



Quality Division Use Only

Quality Tracking #:	2021-001	Classification:	Incident
Non-Conformance Level:	N/A	Section:	Crime Scene, Firearms
Date of Discovery:	01/04/21	Date of Incident:	01/03/21

Forensic Case Number(s), if applicable:	Agency Case Number(s), if applicable:
2021-18002	000963321

Description of Non-conformance:

A Crime Scene Investigator (CSI) collected a firearm submerged in water and stored the firearm in a container with the water it was recovered from, per the Crime Scene Unit (CSU) standard operating procedure. When the CSI returned to HFSC, she was instructed by a CSU Supervisor to discard the water and dry the firearm in a drying cabinet.

Additional Information/Follow-Up:

The CSU SOP specifies that firearms collected from bodies of water shall be preserved in the water they are recovered from to prevent rusting and preserve possible latent print evidence.

The CSU SOP at the time also specified that for officer-involved shootings, all firearms shall be charted. In this instance, the firearm was collected from an officer-involved shooting scene. The firearm was recovered from water and needed to be charted. The CSI had not previously encountered this situation and requested guidance from a supervisor. The supervisor prioritized charting the weapon over the need to preserve it in the water it was recovered from.

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



Actions Taken:

A CSU supervisor and the Firearms Manager arranged for the firearm to be submitted to the Firearms section. A Firearm Examiner dried and oiled the firearm, then proceeded with NIBIN processing. The magazine and cartridges were preserved for possible latent print processing per HFSC's Magazine Preservation Policy.

A revised CSU SOP was published on 03/17/2022. The revision includes a section specific to charting firearms submerged in water. It includes a requirement to inform the stakeholder of the risks associated with removing the firearm from water to chart the weapon. If the stakeholder still requests charting the firearm, the SOP includes instructions for preserving the original water and returning the firearm to it after charting is complete.

Plastic containers for transferring handguns in water were also added CSU vehicles. These containers are large enough to hold most handguns.

Section Manager: Carina Haynes

Date: 04/14/22

Division Director: Carina Haynes

Date: 04/14/22

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: 04/18/22