EVIDENCE PACKAGING

General Packaging Rules

- Always wear disposable gloves to avoid contamination.
- Use only clean, new packaging containers and materials.
- Use paper containers for biologicals, items not requiring fluid preservation or protection from crushing, items submitted for fingerprint processing and other miscellaneous dry items.
  - Temporarily store wet biologicals in plastic until they can be air dried.
- Use plastic containers for documents and dry biologicals not intended for DNA analysis
- Package all liquids in crush proof, non-leaking primary containers. Place this in a secondary plastic container packed with absorbent material.
- Test tubes containing liquid samples should have the tops secured with Parafilm® to help prevent leakage and cross contamination.

Biologicals

Biological evidence that is wet (including buccal swabs) should be air-dried before packaging. Wet evidence can be temporarily packaged in plastic for transportation purposes only, and air-dried once in a controlled environment.

Buccal Swabs

- Place used swabs in a swab box or their original paper wrapper, then place in a secondary paper container (e.g., envelope or paper bag).
- Do not refrigerate - store at room temperature.

Liquid Blood Standard

- Collect in purple top tube with EDTA and place in secondary plastic bag.
- Refrigerate.

Wet Stain Evidence (e.g., swabs, cuttings or whole item)

- Collect liquid substances with a swab and package like a buccal swab.
- Collect entire item (e.g., blanket) if possible. Spread large items out and place a sheet of clean paper over the top - roll item and paper together and place in a secondary paper container.
- A cutting can be taken if whole item cannot be collected.
- Cuttings and large items should be refrigerated or frozen if unable to be air dried.

Dry Stain Evidence

- If collected with swab and sterile water, handle like buccal swab.
- Package flecks of dried stains in a druggist's fold or envelope.

Hair (with follicular tissue for DNA analysis)

- Package in envelope or druggist's fold (Image 1 on back), place in larger secondary paper container.

Tissue and Bone

- Freeze in airtight plastic primary container. Place in plastic or another sturdy secondary container.

Trace Evidence

- Air dry wet items to be searched for trace without the assistance of a fan.
- Package in small paper bag, envelope or druggist's fold to prevent loss.
- Package comparison standards separately from items of evidence.
- Butcher paper can be secured over items too large for a container.
- Package fractured, cut or torn items (e.g., pieces of tape) individually.

Arson/Accelerants

- Package items to be tested for accelerants in either metal or glass containers with airtight lids.
- Do not package potential accelerant evidence in paper or plastic containers.

Ammunition/Projectiles

- Do not use metal instruments (e.g., forceps) to recover spent projectiles from a body. Once recovered, gently rinse with water and allow to air dry before packaging.
- Each projectile recovered from a body should be packaged separately in a rigid container (e.g., small box or plastic vial). Do not package in glass, paper bag or envelope.
- Shotgun pellets or shrapnel may be packaged together in a rigid container (not paper) if recovered from the same location.

Toxicology

- Place liquid blood sample in a serum separator blood collection tube if it will be spun down within 24 hours after collection.
- Place liquid blood in grey top collection tube with oxalate/fluoride if spinning will not occur within 24 hours after collection.
- Contact testing lab for preferred packaging of other samples such as stomach contents, vitreous fluid, urine and tissues.

Deceased Remains

With Tissue

- Place a tag on the body or inside the primary container.
- Wrap body in sterile sheet if loss of trace evidence is a concern.
- Package remains in heavy gauge plastic bag; securely close with knot.
- Leave associated items (e.g., collar) on the body (unless removal is necessary to remove to avoid evidentiary loss).
- Package items not associated with the body separately.

Skeletonized

- Package intact bones in paper bags or boxes.
- Package the cranium and mandible separate from postcranial.
- If possible, package related bones together (e.g., right forepaw, left leg).
- Package any damaged bones singularly in sturdy container.
- Package loose teeth and small bones in small envelopes or boxes.

EVIDENCE LABELING & SEALING

Labeling

Containers should be labeled before items are placed into them to prevent confusion once the container is sealed.

- 'Sharps' include glass, knife blades, projectile shrapnel, needles and any other items capable of cutting or penetrating the skin. Package these items in rigid, puncture-resistant containers and label with the words "WARNING: CONTAINS SHARPS".
- A 'biological hazard' is any biological material that may be infected with bacteria, viruses or toxins that can adversely affect human health.
- Animal (non-primate) biological material is only considered to be biohazardous if it is suspected of or known to be infected by a zoonotic disease.
- If the container contains liquid or dried blood, body fluids or body parts, it is not necessary to use the international biohazard label unless the contents are known to be infectious or contain recombinant DNA.
- All containers should state the following information:
  - Case number
  - Item number or Animal ID number
  - Agency
  - Location collected from
  - Brief description of the item
  - Date and time the item was collected
  - Initials of the collector

Sealing

- Evidence containers must be sealed in a manner that will prevent loss, contamination or access by unauthorized persons. The most common method of sealing is with tape.
- Do not use staples as they may tear gloves or puncture skin.
- Do not lick envelopes to seal them as it could cause DNA contamination.
- A container may be completely sealed with frangible evidence tape, or clear packing tape with a small evidence tape token seal (Images 2 and 3).
- A container is properly sealed if its contents cannot readily escape and if opening the container will result in obvious damage to the container or its seal.
- Mark the evidence tape with the packager's initials and the date sealed. These markings should cover the evidence tape and carry onto the packaging.

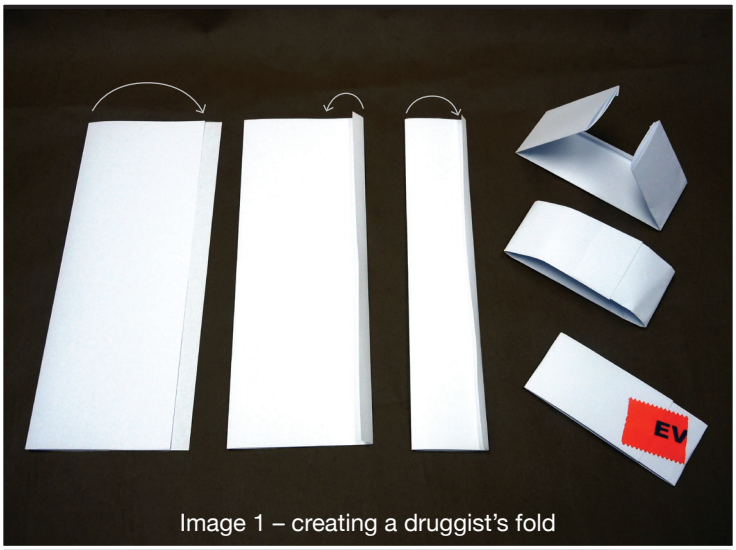

Image 1 – creating a druggist's fold

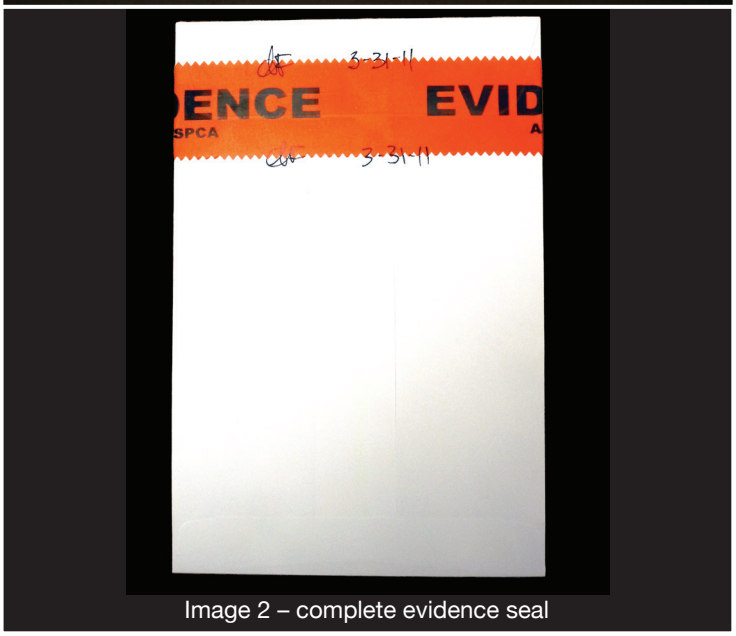

Image 2 – complete evidence seal

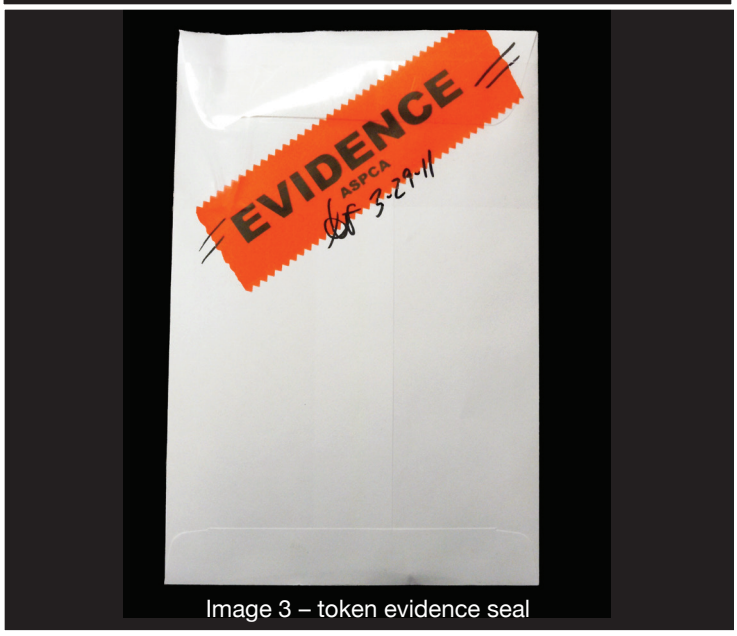

Image 3 – token evidence seal

References for packaging, labeling and sealing evidence

- FBI (2008). "FBI Handbook of Crime Scene Forensics." New York: Skyhorse Publishing.
- Fisher, B.A.J. (2012). "Techniques of Crime Scene Investigation, Eighth Ed." Boca Raton: CRC Press.