



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

CRIME LABORATORY SUBMISSIONS

DIRECTIVE NO:

FC 0731

EFFECTIVE DATE:

July 18, 2025

REPLACES:

FC 0731 dated January 1, 2013

REFERENCE:

Property and Evidence Procedures
Manual

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS:

CALEA Standards: *6th Edition*, 83.1.1, 83.2.1,
83.2.4, 83.2.6, and 83.3.2

PROPONENT UNIT:

Crime Laboratory Section

AUTHORITY:

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If a provision of a regulation, departmental directive, rule, or procedure conflicts with a provision of the contract, the contract prevails except where the contract provision conflicts with State law or the Police Collective Bargaining Law. (FOP Contract, Article 61).

I. POLICY

Officers of the **Montgomery County Department of Police (MCPD)** will be made aware of the capabilities of **MCPD's** Crime Laboratory Section. Officers are encouraged to use the laboratory facilities to assist them with all evidence collected in connection with a crime when the type of examination falls within the scope of this directive.

II. CRIME LABORATORY CAPABILITIES

A. Forensic Biology Unit

The Forensic Biology Unit seeks to identify biological fluids such as blood and semen when possible. DNA analysis is conducted on biological material from items of evidence collected from crime scenes to compare to known individuals.

B. Forensic Chemistry Unit

The Forensic Chemistry Unit analyzes vegetation, powders, tablets, capsules, liquids, and paraphernalia for the presence of controlled dangerous substances (CDS).

C. Crime Scene Unit

The Crime Scene Unit **responds to and documents crimes scenes via photography, notes, 3D scans, and sketches as applicable. The unit will** identify, collect, preserve, **and process** evidentiary material, conduct blood pattern analysis, develop latent fingerprints, and **document** shoe and tire track evidence for potential subsequent comparisons.

D. Firearms Examination Unit

The Firearms Examination Unit analyzes firearms and firearms-related evidence. **The unit performs firearm operability examinations, test fires, serial number restorations, and firearm/firearms evidence comparison.** The unit is a participant in the “NIBIN” program (National Integrated Ballistic Information Network).

E. Latent Print Unit

The Latent Print Unit utilizes regional, state, **and federal** fingerprint **database** systems to **assist in the identification** of arrested subjects, suspects, and deceased individuals. **These same databases are utilized to search** latent fingerprint evidence obtained at crime scenes **in an attempt to identify the source of those latent prints. Direct comparisons of known individuals may also be performed when known prints are available for the person of interest.**

F. Electronic Crimes Unit

The Electronic Crimes Unit processes and analyzes electronic devices for stored digital evidence. These devices may include cellular phones, tablets, computers, vehicles and other data storage devices.

III. CRIME SCENE UNIT RESPONSE PROTOCOL

A. During normal working hours (Monday to Friday, **0600-0100** hours), **Crime Scene Unit (CSU) personnel are available to** respond to the scene for the following crimes/incidents:

1. All homicides.
2. At the discretion of the investigator:
 - a. Rapes and sexual assaults
 - b. Assaults culminating in serious injury or anticipated death
 - c. Commercial and residential robberies
 - d. Other robberies where serious injury occurs, or shots are fired
 - e. Suicides and unattended deaths

- f. Fatal fires or explosive scenes - at the discretion of the investigator/Fire Marshall on the scene
- 3. After an on-scene response and assessment by a district investigator or Shift ID:
 - a. Burglaries - losses in excess of \$20,000.
 - b. Burglaries containing shoe wear and/or tire track evidence.
 - c. Trend/serial burglaries involving the same method of operation.
 - d. Trend/serial felony thefts involving the same method of operation.
- 4. Follow-up investigations and search warrants that involve more than basic evidence collection

B. All Other Crimes

- 1. **PSB personnel should** process all crimes not listed in III.A, preferably **with the assistance of** Shift ID.
- 2. Shift ID may request **CSU personnel** to process the evidence if Shift ID does not have access to specialized equipment or the knowledge necessary to perform certain tests.
- 3. The Crime Scene Unit accepts requests for in-house evidence processing for all offenses regardless of classification.

C. On-Duty Assistance Procedures

- 1. For Crime Scene Unit response, officers should call the office directly at (240) 773-5150 during normal duty hours, Monday through Friday, **0600 to 0100 hours (refer to III.D for contacting available CSU personnel for after-hours notification/call-out).**
- 2. Officers/investigators may also contact the Crime Scene Unit office for assistance/advice on recovering evidence for crimes that do not warrant an on-scene response by the Crime Scene Unit.
- 3. Multiple calls will be handled on a priority basis at the discretion of the Crime Scene Unit supervisor.

D. Call-Out Procedures

The following procedures **may** be used for call-outs during non-operation hours **to contact the available** on-call CSU personnel (Monday to **Friday, 0100-0600** hours, and from **0100** hours **Saturday to 0600** hours Monday):

1. After an investigator has evaluated a scene and has determined **CSU personnel** is needed and that the incident falls under the responsibilities of the Crime Scene Unit, the investigator will contact **PSCC Supervisor**, who will contact the on-call **CSU personnel**.
 2. The need for a call-out should be based on the incidents and criteria listed in III.A. **as well as:**
 - a. Any investigation the Duty Commander determines would be enhanced by the presence of **CSU personnel** and for which the scene cannot be held for on-duty **CSU personnel**. This decision should only be made after an on-scene/telephone assessment **or notifying the Crime Scene Unit Supervisor**.
 3. When it is determined that the immediate services of **CSU personnel** are required, it **may** be the responsibility of the officer in charge of the scene to ensure **CSU personnel are** notified and to preserve the scene/possible evidence. The officer in charge, or designee, will remain on the scene until **CSU personnel** has completed their investigation.
 4. The Crime Scene Unit has the only approved blood-drying room. Call-out procedures should be followed if **these services are** required.
- E. Collecting, Packaging, and Submitting Evidence
Crime Scene **Unit personnel** have the responsibility of collecting, packaging, and submitting evidence whenever they process the crime scene in conjunction with an investigation.
- F. Evidence Processing
1. Evidence collected by the Crime Scene Unit will be entered into the evidence system by the **CSU personnel**.
 2. The investigator is responsible for completing the MCP **Form 41**, "Request for Evidence Examination" **or electronic equivalent** requesting any analysis of items by the Crime Lab. **CSU personnel** will make the determination of the appropriate testing methods.
 3. No item **should** be processed without an MCP **Form 41 or electronic equivalent** whether collected by crime scene personnel or by an officer.
 4. An MCP **Form 41, or electronic equivalent** should be completed to request the development of latent prints or latent prints and possible DNA collection, ballistic testing, **and** firearm examinations.
 5. The Crime Scene Unit will return the MCP **Form 41** with the results of any testing and keep a copy of the MCP **Form 41 or electronic equivalent** on file.
- G. Firearm Processing

1. All firearms collected or seized **that are eligible for examination may** be sent to the Crime Lab for testing. **Reference FC 0640 for additional information regarding the eligibility of firearms for test fire purposes.**
2. All firearms collected or seized **may be** test fired. If needed, an MCP Form 41 or **electronic equivalent** requesting a DNA swab and/or latent prints must be submitted within ten (10) days of a firearm being entered into evidence. **DNA and fingerprints are no longer viable for recovery upon opening for firearms examination and /or test firing.**
3. All evidence boxes, especially those for firearms, must be fully sealed before they will be accepted into the Crime Lab. All holes must be **covered with tape and fully sealed with initials and date over each piece.**

IV. REQUEST FOR DNA ANALYSIS

A. DNA evidence/submissions

1. Place each item of evidence in clean, separate paper bags or **boxes** or manila envelopes depending on item size. Do not use plastic bags for non-CDS evidence.
2. Officers **should** use department-issued evidence tape to seal paper bags/boxes to ensure the integrity of the evidence and the safety of persons receiving and opening the bags/boxes. Staples will not be used to seal any evidence container.
3. Clean gloves must be worn when handling evidence. **To avoid contamination, gloves must be changed between handling items of evidence.**
4. Complete an MCP Form 239, "Request for DNA Examination", or **electronic equivalent** listing all items and **associated barcode numbers** to be examined and a detailed account of the circumstances and need for analysis. MCP Form 239 or **electronic equivalent** that do not contain details **may** be returned.
5. All pieces of evidence **may** be taken to **the Evidence Unit.**
6. The MCP Form 239, or **electronic equivalent** should only be completed by the person responsible for the follow-up investigation. The officer on the scene who collects the evidence should not complete the form unless they will be conducting the follow-up investigation.

B. Known Samples

Known samples for use in analytical comparisons **should** be submitted from the suspect, victim, and/or **other individuals** as applicable.

1. **Known (buccal) samples from individuals may be submitted with the original request or as a supplemental request.**

C. Combined DNA Index System (CODIS)

CODIS is the software that enables crime laboratories to exchange and compare DNA profiles thereby linking crimes to each other and to convicted offenders and arrestees.

1. **CODIS will not be used for the direct comparison of known suspects/defendants to a piece of evidence. Comparisons are accomplished with a buccal swab.**
2. CODIS is not a name searchable database.
3. When a CODIS hit results in a suspect identification, a known buccal swab is required for comparison.

V. **SUBMISSION OF CONTROLLED DANGEROUS SUBSTANCE**

A. Packaging

1. Evidence will be packaged and sealed as soon as possible.
2. To minimize chain of custody concerns, one officer **should** be responsible for packaging and sealing all evidence.
3. CDS field test kits will not be accepted into the lab and should not be submitted as evidence. Any package that contains field test kits **may** be **destroyed**.
4. All items of CDS **should** be sealed in a plastic evidence bag with the label on the bag completely filled out. **Some drug packaging and contents are not easily inventoried. In these instances, descriptions of their outermost packaging will be sufficient. If a total count is not feasible, a photograph representing the submission must be uploaded. Any recording of count in notes, photographs, or submission must be consistent throughout all documentation.** The officer sealing the evidence will verify the bag is properly sealed, then initial and write the date across the seal. **Syringes and needles will not be analyzed, except if approved by the Forensic Chemistry Unit (FCU).**
5. If the evidence is too bulky for the plastic evidence bag, the evidence **should** be packaged in bags/boxes that are size-appropriate and properly labeled and sealed with department-issued evidence tape. Staples are not to be used to seal evidence packages.
6. Evidence from different defendants in the same case will be submitted separately **as different items**.
7. Complete an MCP **Form 139, "CDS Evidence Transmittal Form" or electronic equivalent**.
 - a. The packaging officer **should** legibly complete all information on the MCP **Form 139 or electronic equivalent** except those sections reserved for Crime Laboratory Section use only.

- b. Include the full names of all defendants.
- c. Do not enter more than five separate exhibits for each MCP **Form** 139; use additional forms as needed.

B. Submission

- 1. No evidence **should** be delivered directly to the Crime Laboratory Section that has not been processed through the property officer except:
 - a. Items secured by the **Crime Scene Unit** at crime scenes.
 - b. Evidence withdrawn from the Crime Laboratory Section for court or other processing purposes.
- 2. The officer **should** enter the items into the evidence **management** system. After packaging the evidence, the officer **should** attach all copies of the MCP **Form** 139 to the packaged evidence **or submit electronic equivalent**. The officer **may** place the evidence into the drop box (a large mailbox in, or near, the processing area) **or temporary storage locker**.

C. CDS Evidence for Destruction Only

(CDS evidence not connected with a criminal prosecution and not needed for analysis)

- 1. Comply with packaging and submission procedures (sections V.A, B).
- 2. On the MCP **Form** 139 **or electronic equivalent, indicate the items for destruction**.

VI. **RETRIEVAL AND DISPOSITION OF CDS**

- A. All evidence previously submitted to the **Forensic** Chemistry Unit for examination **should** be retrieved from the lab during normal lab hours and taken to court by the officers involved. Chemists cannot bring evidence to court.
- B. Disposition of CDS evidence that has been checked out of the **Forensic** Chemistry Unit is the responsibility of the officer. As soon as the CDS has been used for evidentiary purposes, it **should** be returned immediately to the Chemistry Unit. CDS checked out of the lab for other than evidentiary reasons (e.g., training) **should** be promptly returned in the same manner.
- C. Officers **should** follow the same procedure outlined in section V.C for destruction of evidence after trial. Due to the appeals process, the Assistant State's Attorney assigned to the case **should** be consulted regarding the decision to destroy evidence.

VII. **ELECTRONIC CRIMES UNIT**

A. Packaging

1. Evidence should be packaged and sealed as soon as possible.
2. Place each item of evidence such as a cellular phone in separate plastic bags depending on item size. Do not use paper bags unless needed to dry liquids. Laptop computers should be packaged in boxes, if possible, and larger computers should be marked as “self-contained” with an evidence tag. For large desktops, evidence tape may be wrapped around the chassis. If any removable storage media are connected or inserted into a port, they should be documented properly, removed, and packaged separately.
3. Cellular phones should be kept powered off if found off and kept powered on if found on. Cellular phones that are powered on, should be placed in airplane mode, with Wi-Fi and Bluetooth transmitters disabled when possible. If not possible, alternate means of isolating the device from transmissions should be utilized. The use of powered Faraday lockers or powered Faraday bags is recommended for devices that are powered on and must be transported to the Electronic Crimes Unit immediately.
4. Vehicles should be secured and entered following department procedures per FC 0721, MCP Form 60, MCP Form 162 and MCP Form 529 as appropriate.
5. Officers who encounter a computer that is powered on and is believed to be relevant to their investigation may contact ECU personnel prior to moving, powering off, or manipulating the device. ECU will advise proper evidence procedures on handling the device or will respond to properly examine the live digital evidence.

B. Submission

1. Complete the Electronic Crimes Unit “Digital Forensic Exam Form” or equivalent for all requests, listing all items to be examined and a detailed account of the circumstances and need for analysis. No examination will occur without a request form submitted.
2. The request for analysis should be completed by the investigator responsible for the follow-up investigation.
3. The device(s) will first be processed for DNA or latent prints should they be needed with the appropriate MCP Form 41 or electronic equivalent completed.

VIII. LABORATORY FORMS

Note: In order to analyze a particular piece of evidence, the appropriate MCP form should be completed **or electronic equivalent**.

A. MCP Form 41, “Request for Evidence Examination”

This form is used to request the processing of a piece of evidence. It should be used for the development of latent prints or latent prints with possible DNA collection, ballistic testing, firearm examinations, and **bloodstain pattern analysis**.

B. MCP Form 139, “Crime Laboratory CDS Evidence Transmittal and Laboratory Analysis Report”

This form is used to test all suspected controlled substances, including those that are submitted for destruction.

C. MCP Form 239, “Request for DNA Examination”

This form is to screen for the type of fluids present and request analysis to develop a DNA profile. This form will only be completed by the individual responsible for the follow-up investigation.

D. MCP Form 25, “Latent Comparison Request”

This form should be used when you have a suspect identified and want a latent print comparison.

E. MCP Form 623, “Latent Impression Evidence”

This form should be used to submit developed latent prints to the Latent Print Examination Unit. **This does not include footwear evidence. It is only applicable to friction ridge impressions.**

F. MCP Form 60, “Impounded Vehicle Report”

This form is utilized to document an impounded vehicle and track tows.

G. MCP Form 162, “Impounded Vehicle Envelope”

This envelope is used when impounding a vehicle and to retain proper keys within the envelope for storage.

H. MCP Form 529, “Vehicle Processing Facility Report”

This form is used to document and request vehicle processing by the crime laboratory.