



Quality Division Use Only

Quality Tracking #:	2020-075	Classification:	Incident
Non-Conformance Level:	N/A	Section:	Toxicology
Date of Discovery:	09/17/20	Date of Incident:	09/17/20

Forensic Case Number(s), if applicable:	Agency Case Number(s), if applicable:
2020-09008	087254820

Description of Non-conformance:
While preparing Toxicology evidence for alcohol analysis, one blood tube accidentally slipped from the analyst's hand while removing the specimen seal from the tube and broke on the laboratory floor.

Additional Information/Follow-Up:
Evidence collected with the HFSC DWI/DUI collection kits contain a long rectangular label that is adhered across the top of blood tubes. The label contains the collector's initials, collection date and time, and the specimen ID number. The top portion of the specimen ID label which does not contain any case information is removed during the initial alcohol analysis workflow.

The analyst was interviewed, and she explained that she was removing the top portion of labels from test tubes directly above a biohazard box to facilitate the disposal of these labels rather than performing this on top of the prep bench area. The analyst explained that she was turning around from the biohazard box to the prep area while holding blood tube item 001-01 and the tube slipped from her gloved hand and landed on the floor. If an ergonomic floormat had been positioned directly below this bench area, this could have reduced the impact of the blood tube against the floor and prevented its breakage. However, ergonomic floormats are typically not placed directly under bench areas because they hinder the movement of chairs used by analysts while prepping samples for casework. Since there were more evidence samples in this case, blood tube item 001-02 was analyzed on October 9, 2020. To prevent this from re-occurring, the analyst will now remove the top portion of specimen seals over the prep bench rather than over the biohazard box.

The removal of the top portion of analyzed blood tubes was implemented as part of Quality Incident 2019-022. Prior to the 2019-022 incident, the specimen ID label was only slit horizontally across one side of the top of analyzed tubes which caused the flap to adhere to test tube racks and gloves which consequently caused the breakage of two blood tubes.



Actions Taken:

The analyst discarded the broken tube and cleaned the area properly. A photograph of the broken tube was taken and uploaded to the case record. The chain of custody for item 001-01 was ended and a comment was added documenting the blood tube breakage.

This occurrence was discussed on October 28, 2020 in the Toxicology section meeting with staff members. All analysts agreed to handle blood tubes and perform sample prep directly above bench areas to prevent this type of situation from reoccurring. In addition, the section discussed and brainstormed on ideas on how to reduce and prevent the risk of other blood tubes from accidentally breaking. Before samples can be prepared for analysis, they must be at room temperature. Since these samples are taken out of the refrigerator, this temperature change in the blood tubes may create condensation which may cause the tube to slip from the analyst gloves. Staff members will be mindful of this condensation and will wipe off these tubes after removing them from the refrigerator to prevent them from becoming slippery when needed. Analysts will also ensure that they have a firm hold on tubes to prevent slipping.

Summary of Root Cause Analysis:

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

N/A

Section Manager: Dayong Lee _____

Date: 10/30/20 _____

Division Director: Amy Castillo _____

Date: 11/05/20 _____

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 _____

Quality Director: Erika Ziemak _____

Date Closed: 11/05/20 _____