



**Quality Division Use Only**

Quality Tracking #:	2022-053	Classification:	Incident
Non-Conformance Level:	N/A	Section:	Seized Drugs
Date of Discovery:	09/15/22	Date of Incident:	08/22/22

Forensic Case Number(s), if applicable:	Agency Case Number(s), if applicable:
2022-06891 2022-07081 2022-08520	074618822 076775722 094134722

**Description of Non-conformance:**  
Three sealed cases were misplaced while in the custody of a Seized Drugs analyst. A search was performed, and all cases were located adjacent to the analyst's workstation lodged between the workstation and a laboratory wall.

**Additional Information/Follow-Up:**  
The Seized Drugs analyst discovered this on September 15, 2022, when performing an evidence audit while preparing evidence to be returned to the submitting agency. The analyst noticed that three cases were electronically in his custody, but the associated evidence and the corresponding folders could not be located. Per the electronic records, on August 22, 2022, the evidence cases had been transferred to the analyst's custody. After discovering this, the analyst informed his supervisor, and jointly performed a search for these cases and folders. The three sealed evidence envelopes and their corresponding folders were found lodged between the analyst's workstation and the laboratory wall. Per an interview with a Quality Specialist, the analyst remembered that after assigning evidence cases to his custody, that he had stacked the evidence envelopes with their corresponding folders as a tower on the edge of his workstation. This appeared to be the reason why the cases and folders had slipped out of the workbench and became wedged against the wall. The Seized Drugs section is a limited access area located within an enclosed limited access floor. Although the evidence was accidentally misplaced, it was at all times maintained in a secured limited-access area under seal. As part of this investigation, it was noted during review of these cases, that both the examination and the inventory sheet contained the original date that the evidence had been assigned to the analyst's custody, but these had been crossed out. Per the Quality Manual's clause 7.5.1.1, observations, data, calculations, and other examination documentation are recorded at the time they are collected or made and are uniquely identified. Per the same interview with the Quality Specialist, the analyst's practice was to annotate on his inventory sheet the evidence



items retained without analysis. In addition, the analyst had the same practice of also starting a corresponding examination sheet since it was his intention of analyzing the assigned evidence items on that same date. The analyst was reminded of clause 7.5.1.1 and to write the examination sheet only at the time after the evidence had been inventoried and was ready to be analyzed to prevent future confusion as to what date the analysis and observations had been recorded.

**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:**

During a section meeting held on September 23, 2022, staff members were reminded that case requests should be assigned to them when they receive and place evidence into their custody. This is important because case assignments are displayed in the section's "JT Analyst page" dashboard and can help serve as another check for analysts for cases pending completion in addition to evidence audits. The three case reports were released with the following comment: "This case is associated with quality report 2022-053, please refer to this quality report for more details regarding the misplacing of sealed evidence item(s) XXX, YYY while in the analyst's custody prior to analysis".

Section Manager: James Miller Date: 12/08/22  
 Division Director: Amy Castillo Date: 12/12/22

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: 01/03/23