situation.

### 13.3 Cameras

There are numerous security cameras operating 24/7 inside the ERU as well as in both evidence vaults.



## 14 Evidence Packaging Supplies & Deliveries

### 14.1 Packaging Supplies

The ERU will be responsible for ordering and maintaining evidence packaging supplies for the MNPD Crime Laboratory, such as integrity tape, gun boxes, evidence bags, etc. Units within the MNPD-CL will obtain these items from the ERU as necessary.

### 14.2 Deliveries

The ERU will assist in answering delivery calls for packages or pallet delivery to the back elevator during operating hours. The ERU personnel will then contact the proper unit and communicate that a package or packages is available for pickup at the ERU. If the package is marked urgent or must be refrigerated or frozen, the ERU will communicate that to the Unit.

Each unit will be responsible for picking up their own packages as soon as practical.

## 15 Approving 282 Forms

The approval of 282 forms is the responsibility of the Evidence Receiving Supervisor or their designee.

Before accepting any 282 forms, an approved 110 form for the evidence requested has to be in RMS. Each case is to be researched to make sure evidence is available at the Evidence Storage Division (ESD) and the evidence has not been previously tested by another lab (TBI, Orchid, etc.). After a 282 request has been approved, it will then be electronically sent to ESD by scanning to the email [police-propertyevidence@nashville.gov](mailto:police-propertyevidence@nashville.gov). These 282 forms will indicate the items of evidence to be delivered to the Crime Lab with the daily evidence that comes automatically; DUI kits, Cartridge Cases, NIBIN compatible Firearms, and Latent print envelopes.

Below are the steps on approving the 282 forms and the processes that need to be done:

1. Login to MNPD Automated Field Reporting (AFR) system to see the list of 282 forms submitted.
2. Ensure a 110 form is on file and the evidence listed in RMS and in custody of the Evidence Storage Division.
3. Ensure the case has not been worked yet by the TBI or a private lab (check the chain of custody tab as well as TRAQ History and TRAQ tabs) Make sure all information on the 282 form is correct: Name of suspect/victim, date of request, address of location, barcode information matches RMS information, etc.
4. Ensure the 282 meets the submission guidelines provided by each unit. When the 282 is approved it will automatically be uploaded to the RMS document section of each incident number listed on the request form.





5. Ensure there are no corrections needing to be done on the evidence to impede the arrival at the Crime Lab.
6. Rejected forms will need comments put into the comment box for what needs correcting on the form. It will come back to the supervisor folder once it has been resubmitted or corrected.
7. Print out a copy of the 282 for items being requested from the Evidence Storage Division to be scanned to the Property & Evidence email.
8. If it is a Latent Request, the request is entered into LIMS. All suspects are entered under one request. A copy of the 282 is put in the images folder of the case file in LIMS.
9. Enter complaint number and mark a number for the precinct in the Compstat sheet in the Evidence Receiving Unit folder on the L:Drive.
10. For the Drug requests, they go under the DA section on the Compstat totals.
11. If the submitting officer on the 282 form is with an outside agency, they must have a MNPD Liaison listed as well to be entered as the requestor in LIMS.
12. When approving 282 forms with multiple agency numbers, the unit supervisor(s) in question will be emailed regarding approving evidence to go under one crime lab number or separate crime lab numbers.
13. All requests are saved to the unit folder on the L:drive in the Evidence Receiving Unit folder. It will be saved by the Incident number, Date approved, then the extension of the unit requested.
14. A weekly audit will be conducted on unit folders in the Evidence Receiving folder to ensure all MNPD form 282 submissions have a request entered in the LIMS system.

### **15.1 Approving DNA 282 Forms (Forensic Biology- FB)**

DNA cases are limited on initial submissions due to high volume of evidence pieces collected at crime scenes. Therefore, the following are the number of items that are allowed for the type of case in addition to the suspect and victim samples:

- Homicide cases- 10 items
- Other violent crimes- 5 items
- Property crimes- 2 items
- Sexual assaults- MLE kits and 2 probative items
- The Forensic Biology section does not accept vacuum sweepings (trace evidence).
- The FB section does accept hair with certain cases (contact FB first before approving)
- Additional evidence submissions after a report has been released: the submitter must communicate first with the assigned scientist for approval of additional evidence submissions.

All correspondences sent to detectives or other persons regarding the case need to be saved by complaint number for the unit and then imaged into LIMS.





DNA evidence requests (with exception of Sexual Assault Kits) are required to be submitted with a completed CODIS Eligibility Form.

Suspect and Victim buccal swabs will need to be submitted with a consent form or search warrant.

If a 282 is received for casings to be processed for DNA, it has to go through the Detectives chain of command, then to the [crimelab@nashville.gov](mailto:crimelab@nashville.gov) email for approval.

## 15.2 Latent Print Submissions

ERU will begin accepting Latent evidence from Precincts under certain circumstances. This will enable officers in the field to streamline latent print evidence from particular crime scenes. The evidence submission has to be approved by the Investigating Unit Lieutenant and he/she must forward the submission request to [crimelabevidencerec@nashville.gov](mailto:crimelabevidencerec@nashville.gov). Once approved the evidence can then be submitted in the blue mailbox outside of the ERU unit along with the completed MNPDP form 110.

### 15.2.1 Entering multiple requests in LIMS when multiple suspects are submitted

- 282 should include an OCA# for each subject. If there is no OCA # for the subject listed, email the Detective asking if one is available. If one is not available send the Latent supervisor an email asking how to proceed with the request.
- All suspects go under one request
- ERU will not relate evidence to the Latent request, the Latent unit will review the 282 and relate the necessary evidence at that time.
- If a request is received for a 282 for a subject and there is a request already entered for another detective, add the new requestor by putting them in the CC list of the request.
- If there is a subject with an FBI# already entered, and the request received for a 282 with the same subject has an OCA#, enter a request using the name with the OCA#.

### 15.2.2 Handling 282's with no evidence in LIMS

- Expect that pre-early December 2014 will not have evidence in LIMS
- Email LP supervisors
- Delay approval until resolved
- LP supervisors will advise
- Evidence now entered in LIMS, add request or no evidence under this incident



### 15.2.3 Standard vs. Urgent designations

- Investigator may classify the request as urgent - enter as standard. Detectives must send a priority or rush request through their chain of command to [crimelab@nashville.gov](mailto:crimelab@nashville.gov) email.
- FS Director or designee will approve the priority or rush request and the Latent Supervisor will update the request
- 

## 15.3 Firearm Submissions

Cartridge cases are received daily as part of the ATF initiative; most will not have 282 requests but all will have requests entered into LIMS and choose NIBIN only. Below is a list of all compatible NIBIN weapons that come over daily:

- All Calibers of Semi-automatic Weapons
- .22 caliber rifles
- 7.62 x39 mm (SKS and AK type)
- .223 (5.56 x45 mm)
- AM-15 (.556)
- .308/ 7.62
- 5.45 x39, 5.57x 28

Guns that will need 282 requests are Shotguns (10, 12, 20 gauge, etc.), .44 magnums and any other that are not listed as NIBIN compatible. Requests for 2 or more cases of comparison will be sent to the Firearms supervisor or designee for approval.

Requests for Distance Determination will be sent first to the Firearms unit supervisor (or the designee) for approval. It will be reviewed for any additional information or evidence needed before approving the 282 request.

Cartridge casings and cartridges/projectiles cannot be compared to each other.

A request for caliber determination on projectiles can be submitted by request on MNPD 282 form.

Firearms submitted to MNPD ESD from outside agencies where they originated as stolen out of Nashville will be approved for NIBIN submission in the following manner:

1. Any qualifying incident where a firearm was recovered within 30 days of submission to ESD can be submitted automatically.
2. Any qualifying incident where a firearm was recovered outside of the 30 days must be assessed by the Lieutenant in SID to determine if there is a connection with the individual(s) and



Nashville.

3. The Lieutenant in SID determines if the firearm would be a good candidate to search in NIBIN and he will contact the FTIU supervisor with the recovering agency information, to include the incident number to determine if it has been entered into NIBIN (email to the Firearms supervisor at TBI).
4. If it is determined that the firearm has never been submitted for NIBIN entry then it will be approved to come over for test firing and NIBIN entry.
5. The ERU Supervisor will be notified that it has been approved and will request the firearm to be submitted.

It is important to remember that per our MOU with the ATF, qualifying firearms are defined as the following:

NIBIN systems are to be used to image ballistic evidence and test fires of firearms illegally possessed, used in a crime, or suspected by law enforcement officials of having been used in a crime. Ballistics information and/or evidence from firearms taken into law enforcement custody through a gun buy-back program, property damage crimes involving firearms, found or abandoned firearms, and domestic disturbances are also permitted to be entered in the NIBIN system. A NIBIN unit will not be used to capture, share, or store ballistic images acquired at the point of manufacture, importation, or sale of a firearm, or images of law enforcement-issued firearms not associated with crimes. The NIBIN system does not store information related to firearms owners or registration.

Cartridge casings can have a 282 for DNA processing, but CSI no longer does Latent Print processing.

When guns/casings are received in ERU with a 282 for CSI processing, the NIBIN request will not be entered until after it is returned from CSI. If the evidence is received first and a NIBIN request entered, then a 282 is received, the NIBIN request will be canceled and CSI will be notified evidence is ready for pick up with the 282 placed on the CSI board. The NIBIN request will be un-canceled once the weapon is returned from CSI. If only a partial case is going to CSI then other items will be placed in a holding location until all items can go to the Firearms location for NIBIN entry.

## 16 Accepting Evidence Directly To ERU

During Officer Involved Shooting Events, ERU Technicians will accept weapons from Officers to enter into LIMS that will not have evidence containers and will be returned back to the officers custody after they have been test fired in the Firearms unit. The transfer will happen at the ERU window with the Firearms Scientist/Technician present who will take custody of the



weapon at that time. The gun will be rendered safe by the officer before any of this is to take place.

The Evidence Receiving Unit will accept evidence after business hours in evidence lockers located outside of the Evidence Receiving Unit. An MNPDP Property and Evidence form 110 should be attached to each evidence submission. The next business morning an Evidence Receiving Technician will empty the drop box and each locker, completing the Chain of Custody information on the MNPDP 110 form. The MNPDP 110 form will then be reviewed for accuracy and either approved or rejected.

If the 110 is rejected, an ERU note is sent by AFR concerning the corrections needed. The evidence will be entered into the LIMS system (if it is not rejected for a case number issue) and placed into a Correction location pending the correction by the submitter. Once the correction is complete and the 110 form approved, the evidence will be transferred to the final location in the ERU vault. The signed correction sheet will then be uploaded into LIMS. If the 110 form is correct, but there are errors with the packaging of the evidence, the 110 form will be approved to document the chain of custody and assigned to the ERU corrections location in the vault. After the corrections have been made, the evidence's storage location will be changed to a normal vault location. As with 110 corrections- a correction sheet will be completed to document the packaging error and uploaded to the document file in LIMS.

If the 110 is approved, the evidence will be entered into the LIMS system and then assigned to the ERU vault(s) location. The appropriate Crime Lab unit will be notified of the evidence entry, the request and that the evidence is ready for processing.

If the evidence submitted is to be processed by the Evidence Processing Unit (CSI) before other units within the Crime Laboratory, a MNPDP 282 Forensic Services Request will need to be completed in the AFR system as soon as possible.

Firearms and casings submitted with an offense of Homicide or any Death classification, with no MNPDP form 282 received, will require the ERU technician entering the case to send the Homicide Lieutenant(s) an email asking if latent print and/or DNA processing will need to be done. The ERU Supervisor and Crime Lab Evidence Receiving email will be copied on this email. The Firearm(s) and/or casing(s) will be placed in a holding location for a reasonable response time. All communication(s) will be uploaded to the LIMS case file.

Below are the steps for approving 110 forms.

## 16.1 Steps on Accepting 110 Forms

1. Open *FormStream (Desktop)* under your applications tab on RMS.
2. Choose *Property\_Evidence* as your account on the dropdown menu.



3. Go to the CSI, or Inbox folder or the folder you are approving the 110 for and find the case by complaint number or by officer completing 110 form.
4. Check to make sure the evidence being submitted matches the 110 form and that the 110 form is filled out properly.
5. Fill in the Drop Box information choosing “CLER,” fill in the employee number of the ERU technician and enter the date/time (military time).
6. Approve the form by checking the green arrow circle.
7. Go to the RMS *Evidence* tab and print out barcodes for items submitted (printer will need to be changed in RMS to the barcode printer).
8. Go to the Evidence Module of RMS and search by incident number; double click the barcode associated with the evidence then click the print icon next to Barcode#.
9. The evidence will then be entered into LIMS (CLER to ERU Technician to vault location (or next person in chain)).

### 16.1.1 Add Evidence to the Original 282

With the new 282 form in the MNPDP AFR system, Latent envelopes will no longer be added to the original 282. The email below will be sent to the detective requesting a new 282 to be submitted for any 110 form(s) approved.

DNA swabs received from CSI will not be updated to the original MPD 282 form. The requesting detective will be notified regarding the 110 form (s) approved by ERU along with the original MPD 282 request and be asked to fill out another MPD 282 form if any additional testing is needed. This email will also be sent when there is a 282 with latent evidence not listing a suspect on the original request. One may be developed at a later time.

Below is the generic email notification: The Subject line of the email should read “Please submit a new 282”

Detective,

The attached MPD 110 form (s) were approved by the Crime Laboratory ERU as a result of a MPD 282 request for CSI processing. The original MPD 282 is also attached.

If you would like items tested by the Crime Laboratory, please fill out a 282 request following the Crime Laboratory submission guidelines via MNPDP AFR.

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## 17 Viewing Of Evidence

ERU will no longer do viewings of evidence unless a court order is received and approved by the Crime Lab Director. If a court order is received, a deviation request will be completed for the case. The Crime Lab unit affected will be contacted to have a supervisor or scientist to oversee the viewing to ensure the evidence is not compromised, or any testing affected by the viewing. The evidence will be transferred into the custody of the person conducting the viewing with notes in the transfer that it is a “viewing” or “return from viewing” and not a transfer. A copy of the court order will be uploaded to the case file as well any correspondences.