



## **BCI DNA Evidence Submission Policy**

Effective 02/13/2023

As part of BCI's on-going effort to effectively and efficiently assist law enforcement in Ohio, the Laboratory has adopted the following policies for all Biology/DNA submissions:

### **PACKAGING REQUIREMENTS**

Upon receipt, evidence items must be packaged to protect them from loss, cross transfer, cross contamination and/or deleterious change.

- Small evidence items must be submitted in a minimum of ~ 5x7" package(s).
- Potentially hazardous evidence must be packaged to ensure safe handling. Examples include:
  - Glass, knives, guns, etc. should be packaged in boxes
  - Syringes should be packaged in sharps containers
- Evidence items should be packaged separately to avoid direct contact that could result in cross transfer. Examples include:
  - Separate each item by the location where it was collected from the crime
  - Separate questioned evidence from known sources
  - Separate by evidence type
- Biological evidence should be packaged in paper to prevent deterioration of evidence. Exceptions include condoms, products of conception, potential bug infested evidence, which may be packaged in plastic and stored frozen.
- DNA reference standard packages must be clearly labeled with the name of the donor.
- All evidence packages must be sealed and initialed prior to BCI submission.

### **LABORATORY REQUEST DETAILS**

- I. Provide a summary narrative of the case facts. In order to establish CODIS eligibility, a synopsis should provide details for the following information:
  - How the evidence relates to the crime in question;
  - To whom the evidence belongs; and
  - Where the evidence was located

A DNA profile from evidence is entered into CODIS only for those items that will connect a suspect to the crime and this connection should be clearly documented in the narrative.

- II. To accommodate timely results for all law enforcement agencies throughout Ohio, BCI works evidence in order of submission. Rush requests impede this process; therefore, they will be accepted on a limited basis. The DNA section will not rush cases for approaching grand jury. Consult with a DNA Laboratory Supervisor with any rush request.

#### **DNA rush requests must pertain to:**

- Significant public safety concerns regarding violent crimes against a person(s);
- Unknown perpetrator; and
- Biological fluid evidence only (i.e. no touch DNA); or
- Approaching jury trial date (when suspect is in custody)

### **EVIDENCE ITEM ACCEPTANCE**

The types and number of evidence items accepted are dependent on the case type. Known DNA reference standards will not count against the number of items that may be submitted. The goal in any submission is for the agency to submit items that will establish a probative connection and therefore evidence that would best accomplish this should be considered before other items. If a probative association is obtained once DNA testing is complete, no further analysis will be performed on remaining evidence; otherwise, additional items



may be submitted. The laboratory can consider exceptions to the stated item number limits or submission of additional items after the first round of testing is complete. Additional items should not be submitted prior to discussion with DNA Laboratory management.

**I. Presumed limits on the first laboratory submission:**

- Crimes against a person(s) (includes Homicides, Robbery, Assault, Aggravated Burglary) – 5 evidence items
  - Touch DNA\* evidence collected from crimes against persons will only be accepted for analysis if there are no other items to test and if not previously processed by another lab discipline. Elimination or known reference standards must be submitted for comparison purposes.
    - Examples include swabs from vehicles or personal property; vehicle operator or homeowner standards must be submitted on original submission
- Property Crimes (includes Burglary) – 2 evidence items

**II. Preferred evidence items on first laboratory submission (as applicable):**

- Sexual Assault - sexual assault kit, one pair of underwear, one condom
- Property Crime - suspected blood from point of entry, items or tools left behind by suspect, item likely to contain DNA or skin cells from suspect (beverage containers, clothing items, cigarette butts, etc.)
- Homicide - weapons, suspect/victim clothing, sexual assault kit (as applicable), autopsy samples
- Felonious Assault – weapons, suspect clothing

**III. Evidence items not accepted for DNA submission/analysis:**

- Touch DNA\* requests for property crime evidence unless a weapon was stolen
- Touch DNA\* in criminal drug possession cases
- Firearms (or swabs collected from firearms) in criminal possession cases including weapons under disability cases
- Firearms found in public - unless the firearm is associated with a violent offense and the connection to the violent offense is clearly established.
- Firearms or fired cartridge casings that have been handled, examined or manipulated in a manner that impacts the preservation of touch DNA.

\* **Touch DNA** is defined as an evidence item that has had brief skin contact with an individual. Items that may contain saliva, such as beverage containers, cigarette butts, or items that have undergone prolonged contact such as clothing or tools are not considered touch DNA items and may be submitted for testing following the guidelines above.

- Additional guidance for DNA testing related to NIBIN-related evidence:
  - If a correlation is made in NIBIN on firearms related evidence, contact DNA Laboratory management for possible testing
  - Due to the exceedingly low-probability of recovering any usable DNA from fired cartridge cases and our high volume of DNA submissions, DNA testing on cartridge cases will be limited to felony crimes of violence after correlation in NIBIN

**IV.** To reduce the time to obtain a laboratory report, provide known DNA reference standards at the time of the original case submission.

Before testing evidence from complex investigations, BCI strongly recommends that lab personnel, lead investigator(s) and the prosecutor confer and identify which items are best-suited for testing. By eliminating



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items that are unlikely to yield probative results, the remaining items can be tested faster and will have greater evidentiary value. In cases that are potentially capital, agencies should confer with lab personnel and prosecutor to determine if permission to consume samples will be necessary.

Based on the circumstances of a case, the possibility of additional testing may be warranted. In such cases, the evidence items and testing requested should be discussed with DNA laboratory management, see contact list below. DNA laboratory management reserves the right to request any reference standards or additional information prior to making exceptions to the DNA submission policy.

We invite you to direct your questions concerning the policy to:

**Kristen Slaper**

BCI DNA Lab Manager

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Thank you for your cooperation in helping BCI to provide consistent, quality service to law enforcement agencies throughout Ohio and we look forward to working with you.

#### BCI DNA Laboratory Supervisors

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