



Quality Division Use Only

Quality Tracking #:	2022-004	Classification:	Incident
Non-Conformance Level:	N/A	Section:	Firearms
Date of Discovery:	01/12/22	Date of Incident:	01/12/22

Forensic Case Number(s), if applicable:	Agency Case Number(s), if applicable:
2022-00117	000135222

Description of Non-conformance:
A NIBIN Technician inadvertently began the decontamination process on a fired cartridge casing prior to remembering that the possible blood she visually observed on the casing needed to be collected by the Forensic Biology section.

Additional Information/Follow-Up:
HFSC's Firearms analysts routinely look for possible blood on fired cartridge cases submitted for NIBIN processing. If they observe possible blood, they review the request to determine if the cartridge cases were collected by HFSC's Crime Scene Unit (CSU). Crime Scene Investigators (CSIs) swab all firearms-related evidence collected on scene for DNA. If CSIs observe possible blood, they swab the observed staining. If they do not observe possible blood, they swab for possible contact DNA. Therefore, if a Firearms analyst observes possible blood on a cartridge case collected by CSU, they proceed with decontamination using a 10% bleach solution. If a cartridge case with possible blood was not collected by CSU, it is transferred to HFSC's Forensic Biology section.

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 NIBIN Technician was inspecting 5 fired cartridge casings for possible blood in case 2022-00117 (item 005). She noted possible blood on 1 of the 5 cartridge casings. The NIBIN Technician began the decontamination process by placing the cartridge casings in 10% bleach solution. The cartridge casings were in the 10% bleach solution for less than 2 minutes when the NIBIN Technician realized that the evidence had not been collected by CSU and would need to be sent to Forensic Biology for DNA swabbing. The NIBIN Technician took the casings out of the bleach solution and placed them on a Wypall® absorbent paper towel to air dry while waiting for further instructions from section management.

The Firearms Manager contacted the Quality Division and the Forensic Biology section. It was decided that an attempt should be made to preserve any possible DNA present on the cartridges. This was communicated to the technician who then repackaged the dried evidence and placed it on the proper shelf to be transferred to the Forensic Biology section.

The Forensic Biology section processed the item for possible DNA and was able to develop a DNA profile.

The Firearms Manager tasked a Firearms analyst with the responsibility of triaging fired cartridge cases to improve the workflow process and increase efficiency. The analyst now determines which fired cartridge cases need swabbing and which can be processed for NIBIN, sorts them accordingly and assigns them to a Firearms analyst. Those that need to be swabbed are transferred to the Forensic Biology section by CS/CM prior to NIBIN processing. This process improvement reduces the risk of analysts decontaminating fired cartridges cases prior to being transferred to the Forensic Biology section for swabbing.

This is a first-time occurrence for this NIBIN technician. HFSC tries to preserve any observed possible blood for DNA testing, even if the stakeholder has not requested DNA testing. In this instance there was no request for DNA testing, and other than the NIBIN request, which is auto-generated, no forensic services have been requested. HFSC informed the investigator of the nonconformance in an email sent by the section manager on 03/28/2022. Although the investigator did not respond, a review of the initial police report revealed that the incident involved an accidental shooting where both the suspect and complainant are known, and there was an eyewitness to the event.



Section Manager: Donna Eudaley

Date: 07/15/22

Division Director: Amy Castillo

Date: 07/18/22

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: 07/18/22