



Quality Division Use Only

Quality Tracking #:	<input type="text" value="2022-049"/>	Classification:	<input type="text" value="Incident"/>
Non-Conformance Level:	<input type="text" value="N/A"/>	Section:	<input type="text" value="Firearms"/>
Date of Discovery:	<input type="text" value="03/11/22"/>	Date of Incident:	<input type="text" value="03/11/22"/>

Forensic Case Number(s), if applicable:	Agency Case Number(s), if applicable:
2019-20381	152304719

Description of Non-conformance:
A fired Federal 22LR cartridge case was found by Client Services/Case Management (CS/CM) on the floor in the Firearms basement area on March 11, 2022.

Additional Information/Follow-Up:
A CS/CM evidence specialist was returning evidence from the Firearm's basement area to the Houston Police Department (HPD) property room on the morning of March 11, 2022. She did not notice the cartridge case in the Firearms basement area at that time. When she returned from the property room to bring that day's firearms evidence to the Firearms basement area, she noticed the cartridge case on the floor. She placed it on a table, where a NIBIN technician later found it.

The basement area had been cleaned (including having the floor swept and the garbage removed) after the specialist left for the property room to return/retrieve evidence.

While it can't be determined with certainty, it is possible that the cartridge case was moved from underneath one of the work areas when the room was cleaned.

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:

The NIBIN technician followed a process put in place for found evidence. The process had been developed as part of the action plan for Quality Report 2021-069. The technician notified her supervisor and posted a message on the Firearms Teams site asking if anyone knew the source of the found cartridge case.

Per the process, all Firearms staff were supposed to respond to the message. However, two examiners were on vacation, did not respond, and forgot to do so once they returned to work. The process required the submission of a workflow after everyone responded, which did not happen for several months. The process was revised to require a workflow be submitted as soon as practical after potential evidence is found, rather than waiting until all staff have responded to a query asking if anyone has information about the found item. See Quality Report 2021-069 for further details.

Once all the examiners responded it was determined that the cartridge case did not appear to belong to any active cases being examined in the Firearms section. It is possible that the cartridge case was created as part of a training sample. Two recent trainers of NIBIN technicians were interviewed, one trainer stated that he had not used Federal 22LR ammunition, and the other trainer stated that while he remembered using 22LR ammunition, he did not remember the specific brand. When the NIBIN technician he trained was interviewed, she opened her 22LR training sample and was able to confirm that it was not Federal 22LR ammunition.

It is also possible that the cartridge case fell out of an evidence package received from the property room, prior to the evidence being inventoried. HFSC met with property room representatives on 8/16/2022 to discuss a more effective process for sealing evidence. Typically, fired evidence is received in manila envelopes sealed across the top flap. However, it is possible for small caliber cartridge cases, such as 22LR, to fall out of the envelopes through the upper corner of the flap. The property room and HFSC agreed that a second layer of packaging, such as a Ziploc bag, should be used for packaging fired evidence.

The source of the cartridge case could not be determined, and it was submitted to the property room on 7/28/2022 as found evidence under agency case number 152304719.

Section Manager: Donna Eudaley

Date: 11/01/22

Division Director: Amy Castillo

Date: 11/07/22

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: 11/07/22