



**Quality Division Use Only**

Quality Tracking #:	<input type="text" value="2019-049"/>	Classification:	<input type="text" value="Corrective Action"/>
Non-Conformance Level:	<input type="text" value="Class II"/>	Section:	<input type="text" value="Crime Scene"/>
Date of Discovery:	<input type="text" value="07/22/19"/>	Date of Incident:	<input type="text" value="07/21/19"/>

<b>Forensic Case Number(s), if applicable:</b> 2019-12321	<b>Agency Case Number(s), if applicable:</b> 093107419
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**Description of Non-conformance:**  
A firearm was collected at a crime scene by a Crime Scene Investigator (CSI) on 07/21/2019. The CSI did not properly clear the chamber nor secure the firearm with a zip tie prior to placing it in a vault at HFSC.

**Additional Information/Follow-Up:**  
A NIBIN Technician retrieved the firearm from the LPP Evidence Vault on 07/22/2019. When the NIBIN technician went to process the firearm, he noticed that there was no zip tie in place to secure the firearm and there was a loaded cartridge in the chamber. The firearm had a recessed chamber, making it difficult to see the loaded cartridge when looking straight down at the open chamber. The firearm was collected by a CSI at a night scene where there was limited visibility. The CSI performed a safety check but the check did not include the use of a light source to increase visibility inside the chamber.



**Summary of Root Cause Analysis:**

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

This nonconformance was caused by a CSI not using adequate lighting when performing a firearms safety check at night under limited visibility. The CSI also forgot to properly secure the firearm with a zip tie prior to submission. When initially interviewed the CSI admitted that she did not use adequate lighting when performing the firearm safety check and forgot to secure the firearm with a zip tie. She was able to articulate a clear and appropriate understanding of the SOP requirements regarding firearms safety and submission however she did not demonstrate that understanding while at the scene. A follow up interview (which is standard practice for the Quality Division) was not scheduled because the CSI went on leave.

**Actions Taken:**

When the NIBIN technician noted the missing zip tie and the loaded cartridge, he photographed the firearm as it was received, removed and itemized the cartridge, and added it to the case record in JusticeTrax for reference. Firearms safety was reviewed with CSIs during the Thursday squad briefings held on 7/25/2019 and again on 8/22/2019. The review included the need to look inside the chamber from different angles using a light source to determine whether there is a cartridge in the chamber or barrel. It also included a reminder to use zip ties to secure firearms. An email was sent to the CSIs who missed the meeting, requiring them to review this information and send an email to their supervisors acknowledging when their review was complete. Language was added to the CSU SOP strengthening the requirement for clearing firearms prior to submitting them to HFSC or to a stakeholder. The SOP now includes language stating that when there is limited visibility the chamber must be checked using a light source to ensure that it does not contain a cartridge. The revised SOP was issued on 9/1/2019. Training on the SOP revision was provided on 8/8/2019, a PowerPoint presentation on the changes to the SOP was provided to CSIs on 8/22/2019, and testing through Qualtrax was completed on 8/30/2019. The CSI involved in this nonconformance was on leave and unable to complete the Qualtrax test. When she returns from leave she will be required to review the PowerPoint presentation and take the test in Qualtrax prior to resuming casework.

Section Manager: Domingo Villarreal

Date: 10/16/19

Division Director: Jerry Pena

Date: 10/18/19

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

Technical Leader: N/A

Date: N/A

CODIS Administrator: N/A

Date: N/A



**Houston Forensic Science Center**  
**Incident/Corrective Action Report**  
Quality Division

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**Quality Director:** Erika Ziemak

**Date Closed:** 10/24/19