



Client Services and Case Management

Standard Operating Procedures

Client Services & Case Management Division



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1. Introduction and General Information

1.1. Introduction and Scope

- 1.1.1. This document is intended to outline the procedures and expectations for duties within the Client Services and Case Management Division (CS/CM). The CS/CM Division is largely comprised of two separate duties: administrative and evidence handling.
- 1.1.2. HFSC does not receive, store, release, dispose or destroy property. The mission statement of HFSC is to receive, analyze, and preserve physical and digital evidence while adhering to the highest standards of quality, objectivity, and ethics.
 - 1.1.2.1. CS/CM is responsible for the submission, transportation, transference, and release of evidence.
- 1.1.3. It is not possible to account for every scenario that may arise while performing these duties. Therefore, the CS/CM Specialist shall assess each situation carefully and use sound judgment. Any deviation from the guidelines listed here shall be approved by the CS/CM **Manager** or Supervisor, and shall be properly documented.

1.2. Goals

- 1.2.1. The primary goals of the CS/CM Division are to provide support to the various sections within the Houston Forensic Science Center (HFSC) and to provide high-quality customer service to the clients of HFSC.

1.3. Lab Safety and General Evidence Handling

- 1.3.1. While in the laboratory areas of HFSC, a lab coat shall be worn.
- 1.3.2. When handling chemical and biological evidence within **the laboratory areas of HFSC**, gloves shall be worn.
 - 1.3.2.1. **In the event that items of evidence are unpackaged, gloves shall be worn at all times when handling/transporting evidence.**
- 1.3.3. When transferring evidence in LIMS:
 - 1.3.3.1. A comment shall be made describing the reason for the transfer.
 - 1.3.3.2. Evidence **should** be transferred at the location in which the evidence is being placed (i.e. transferring evidence into a toxicology fridge **should** be done in the toxicology lab).
 - 1.3.3.3. When transferring evidence via the barcode system in LIMS, the barcode on the evidence shall be scanned. A receipt or an equivalent barcode shall not be scanned in lieu of evidence barcodes.
- 1.3.4. **Evidence shall not remain in the custody of a Specialist outside of working hours.**
 - 1.3.4.1. **Case files are not considered evidence and can remain in the custody of a Specialist outside of working hours.**



1.3.5. For specific evidence handling procedures, refer to sectional standard operating procedures.

2. Records Requests Procedure & Subpoenas for Testimony

2.1. Records Requests

2.1.1. Requests for records may come in the form of:

2.1.1.1. Discovery Orders

2.1.1.2. Subpoenas for Records (Subpoena Duces Tecum)

2.1.1.3. Code of Criminal Procedure: Article 39.14 (Michael Morton Act)

2.1.1.4. Administrative License Revocation (ALR)

2.1.1.5. Code of Criminal Procedure: Chapter 64 Motion for Forensic DNA Testing

2.1.1.6. Records requests from law enforcement officials or government agencies

2.1.2. Receiving records requests.

2.1.2.1. Requests for records are typically received through electronic means (i.e. a group email address managed by the CS/CM Division).

2.1.2.1.1. The requests may also be received through other means (i.e. fax, mail, or in-person delivery).

2.1.2.2. Only written requests will be received by HFSC.

2.1.2.3. If a records request is accompanied by a document, the document shall be time stamped.

2.1.2.3.1. A time stamp shall include the Forensic Case Number (FCN), if applicable, date, time, and initials of the Specialist receiving the request.

2.1.3. Responding to records requests.

2.1.3.1. A response shall be sent to the requestor stating that the request was received.

2.1.3.1.1. When responding to requestors, the Specialist shall carbon copy a group email address managed by the CS/CM Division.

2.1.3.1.2. If there is an issue or discrepancy with the request, the requestor shall be informed of the issue.

2.1.3.1.2.1. If the issue causes the request to be rejected, the requestor shall be informed that no further action is being taken.

2.1.3.1.3. If applicable, a time stamped copy of the request shall be attached into the email response.

2.1.3.1.4. For efficiency, a predetermined phrase may be used as the response.

2.1.4. Informing the appropriate section(s).



- 2.1.4.1. If the request is not rejected, the appropriate staff member shall be informed that the request was received.
- 2.1.4.2. An electronic copy, the original document, or an equivalent can be made available to staff members for reference.
- 2.1.4.3. Informing the appropriate section may not be applicable when receiving the following:
 - 2.1.4.3.1. ALR requests
 - 2.1.4.3.2. Chapter 64 requests
- 2.1.5. Tracking and logging records requests.
 - 2.1.5.1. All requests for records received by the CS/CM Division shall be logged and tracked.
 - 2.1.5.2. When using Information Requests in Office 365 (O365) to log/track requests, a new ticket shall be created for each request.
 - 2.1.5.2.1. All fields shall be filled out as completely as possible.
 - 2.1.5.2.2. The request may be attached into the ticket.
 - 2.1.5.2.3. The appropriate status shall be set.
 - 2.1.5.2.3.1. As the status changes, the ticket shall be edited to reflect the update.
 - 2.1.5.3. It should be noted that ALRs are not required to be tracked using Information Requests in O365. ALRs shall be tracked using the shared ALR tracking log within the CS/CM Division.
 - 2.1.5.3.1. The columns on the tracking log shall be filled out as completely as possible.
- 2.1.6. Uploading documents and correspondence.
 - 2.1.6.1. An electronic copy or equivalent of all received documents and all correspondence shall be uploaded to the correct case in LIMS, if applicable.
- 2.1.7. Processing discovery orders, subpoenas for records, 39.14, and records requests.
 - 2.1.7.1. The request shall be reviewed and the CS/CM Division should identify what is being requested.
 - 2.1.7.1.1. It shall be determined if the request pertains to HFSC.
 - 2.1.7.2. At a minimum, legal documents shall be:
 - 2.1.7.2.1. Addressed to HFSC.
 - 2.1.7.2.2. Received in full (i.e. all pages shall be received).
 - 2.1.7.2.3. If any issues or discrepancies are noted, refer to section 2.1.3.1.2
- 2.1.8. Processing ALR requests.
 - 2.1.8.1. Requests for alcohol lab results and accompanying affidavits may be requested by the Texas Department of Public Safety as part of the Administrative License Revocation (ALR) Program.



- 2.1.8.1.1. Note: In alcohol reports generated by HFSC, the affidavit is included in the lab report.
- 2.1.8.2. Each alcohol report shall be downloaded and provided to the requestor.
- 2.1.8.3. If the case cannot be located in LIMS, the ALR request shall still be entered into the tracking log and a note should be made that the case does not exist.
- 2.1.8.4. If a report cannot be provided at the time of the request, a note shall be made in the tracking log as to the reason and the requestor's email should be listed for future use.
- 2.1.8.5. The CS/CM Division is responsible for periodically checking the tracking log and updating the status of pending requests.
 - 2.1.8.5.1. If a report has been completed since the last update, the CS/CM Division shall email the report to the requestor, and the tracking log shall be updated to reflect this action.
- 2.1.9. Processing Chapter 64 requests.
 - 2.1.9.1. When the appropriate staff member receives the request, he/she is responsible for searching the section where there is any reasonable likelihood the evidence might be located.
 - 2.1.9.2. Once the search is complete, the appropriate staff member shall complete the approved form in Qualtrax. This form shall state whether or not evidence was found to be in the custody of HFSC, and if so, list what evidence was located.
 - 2.1.9.3. The original form shall be provided.
- 2.1.10. Processing other documents and other errors.
 - 2.1.10.1. Requests can be labeled as Other or Error for various reasons. These include, but are not limited to:
 - 2.1.10.1.1. Wrong Addressee.
 - 2.1.10.1.2. Missing appropriate official's signature.
 - 2.1.10.1.3. Missing pages.
 - 2.1.10.1.4. Consumption Order.
 - 2.1.10.1.5. Does not pertain to HFSC.
 - 2.1.10.2. While other documents or other errors may not require action from HFSC, all requests shall be logged and a response shall be provided to the requestor.
- 2.1.11. Releasing of records.
 - 2.1.11.1. Records should be released through the CS/CM Division.
 - 2.1.11.2. When releasing records in person, a Records Receipt shall be completed, and the individual receiving the records shall sign the receipt.
 - 2.1.11.2.1. The record receipt shall be uploaded to the case in LIMS, if applicable.



2.1.11.2.2. If appropriate, a copy of the individual's photo ID shall be made and uploaded to the case in LIMS.

2.1.11.3. Records may be released through an electronic method (i.e. email) if the recipient has been verified.

2.1.11.3.1. The records shall be released in an encrypted format.

2.1.11.3.2. It shall be requested that the recipient acknowledge that the records were received.

2.2. Subpoenas for Testimony

2.2.1. Receiving Subpoenas.

2.2.1.1. Subpoenas to appear in court are typically received through electronic means (i.e. a group email address managed by the CS/CM Division).

2.2.1.1.1. Subpoenas can also be received through other means (i.e. mail, fax, in person, or a different email address).

2.2.1.2. Subpoenas can be sent directly to HFSC staff members from the requesting agency.

2.2.1.2.1. The staff member should time stamp the document.

2.2.1.2.1.1. This should include date, time and initials of the staff member.

2.2.1.2.2. The staff member shall forward the subpoena to a group email address managed by the CS/CM Division to be logged by a CS/CM Specialist.

2.2.1.2.2.1. If a CS/CM Specialist receives a subpoena from a staff member that is not time stamped, it shall be returned to the staff member for necessary action.

2.2.1.2.3. Once the subpoena has been received by a CS/CM Specialist, he/she shall log the subpoena per the procedure in section 2.2.3. using the subpoena tracking log.

2.2.1.2.3.1. The receiving CS/CM Specialist shall respond to the staff member and the subpoenas email address (subpoenas@houstonforensicscience.org) that the subpoena has been logged and uploaded to the case into LIMS, if applicable. A response to the original sender is not required by the CS/CM Specialist when the subpoena was sent directly to an HFSC staff member.

2.2.2. Responding to Subpoenas.

2.2.2.1. As soon as a subpoena has been received by the CS/CM Division from an outside agency, he/she shall verify that the staff member(s) listed on the subpoena is employed or managed by HFSC.

2.2.2.2. After verification that the staff member is employed or managed by HFSC, the subpoena is forwarded to the listed staff member.

2.2.2.3. A response email is sent to the requesting agency to inform the requestor that the subpoena has been received and forwarded on to the appropriate individual.



2.2.2.3.1. When responding, the Specialist shall carbon copy a group email address managed by the CS/CM Division.

2.2.2.3.2. If a listed individual no longer works at HFSC or has no affiliation with HFSC, then the requestor is informed that the individual is not employed or managed by HFSC and the subpoena was unable to be forwarded.

2.2.3. Tracking and Logging Subpoenas.

2.2.3.1. Pertinent information from received subpoenas is added to the subpoena tracking log.

2.2.3.1.1. Pertinent information includes:

2.2.3.1.1.1. Agency

2.2.3.1.1.2. Cause Number

2.2.3.1.1.3. Incident Number

2.2.3.1.1.4. Lab Number

2.2.3.1.1.5. Defendant Name

2.2.3.1.1.6. Agency Contact

2.2.3.1.1.7. Contact Number

2.2.3.1.1.8. Requested Analyst

2.2.3.1.1.9. Date Received

2.2.3.1.1.10. Received By [CS/CM staff member]

2.2.3.1.1.11. Date Delivered [to HFSC staff member]

2.2.3.1.1.12. Criminal Court Number

2.2.3.1.2. The columns in the tracking log shall be filled out as completely as possible.

2.2.3.1.3. All subpoenas shall be entered into the tracking log, even if the individual or case is not affiliated with HFSC.

2.2.3.2. For each subpoena, the case is located in LIMS.

2.2.3.2.1. The FCN is documented in the subpoena tracking log, if applicable.

2.2.3.3. Each subpoena is uploaded into LIMS under the appropriate case number, if applicable.

2.2.3.4. If the case cannot be located in LIMS, the following action shall be taken:

2.2.3.4.1. The Specialist shall try all search methods in LIMS to locate the case (i.e. search by defendant name, agency case number, offense date, etc.).

2.2.3.4.2. If the Specialist is not able to locate the case, he/she shall refer to the recipient of the subpoena for more information.

2.2.3.4.2.1. If the recipient is unable to provide more information, he/she is responsible for reaching out to the requestor. Any information gained from the requestor should be relayed to the CS/CM Specialist for documentation. Any updated information received from the recipient shall be respectively updated in the tracking log.



2.2.3.4.3. If it is determined that the subpoena was sent in error and there is not a case in LIMS, a notation shall be made on the subpoena tracking log.

3. Toxicology Procedures

3.1. Compiling Toxicology Discovery Orders (Case Specific Records)

- 3.1.1. General information in response to a discovery order can be located on the HFSC eDiscovery website. However, case specific records shall be provided to a requestor when a proper discovery order is received.
- 3.1.2. Case specific records should be compiled and sent to the Toxicology analyst(s) for review. After review, the material should be burned to a disc and provided to the requestor.
- 3.1.3. The following information shall be included in case specific records if the information is available, and should be labeled as such:
 - 3.1.3.1. - 1. Accessioning Form (FCN) - # Pages
 - 3.1.3.2. - 2. Chain of Custody (FCN) - # Pages
 - 3.1.3.3. - 3. Case Data Files (FCN) - # Pages
 - 3.1.3.4. - 4. Report(s) (FCN) - # Pages
 - 3.1.3.5. - 5. Review Checklist (FCN) - # Pages
 - 3.1.3.6. - 6. Correspondence (FCN) - # Pages
 - 3.1.3.7. - 7. Evidence Pictures (FCN) - # Images
 - 3.1.3.8. - 8. Other Documents (FCN) - # Pages
 - 3.1.3.9. - 9. Supplemental Drug Analysis Documents (FCN) - # Pages
- 3.1.4. In addition to the above mentioned material, a Toxicology Cover Page **or equivalent** shall be completed and added to the discovery order folder.

3.2. Accessioning Toxicology Evidence

- 3.2.1. Before Toxicology evidence is analyzed, it shall be accessioned. Accessioning includes taking inventory of the evidence and examining the evidence for any discrepancies.
 - 3.2.1.1. For a list of discrepancies, reference the Toxicology Analytical Manual Standard Operating Procedure.
- 3.2.2. During accessioning, evidence shall be in the custody of the accessioner.
 - 3.2.2.1. A comment shall be made during the time of transfer that the evidence is being accessioned.
- 3.2.3. The ALC assignment shall be assigned to the appropriate accessioner and the accessioning task shall be initiated.
- 3.2.4. The outer evidence container shall be examined before the evidence is opened.
 - 3.2.4.1. The outer evidence shall be examined for a proper seal and identifying information shall be compared to LIMS.
 - 3.2.4.2. All notes shall be made in the matrix panel in LIMS, including any discrepancies.



- 3.2.4.3. At least one photo shall be taken of the evidence documenting the condition and capturing all identifying information.
 - 3.2.4.3.1. It is common practice to use Mideo systems, but it is not required.
- 3.2.4.4. If the evidence is not properly sealed, the accessioner shall automatically reject the evidence and shall not continue with the accessioning process. The packaging shall not be opened.
- 3.2.5. If the outer evidence container is properly sealed, the accessioner shall open the container and examine the inner items.
 - 3.2.5.1. All appropriate items shall be sub-itemized in LIMS and barcoded.
 - 3.2.5.2. The sub-itemized evidence shall be examined for discrepancies and notes shall be documented in the matrix panel in LIMS.
 - 3.2.5.2.1. Sub-items are considered child items and can include:
 - 3.2.5.2.1.1. one color top tube.
 - 3.2.5.2.1.2. one color top tube with replacement top.
 - 3.2.5.2.1.3. one replacement top tube.
 - 3.2.5.2.1.4. one plastic container.
 - 3.2.5.2.1.5. one specimen ID form.
 - 3.2.5.3. The accessioner shall take photos of the inner evidence items documenting the conditions and the required identifying information.
 - 3.2.5.3.1. It is common practice to use Mideo systems, but it is not required.
- 3.2.6. After all documentation in the matrix panel is complete, an accessioning report shall be generated and uploaded to the case in LIMS.
- 3.2.7. All photos taken during accessioning shall be uploaded to the case in LIMS.
- 3.2.8. If the evidence is not rejected, it shall be assigned to the appropriate analyst and transferred to the appropriate container or storage location(s).
 - 3.2.8.1. **Any** remaining child items shall be repackaged with the parent item, and the parent item shall be transferred into the appropriate storage location.
- 3.2.9. If the evidence is rejected, all child items shall be repackaged with the parent, the parent item shall be sealed, and the evidence shall be transferred to the appropriate location to be returned to the submitting agency.
 - 3.2.9.1. The seal shall include initials and the date.
 - 3.2.9.1.1. The initials and date should be half on/half off the evidence tape.
 - 3.2.9.2. A rejection report documenting all discrepancies shall be issued to the submitting agency and the evidence shall be returned.
 - 3.2.9.2.1. For rejection reports, refer to section 3.4.



3.3. Repackaging Toxicology Evidence

- 3.3.1. After analysis has been completed and the evidence is ready to be returned to the submitting agency, the child items shall be repackaged with parent and the chain of custody shall be updated.
 - 3.3.1.1. Parent and corresponding child items shall be placed into the custody of the Specialist for repackaging purposes.
 - 3.3.1.2. It shall be confirmed that the child item matches the parent item.
 - 3.3.1.2.1. The following identifiers shall match on both items, if applicable:
 - 3.3.1.2.1.1. FCN
 - 3.3.1.2.1.2. Subject's name
 - 3.3.1.2.1.3. Item number
 - 3.3.1.2.1.4. Specimen ID number
 - 3.3.1.3. After confirmation, the child item shall be repackaged with the parent item both physically and electronically in LIMS.
 - 3.3.1.4. The evidence shall be sealed with evidence tape.
 - 3.3.1.4.1. The seal shall have initials and the date.
 - 3.3.1.4.1.1. The initials and date should be half on/half off the evidence tape.
 - 3.3.1.5. The parent item shall be transferred to the appropriate storage location to be returned to the submitting agency.

3.4. Writing Toxicology Rejection Reports

- 3.4.1. If evidence is rejected for analysis based on the rejection criteria set by the Toxicology section (refer to the Toxicology Analytical Manual), a rejection report is issued to notify the submitting agency of the discrepancy.
- 3.4.2. Writing the rejection report.
 - 3.4.2.1. The information on the accessioning report shall be compared to the information in LIMS and the following items shall be consistent:
 - 3.4.2.1.1. Subject's name.
 - 3.4.2.1.2. Chain of custody for all items.
 - 3.4.2.1.2.1. The date of accessioning on the report shall match the date the evidence was placed in the accessions' custody.
 - 3.4.2.1.2.2. All child items shall be repackaged with parent.
 - 3.4.2.1.2.3. The parent item shall be returned to the submitting agency or in a location to be taken to the submitting agency.
 - 3.4.2.2. The appropriate individuals shall be added to the LIMS distribution list to receive the final report.
 - 3.4.2.3. The pictures in LIMS shall be compared to the information on the accessioning report and the discrepancy listed.



- 3.4.2.4. Any appropriate discrepancy phrases shall be added to the report writing panel in LIMS.
- 3.4.2.5. Once the draft has been created, the automatic phrases shall be configured to match the item numbers and discrepancy information by filling in the blanks and adding any appropriate additional phrases.
- 3.4.3. After the report is written, it shall be administratively reviewed by another CS/CM Specialist or Toxicology **staff member(s)**.
 - 3.4.3.1. The Toxicology Rejection Report is an administrative report that is not subject to a technical review.
 - 3.4.3.2. Regarding LIMS and the accessioning form, the following shall be reviewed and confirmed:
 - 3.4.3.2.1. Subject's name.
 - 3.4.3.2.2. Chain of custody for all items.
 - 3.4.3.2.2.1. The date of accessioning on the report shall match the date the evidence was placed in the accessioner's custody.
 - 3.4.3.2.2.2. All child items shall be repackaged with parent.
 - 3.4.3.2.2.3. The parent item shall be returned to the submitting agency or in a location to be taken to the submitting agency.
 - 3.4.3.2.3. The appropriate individuals shall be added to the distribution to receive the final report.
 - 3.4.3.2.4. The pictures in LIMS shall be consistent to the information on the accessioning report and the discrepancy listed.
 - 3.4.3.3. Regarding the rejection report, the following shall be reviewed and confirmed:
 - 3.4.3.3.1. All discrepancies are listed and the phrases are clear and organized.
 - 3.4.3.3.2. The report is formatted correctly.
 - 3.4.3.3.3. The date of the report is correct.

3.5. Receiving Toxicology Outsource Evidence

- 3.5.1. When a package arrives at HFSC containing outsourced evidence, the shipping label shall be time stamped at the time of receipt.
 - 3.5.1.1. The time stamp shall include the date, time, and the initials of the Specialist who received the package.
 - 3.5.1.2. The tracking number of the shipment shall be noted.
- 3.5.2. The Specialist shall document the condition in which the container was received.
- 3.5.3. In a secure location, the Specialist shall open the container and process the evidence.
 - 3.5.3.1. The following shall be verified for each item of evidence received:
 - 3.5.3.1.1. The evidence should not be cracked, broken, or leaking.



- 3.5.3.1.2. The FCN and item number on the barcode placed on the evidence shall match the FCN and item number of the barcode placed on the outside bag, if applicable.
- 3.5.3.1.3. The outer most evidence container shall be properly sealed.
- 3.5.3.1.4. Each item of evidence should have been received with a corresponding submission form and chain of custody form.
 - 3.5.3.1.4.1. If there are two or more items with the same FCN (but different items numbers), these may be on the same submission form.
 - 3.5.3.1.4.2. There should not be any items without a form nor any forms without an item.
- 3.5.3.1.5. If there is any discrepancy or issue with the evidence, a picture shall be taken noting the discrepancy and a comment shall be made when updating the chain of custody (refer to 3.5.3.2.1.2).
- 3.5.3.2. Using LIMS, all items of evidence shall be scanned into the custody of the Specialist.
 - 3.5.3.2.1. For each case without a discrepancy, a comment shall be made, something to the effect of "Evidence received via [FedEx/UPS] on [date] at [time]. Contents verified."
 - 3.5.3.2.1.1. If the packaging was opened to process the evidence, the comment shall include that the seal was broken to verify the contents.
 - 3.5.3.2.1.2. If an item has a discrepancy or issue, it shall be scanned in a separate transaction and the discrepancy shall be noted in this comment.
 - 3.5.3.2.2. The tracking number of the shipment shall be noted in the tracking number field.
 - 3.5.3.2.3. The Specialist shall note the number of items scanned and verify that this matches the number of items received.
- 3.5.3.3. For efficiency, a bulk container may be created in LIMS to transfer the evidence to the lab location.
 - 3.5.3.3.1. Each item of evidence shall be scanned into the container.
 - 3.5.3.3.1.1. The number of items scanned into the bulk container shall match the number of items scanned into the Specialist's custody.
- 3.5.4. All paper documents shall be uploaded into a shared drive within Toxicology and into LIMS.
 - 3.5.4.1. A folder shall be created in **a shared site that is accessible to CS/CM and Toxicology staff members.**
 - 3.5.4.1.1. The folder shall be titled as the tracking number on the shipping label.
 - 3.5.4.2. A copy of the shipping label should be scanned and attached into the folder created in 3.5.4.1.
 - 3.5.4.3. All submission forms should be scanned as one document.
 - 3.5.4.3.1. If the pages are double sided, both sides shall be scanned.



- 3.5.4.3.2. The document shall be uploaded into the folder created in 3.5.4.1.
- 3.5.4.4. Each submission form shall also be scanned individually and attached into the appropriate case in LIMS.
- 3.5.5. All documents and blood tubes shall be placed into the container.
- 3.5.6. The container shall be sealed with tape to ensure that it will not open during transport.
- 3.5.7. If applicable, the container shall be transferred to the appropriate **staff member** who will transport the evidence to the lab location.
 - 3.5.7.1. After arriving at the lab, the container is scanned into the appropriate storage location.
- 3.5.8. After the evidence has arrived at the lab and processing has been completed, it is ready to be repackaged with parent (refer to 3.3).

3.6. Toxicology Outsource Reports (TOUT Reports)

- 3.6.1. Scanning the report into LIMS.
 - 3.6.1.1. Under the TOUT assignment, the document shall be scanned or attached into case in LIMS.
 - 3.6.1.1.1. The document shall be titled as the outsource report, noting the outsourced lab's name.
- 3.6.2. Generating a TOUT report in LIMS.
 - 3.6.2.1. Under the same TOUT assignment in which the outsource report was uploaded, a TOUT report shall be generated with a cover page.
 - 3.6.2.2. The writer shall verify that the report generated correctly and that all case numbers, item numbers, etc. match for each page.
- 3.6.3. Administratively reviewing the report.
 - 3.6.3.1. Each report is administratively reviewed by another Specialist.
 - 3.6.3.2. The following items shall be consistent, reviewed, and verified:
 - 3.6.3.2.1. Case numbers.
 - 3.6.3.2.2. Item numbers.
 - 3.6.3.2.3. Report date.
 - 3.6.3.2.4. All pages of the document shall be uploaded into the report.
 - 3.6.3.3. After verifying that the information is correct, the report is signed off as reviewed and completed.

4. Evidence Handling Procedure – Houston Police Department (HPD)

4.1. HPD Property Room

- 4.1.1. All items to be returned to the Property Room shall be retrieved from the section's storage location.



- 4.1.1.1. All sections shall be checked for evidence.
- 4.1.1.2. Evidence shall be placed in the Specialist's custody before returning to the Property Room.
 - 4.1.1.2.1. It should be noted how many items are transferred.
- 4.1.2. **Before returning evidence to the Property Room**, the evidence received from each section shall be returned via LIMS and EMS.
 - 4.1.2.1. In LIMS, all items shall be scanned to the appropriate return location.
 - 4.1.2.1.1. The number of items returned shall match the number of items scanned into the Specialist's custody.
 - 4.1.2.2. In EMS, all items shall be scanned to the appropriate location.
 - 4.1.2.2.1. The number of items returned in EMS shall match the number of items returned in LIMS.
 - 4.1.2.2.2. When scanning in EMS, the HPD barcode shall be scanned as EMS cannot read FCN barcodes.
 - 4.1.2.2.3. The same Specialist who returned the items in LIMS shall return the items in EMS.
 - 4.1.2.2.4. Unfired ammunition and physical firearms shall be scanned in the gun room.
- 4.1.3. Requested evidence shall be received from the Property Room.
 - 4.1.3.1. An inventory of the pulled/requested items shall be taken to ensure accurate retrieval of items.
 - 4.1.3.1.1. If any requested items are missing, the Specialist shall consult the Property Room **personnel**.
 - 4.1.3.1.2. Some firearm requests may be in the gun room.
 - 4.1.3.2. All items to return to the lab shall be transferred into the Specialist's custody via EMS.
 - 4.1.3.2.1. The number of items scanned and the number of items physically received shall match and this number should be noted.
 - 4.1.3.3. After scanning all items in EMS, the same items shall be scanned into the Specialist's custody in LIMS.
 - 4.1.3.3.1. This **should** occur at the Property Room after receiving the items through EMS.
 - 4.1.3.3.2. The number of items scanned in LIMS shall match the number of items scanned in EMS.
- 4.1.4. After returning from the Property Room, the received evidence shall be disseminated to the appropriate storage locations in each section.
 - 4.1.4.1. The Specialist(s) shall scan the items into the appropriate location using the correct barcode.



- 4.1.5. As evidence is needed by analysts, the request shall be made in EMS to receive the evidence from the Property Room.
 - 4.1.5.1. Ensure proper measures have been taken to cross reference the items requested and the items received.
- 4.1.6. If an item is new to the Property Room, a new submission shall be created in order to submit the evidence to the Property Room.
 - 4.1.6.1. An EMS label shall be printed and placed on the item.
 - 4.1.6.2. A new submission form shall be completed and a physical copy shall be made available to submit with the evidence to the Property Room.

4.2. HPD Narcotics Evidence Receiving (NER)

- 4.2.1. Before receiving evidence from NER (formally known as Centralized Evidence Receiving, or CER), a pull list shall be printed from EMS.
 - 4.2.1.1. The evidence that is received is based on the pull list.
 - 4.2.1.1.1. It is normal procedure that only the evidence listed on the pull list is received from NER.
 - 4.2.1.1.1.1. Exceptions include late requests, in which an email from Controlled Substance supervisors should have been received, or cases that contain multiple items but only one was requested.
- 4.2.2. Items of evidence shall be received from NER.
 - 4.2.2.1. NER personnel shall call out the case number listed on the evidence.
 - 4.2.2.1.1. As the number is called, the case should be marked off of the pull list.
 - 4.2.2.2. The Specialist shall verify that all cases listed on the pull list have been called and marked off.
 - 4.2.2.2.1. If a case was not called, NER personnel shall be informed. The case needs to be pulled or a reason shall be provided by NER personnel as to why it is not available for pick up.
 - 4.2.2.2.2. If an extra case is called that is not listed on the pull list, an explanation should be provided by NER personnel (i.e. for a reason listed in 4.2.1.1.1.1). If one cannot be provided, the evidence should not be accepted.
 - 4.2.2.3. After verification of the pull list, the evidence shall be inspected for correct seals and proper packaging.
 - 4.2.2.3.1. Each seal shall be initialed and the packaging shall not be leaking or torn.
 - 4.2.2.3.2. If there is an issue, NER personnel shall be informed and the evidence shall not be accepted until the issue has been corrected.
 - 4.2.2.4. All evidence shall be scanned into the custody of the HFSC personnel through EMS.
 - 4.2.2.4.1. The NER personnel shall be signed into EMS during this process.
 - 4.2.2.4.2. The number of items scanned should be noted.



- 4.2.2.4.2.1. This number shall match the number on the pull list, with the exception of added or deleted items (refer to 4.2.2.2).
- 4.2.3. After evidence is received from **NER**, it shall be transported to the lab, scanned into LIMS, and prepared for storage.
 - 4.2.3.1. All evidence shall be scanned into the Specialist's custody in LIMS.
 - 4.2.3.1.1. The same number of items scanned in LIMS shall be the same number of items scanned in EMS.
 - 4.2.3.2. FCN barcodes shall be printed from LIMS for each item and placed on the correct piece of evidence.
 - 4.2.3.3. All evidence shall be scanned into the appropriate storage location and placed in that respective location (i.e. Latent Print Vault).
 - 4.2.4. After analysis, evidence shall be returned to **NER**.
 - 4.2.4.1. All items to be returned shall be placed into the Specialist's custody.
 - 4.2.4.1.1. The number of items scanned should be noted.
 - 4.2.4.2. All items shall then be scanned to the **NER** return location in LIMS.
 - 4.2.4.3. Per the request of **NER**, if there are multiple items placed into a box, these shall be placed in numerical order by the agency case number.
 - 4.2.4.4. To return evidence to **NER**, the items shall be scanned in EMS.
 - 4.2.4.4.1. The CS/CM Specialist shall be signed in to EMS during this process.
 - 4.2.4.4.2. The same number of items scanned to be returned in EMS shall be the same number of items scanned to be returned in LIMS.

5. Evidence Handling Procedure – Other Outside Agencies

5.1. Outside Agencies

- 5.1.1. Outside agencies include all agencies in which evidence is accepted by HFSC with the exception of the Houston Police Department.
- 5.1.2. Outside agencies should make an appointment to drop off or pick up evidence by contacting the CS/CM division through phone or email.

5.2. Submission Forms

- 5.2.1. Submission forms shall be completed in order for the evidence to be accepted.
 - 5.2.1.1. An exception would include the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) for firearm submissions.
 - 5.2.1.2. The submission form shall be signed by the submitter before or at the time of submission.
- 5.2.2. Submission forms can be downloaded from the HFSC website.
- 5.2.3. For efficiency, submission forms may be sent to CS/CM prior to the appointment for drop off. This shall allow for the case to be created in LIMS prior to the arrival of the submitter.



5.3. Case Creation

5.3.1. After a submission form has been received, the case shall be created in LIMS.

5.3.1.1. At a minimum, the following information should be included when creating a case in LIMS:

5.3.1.1.1. Submitting agency.

5.3.1.1.2. Agency case number.

5.3.1.1.3. Offense information, if provided.

5.3.1.1.4. Individual's information, if provided (such as suspects, complainants, and/or involved parties).

5.3.1.1.5. Items of evidence submitted with given descriptions.

5.3.1.1.5.1. If the case is being created in Porter Lee LIMS, the evidence should not be entered into LIMS until the evidence is physically received.

5.4. Receiving Evidence

5.4.1. If the evidence is received at the same time as the submission form, the procedures under section 5.3. shall be followed to create the case in LIMS and shall include entering the evidence items to begin the chain of custody.

5.4.2. If the case was previously created in Porter Lee LIMS, the items of evidence shall be added.

5.4.3. A barcode label for each item shall be printed and placed on the outer container.

5.4.4. A lab label shall be printed and placed on the submission form.

5.4.5. The submission shall be initialed and time stamped with the date and time of evidence submission.

5.4.6. A copy of the completed submission form shall be provided to the submitter.

5.4.7. After submission, the evidence shall be transferred to the appropriate storage location.

5.4.7.1. A copy of the transfer receipt or equivalent shall be sent to AR@houstonforensicscience.org for billing purposes.

5.4.8. The appropriate sections should be notified that evidence was received and is pending analysis.

5.5. Returning Evidence

5.5.1. All items of evidence to be returned shall be in the custody of the CS/CM Specialist prior to return.

5.5.2. At the time of the appointment, each item shall be returned to the submitted agency.

5.5.2.1. Enter a comment including the name, agency, and payroll number (if applicable) of who is receiving the evidence.

5.5.2.2. An electronic signature from the agency representative shall be captured.

5.5.3. After the representative has signed, the receipt of the transaction or a chain of custody receipt shall be printed and provided to the representative along with the evidence.



6. Receiving & Supply Management

6.1. Receiving Procedures

6.1.1. Storeroom Supplies

- 6.1.1.1. Supplies shall be brought to the Central Storeroom by the **Logistics** Specialist or designee in order to be processed.
- 6.1.1.2. Items are inventoried according to the vendor packing slip or QuickBooks purchase order forms. Items shall then be received through QuickBooks.
- 6.1.1.3. An RFID workbook shall be generated to upload Storeroom items into the RFID system. Once they have been added, the supplies shall be tagged with RFID stickers and placed on the shelves.

6.1.2. Partial Orders

- 6.1.2.1. Partial orders shall be processed and shall be entered into QuickBooks separate from remaining items. However, partial orders shall not be paid in full.
- 6.1.2.2. The AP section should be notified for partial orders, as this may be due to other discrepancies with the vendor.

6.1.3. Section Supplies

- 6.1.3.1. Items ordered directly from the section(s) that will not be stocked in the storeroom (i.e. Amazon orders) shall follow the same inventory as QuickBooks procedures (refer to 6.1.1.2). These items however, shall not be entered into the RFID system for tagging and inventory.
- 6.1.3.2. Once these items are received through QuickBooks, they shall be forwarded to the section listed on the Purchase Order, which has been assigned by Procurement and Purchasing.
- 6.1.3.3. The section representatives shall be notified and are responsible for the retrieval of their items.

6.1.4. QuickBooks

- 6.1.4.1. Orders with Purchase Order numbers shall be received through QuickBooks to be paid. Once items are inventoried, the packing slip shall be marked with the total price, section budget, and stamped with the date.
- 6.1.4.2. The initials of the person entering the items shall be added underneath the date.
- 6.1.4.3. The packing slip shall then be scanned into the QuickBooks system.

6.1.5. P-Card and Contract Services

- 6.1.5.1. P-Card and Contract Services shall be accounted for depending on the service or purchase.



6.1.5.2. Each service contract may be affiliated with a specific forensic discipline. A staff member from that discipline should be assigned as the point of contact. Slips from the service visit should be saved and sent to the AP section. A copy may be sent to the Receiving Specialist for filing.

6.2. Section Responsibilities

6.2.1. Authorization for Storeroom Access

6.2.1.1. Authorization for access to the Storeroom shall be granted by section managers or appointed supervisors only. Receiving shall prepare the final access list.

6.2.1.2. **Staff members** who have been identified for access shall receive a RFID card assigned to them by the Receiving Section. Those authorized shall not be given access until physically assigned an RFID card.

6.2.1.3. The Receiving Section shall notify Security of any changes made to the access list. Unauthorized **staff members** shall not access the supply Storeroom unless accompanied by a **staff member** with access.

6.2.1.3.1. **Staff members** shall comply with the Security Manual when entering controlled areas.

6.2.2. Lost/Stolen RFID cards

6.2.2.1. If the assigned RFID card is lost or stolen, the **Logistics** Specialist should be notified immediately in order for the card to be deactivated.

6.2.2.1.1. When notified of a lost or stolen card, the **Logistics** Specialist shall notify the Security Director.

6.2.2.1.1.1. The person to whom the card was assigned shall no longer have HFSC badge access to the Storeroom.

6.2.2.2. In order to regain badge access to the Storeroom and receive a new RFID card, the following shall occur:

6.2.2.2.1. Issue a memo stating the events that led to the lost/stolen card.

6.2.2.2.1.1. The memo shall be signed by the individual's Section Manager.

6.2.2.2.1.2. The memo shall then be submitted to the **Logistics** Specialist.

6.2.2.2.2. The individual shall complete a training session at the discretion of the **Logistics** Specialist.

6.2.2.3. After the memo and training have been completed, the **Logistics** Specialist shall order a new RFID card for the individual. This card may be charged to the individual's section budget.

6.2.2.3.1. After the new RFID card has been received, the **Logistics** Specialist shall issue the card to the individual and notify the Security Director that badge access to the Storeroom is now permitted.



6.2.3. Section Ordered Supplies

6.2.3.1. **Staff members** shall be notified when items are ready for pick-up.

6.2.3.1.1. Items ordered by the sections shall be picked up in a timely manner.

6.2.3.1.2. Sections are encouraged to keep all purchase order forms and inventory items once they are received. Archived paperwork may be helpful when used to solve shipping discrepancies.

6.2.3.2. For all incoming shipments with special instructions (i.e. items on pallets, installation required, etc.), Receiving should be notified in order for arrangements to be made.

6.2.4. Storeroom Supply Checkout/ RFID Procedures

6.2.4.1. RFID cards shall be carried at all times when entering/exiting the Storeroom.

6.2.4.2. Storeroom items taken by the sections shall be recorded in the RFID system. Prior to entering the Storeroom, the authorized user shall scan the assigned tag by waving or placing the tag in front of the RFID antenna. Once inside, items may be collected for the section. After exiting the Storeroom with supplies, the RFID system shall record the exiting items and Finance shall charge the cost of items taken to the appropriate section.

6.2.4.3. The RFID tag should be carried away from the body and/or other access cards.

6.3. HPD Mailroom

6.3.1. Authorization

6.3.1.1. CS/CM is the only division authorized to retrieve packages from the HPD mailroom.

6.4. Inventory and Stock List

6.4.1. Storeroom Inventory

6.4.1.1. Items in the Supply Storeroom shall be inventoried annually, at a minimum.

6.4.1.2. RFID shall be used to keep inventory of items on hand and track product history.

6.4.2. Request for adding items to stock

6.4.2.1. For items needed on a regular basis but not on the Storeroom Stock List, a request may be placed to add items. **Staff members** may request an item be added to the Storeroom Stock List by completing a Supply Request Form and sending it to Receiving. This form can be found under the CS/CM section in Qualtrax.

6.4.3. Grant Tags and Capital Items

6.4.3.1. Equipment purchased over \$5,000 or items purchased by grants are considered Grant and/or Capital items. Tags for these items shall be printed by the Receiving section on blue labels only. The tags shall then be forwarded to the Methods section



for placement. Grant and Capital items shall be verified by the Accounting section prior to being entered into LIMS.

7. Visitor Management System & Parking Requests

7.1. Pre-Registration

- 7.1.1. Staff members should pre-register guests using the Visitor Ticket/Visitor Registry in Office 365. The ticket should include the following:
 - 7.1.1.1. Visitor Name.
 - 7.1.1.2. Date and Time of arrival.
 - 7.1.1.3. Host.
 - 7.1.1.4. Area to be visited.
 - 7.1.1.5. Purpose of visit.
- 7.1.2. If the visitor needs parking accommodations, the staff member should list this in the Notes section of the ticket.
- 7.1.3. Staff members should specify at which location (Travis or Fannin) the visitor will need parking and the duration of the parking required.
 - 7.1.3.1. CS/CM is responsible for securing parking for visitors at both (Travis or Fannin) locations.
- 7.1.4. Parking fees will be charged to the section to whom the host belongs to.
- 7.1.5. The Host is responsible for notifying/ensuring the visitor receives appropriate instructions regarding parking.
- 7.1.6. CS/CM Specialists may log the tickets received from staff members into the Visitor Management System for ease during the check-in process.

7.2. Visitors for 1301 Fannin

- 7.2.1. All visitors at 1301 Fannin shall be checked in using the Visitor Management System.
 - 7.2.1.1. The visitor must be logged into the system if not done so through Pre-registration.
- 7.2.2. All visitors shall provide proof of identification.
- 7.2.3. All visitors shall be issued an adhesive badge that must be visibly displayed on his/her body for the duration of the visit.
- 7.2.4. Refer to Security Manual for additional information.

7.3. Visitor Parking for 1301 Fannin

- 7.3.1. The Clay Street Garage is located at 1112 Clay Street.
- 7.3.2. The visitor should be instructed to enter the Clay Street Garage at the public parking entrance and obtain a ticket from the parking kiosk.
- 7.3.3. Upon arrival at the Service Center, the guest should present the parking ticket to a CS/CM Specialist if parking reimbursement is needed. The Specialist should confirm the following:



- 7.3.3.1. Visitor Name.
- 7.3.3.2. Date of Visit.
- 7.3.3.3. Time of Visit.
- 7.3.3.4. Duration of Visit.
- 7.3.3.5. Host.
- 7.3.4. Upon confirmation, the CS/CM Specialist shall provide a parking validation voucher to the guest.
- 7.3.5. The CS/CM Specialist shall log all visitors who receive a parking voucher for the Clay Street Garage in the Parking Voucher Tracking Log.
- 7.3.6. At the end of each month, CS/CM shall send a copy of the Parking Voucher Tracking Log to Accounts Payable (ap@houstonforensicscience.org).

7.4. Visitors for 1200 Travis

- 7.4.1. All visitors at 1200 Travis shall follow the Houston Police Department's security protocols when entering the building.
- 7.4.2. All visitors entering HFSC area(s) shall be checked in on the 24th floor and issued a visitor lanyard.
- 7.4.3. All visitors should be checked out on the 24th floor upon completion of his/her visit.
- 7.4.4. Refer to Security Manual for additional information.

7.5. Visitor Parking for 1200 Travis

- 7.5.1. The HPD Travis Parking Garage is located at 1200 Travis.
- 7.5.2. The visitor should be instructed to enter the HPD Parking Garage off of Polk Street.
- 7.5.3. Approval of temporary parking space is at the discretion of the Houston Police Department and is not guaranteed. For this reason, requests for parking at 1200 Travis should be made at least two (2) business days in advance.
- 7.5.4. Parking requests with more than two (2) weeks notice will not be submitted as demands for parking fluctuate weekly.
- 7.5.5. Visitors should park in the area designated by the Houston Police Department. Any unauthorized parking may result in the removal of the vehicle and a revocation of parking privileges for the Houston Forensic Science Center.

8. Audits

8.1. Audit Schedule

- 8.1.1. Personal custody audits, record management audits, and evidence storage location audits should be conducted monthly. It is acceptable that a designated percentage of records/evidence are audited.
 - 8.1.1.1. It is recommended that evidence storage locations be audited annually at 100 percent.



8.2. Personal Custody Audits

- 8.2.1. A custody inquiry shall be conducted on each staff member within CS/CM.
- 8.2.2. A Custody Inquiry Review Checklist form shall be completed and signed by the staff member and their immediate supervisor or designee.

8.3. Record Management Audits

- 8.3.1. A record management audit shall be conducted on each staff member who completes record management duties within CS/CM.
- 8.3.2. A Record Management Review Checklist form shall be completed and signed by the staff member and their immediate supervisor or designee.

8.4. Evidence Storage Location Audits

- 8.4.1. Evidence storage location audits shall be conducted for each area/section that stores evidence.
- 8.4.2. An Evidence Storage Location Review Checklist form shall be completed and signed by the staff member conducting the audit and their immediate supervisor or designee.