



Quality Division Use Only

Quality Tracking #:	<input type="text" value="2018-099"/>	Classification:	<input type="text" value="Corrective Action"/>
Non-Conformance Level:	<input type="text" value="Class II"/>	Section:	<input type="text" value="Seized Drugs"/>
Date of Discovery:	<input type="text" value="10/03/18"/>	Date of Incident:	<input type="text" value="10/03/18"/>

Forensic Case Number(s), if applicable:	Agency Case Number(s), if applicable:
2018-15824	N/A

Description of Non-conformance:

While cleaning, an analyst discovered a tablet under the electrical cords attached to the balance in her work area.

Actions Taken:

The analyst compiled a list of clandestine tablet cases she had worked on between May and September 2018, and identified case 2018-10517 (agency case number 091014318) as a possible source since it contained tablets with similar characteristics (pink tablets with dragon logo). On October 9, 2018, the analyst verified the weights of the retained tablets and the weights and count of the analyzed tablets from case 2018-10517. During the initial analysis, the tablets with characteristics similar to the found tablet were weighed and retained with no analysis. From the weight documented in the case record, the analyst was not able to determine whether the found tablet came from this case. Since it was not possible to determine with certainty that this tablet belonged to case 2018-10517, the tablet was analyzed under a separate forensic case number (2018-15824). During a section meeting held on 10/12/18, staff members were reminded of their responsibility to ensure their work areas and common areas are thoroughly cleaned and organized at all times. The analysts need to ensure that evidence is contained and does not become loose during handling, inventory, sampling, and weighing of the evidence samples. On 10/23/18, the section manager sent an email to the Harris County District Attorney's Office Grand Jury and Integrity Divisions to notify them of this incident. A copy of laboratory reports 2018-15824 and 2018-10517 were attached to the email. To prevent this nonconformance from reoccurring, the analyst moved the balance and adhered the electrical cords to the wall to allow more room and a clear view of the area surrounding the balance.



Summary of Root Cause Analysis:

Note: Incidents are documented for tracking purposes and trend analysis. Root Cause Analysis is not required for incidents.

The root cause of this nonconformance was the analyst did not thoroughly clean her work area in accordance with sectional policy. The analyst's cleaning process did not routinely include checking under the balance's electrical cords. Given the setup of this work area, the cords were compressed against the wall hiding the tablet from view.

Additional Information/Follow-Up:

Unlike other work areas in the section, this analyst's work area includes a wall without shelving. Other work areas within the section have shelving which allows the ability to place objects above the bench level to prevent obstruction of view. The list of clandestine tablet cases was not extended outside of the May-September 2018 timeframe because the analyst stated in an interview that she only recalled receiving one case that contained tablets with similar characteristics to the found tablet. Since the tablet could not be associated to a specific case, it was retained and stored by the Quality Division under forensic case number 2018-15824.

Section Manager: James Miller

Date: 11/16/18

Division Director: Amy Castillo

Date: 11/19/18

Incidents or Corrective Actions that involve the Biology/DNA section are reviewed by the Technical Leader and CODIS Administrator.

Technical Leader: N/A

Date: _____

CODIS Administrator: N/A

Date: _____

Quality Director: Lori Wilson

Date Closed: 11/21/18