
 NSW Police Force Forensic Services Group CRIME SCENE PROCEDURES MANUAL - GENERAL 		
Title: Procedures Manual – 8.0 Evidence Management		
Prepared by: Snr Sgt Ian Parker & Supt Darryl Tuck	Authorised by: Operations Coordinator, CSSB	Endorsed by: Commander, CSSB
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8.0 EVIDENCE MANAGEMENT

8.1 PROCEDURES

The term, “evidence”, refers to exhibits, specimens and any other item collected in relation to an investigation.

8.1.1 *Occupational Health & Safety*

Assess and address Occupational Health & Safety issues when collecting, handling, packaging and labelling exhibits.

Refer to [FSG Occupational Health & Safety Manual](#) and [Crime Scene Procedures Manual – General, Section 4, Contamination Prevention](#)

When collecting handling, packaging and labelling items, wear the appropriate level of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).

Refer to [FSG Occupational Health & Safety Manual](#) and [Crime Scene Procedures Manual - General, Section 4, Contamination Prevention](#)

8.1.2 *Evidence Collection*

Tailor evidence collection techniques to each individual evidence type and its overall physical condition.

Refer to [Crime Scene Procedures & Methods Manual - General, Section 7 Collection of Specimens](#)

8.1.3 *Packaging*

Package all items in an approved and appropriate bag or container.

8.1.3.1 Assess the packaging requirements of each item to:

- a) physically protect the item from damage
- b) protect the integrity of evidence
- c) maximise the potential evidentiary value of the item
- d) minimise any disturbance of physical and/or trace evidence upon the item
- e) eliminate the chances of cross-contamination
- f) reduce flammable/biological hazard risks to handlers

8.1.3.2 Paper bags

Store an item which is of biological significance or susceptible to moisture degradation in a paper bag, including:

- a) blood stained clothing
- b) wet or damp item
- c) organic material (eg cannabis plants)
- d) shoes

8.1.3.3 Plastic bags

- a) use a plastic bag if an item:
 - i. is not susceptible to degradation or decomposition
 - ii. will not have its evidentiary value diminished

- b) if an item is very wet or heavily blood stained:
 - i. place it in a plastic bag at the scene
 - ii. leave the plastic bag open
 - iii. package the plastic bag in a sealed, appropriately labelled paper bag at the scene before sending it to the Crime Scene Section
 - iv. when it reaches the Crime Scene Section, remove the item from the plastic bag as soon as possible
 - v. retain the paper bag and the plastic bag
 - vi. air dry the item in an approved Forensic Evidence Drying Cabinet
 - vii. repackage the item in the original paper bag
 - viii. thoroughly examine the plastic bag for trace evidence before discarding/retaining it, as appropriate.

Refer to [Crime Scene Procedures Manual - General, Section 4, Contamination Prevention](#)

8.1.3.4 Rigid containers

Use rigid or fixed form containers in instances where the use of either a paper or plastic bag would not:

- a) maintain the integrity of an item (e.g. fragile items requiring protection)
- b) provide adequate Occupational Health & Safety protection (e.g. for hypodermic needles, knives, broken glass)
- c) suitably contain the item (e.g. flammable liquids)

8.1.3.5 Multiple items

Where a number of items are collected and individually packaged at a scene, place them in a larger bag/container for transportation and containment purposes.

8.1.4 Labelling

8.1.4.1 Ensure every item collected is labelled with all relevant and available details.

8.1.4.2 On the pre-printed field item label on the front of the paper bags supplied, enter all details available at the time of collection of an item, including:

- a) forensic case number (FCN)
- b) incident title
- c) incident location
- d) Crime Scene Investigator's name and section
- e) Senior Investigating Officer's name and station
- f) brief description of item

8.1.4.3 When using plastic bags or rigid containers, complete an **adhesive** pre-printed field item label providing all relevant information listed in 8.1.4.2 and stick it on the outside of the bag or container.

8.1.4.4 Place items suitable for packaging in a plastic bag or rigid container into a fully labelled paper bag for security sealing.

8.1.5 *Sealing*

Before leaving the scene, or upon receiving an item from a scene, use evidence security tape to seal all bags containing items. Apply item security seal tape as follows:

8.1.5.1 Paper bags

- a) fill out the field item label on the bag
- b) fold approximately 5cm of the top of the paper bag over to the front (printed label side)
- c) cut a length of evidence seal tape longer than the width of the bag to be sealed, allowing adequate tape overlap for the sides of the bag
- d) place evidence tape across the front of the bag so it adheres to both the edge of the folded flap and the main body of the bag (ie the flap edge is covered by the tape)
- e) sign, date and print the registered number across the evidence security seal tape, ensuring your signature is on both the tape and the bag
- f) check that tape is wrapped completely around both sides of bag and adheres properly

8.1.5.2 Plastic bags

- a) fill out details on the adhesive field item label and affix it to the bag
- b) place the plastic bag inside a suitably sized paper item bag and complete the external field item label
- c) follow steps b. to f. of 8.1.5.1

8.1.5.3 Rigid containers

- a) fill out details on the adhesive field item label and affix it to the container
- b) place the container inside a suitably sized paper item bag and complete the external field item label
- c) complete Steps b. to f. of 8.1.5.1

8.1.5.4 Multiple item containers

Individual item bags must be sealed appropriately, but when several items collected from a scene are placed in a larger bag for transportation and containment purposes, it is not necessary to seal the large bag by affixing security seal tape as in 8.1.5.1.

8.1.6 *Evidence Handling and Recording*

All items you collect are required for further forensic examination and analysis. Forming part of the overall police investigation, they are ultimately the responsibility of the LAC in which the incident has occurred.

8.1.6.1 When possible, hand all exhibits/items directly to the SIO or nominated Exhibit Officer at the scene. Exceptions to this include:

- a) items that are wet or contaminated with biological material and require drying
- b) items that are, or may be, contaminated with a chemical or biological agent
- c) country post mortem exhibit/specimens forwarded directly from the Department of Forensic Medicine, Glebe

8.1.6.2 Enter each sealed exhibit/item bag in the Field Exhibit Log at the scene.

- 8.1.6.3 The SIO or nominated Exhibit Officer must sign the Field Exhibit Log at the scene as a receipt.
- 8.1.6.4 The SIO or nominated Exhibit Officer must convey items from the scene to the exhibit handling Police Station nearest the scene.
- 8.1.6.5 The SIO or nominated Exhibit Officer must ensure the items are entered into the Station Exhibit Book and secured in the Exhibit Room awaiting further forensic examination.
- 8.1.6.6 As per Commissioner's Notice 99/1, sealed evidence bags must not be opened by the Station Exhibit Officer for the purpose of inspecting or recording a description of an item.
- 8.1.6.7 If the SIO is not in attendance at the time of the scene examination, or in minor matters where an Exhibit Officer is not appointed, the Forensic Investigator must convey the exhibits/ items to the exhibit handling Police Station nearest the scene and ensure the items are entered into the Station Exhibit Book at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.1.6.8 Once they have been processed through the LAC exhibit system, items may be signed out and conveyed to the Crime Scene Section for further examination.
- 8.1.6.9 Where it is impractical for the Forensic Investigator to attend the nearest exhibit handling Police Station to enter the evidence items, or where further evidence items have been generated through trace evidence examinations at a facility, the following procedure must be adopted:
 - a) package exhibits/items, convey them directly to the Crime Scene Section, and ensure they are entered in the Exhibit Book
 - b) secure the exhibits/items in an approved Exhibit Room within the Section
 - c) at the first opportunity, transfer the exhibits/items for further technical analysis or forward them to the exhibit handling station nearest the incident
- 8.1.7 *Receiving Evidence at Crime Scene Sections*
 - 8.1.7.1 Do not accept evidence delivered to a Crime Scene Section unless each exhibit/item has been properly entered into the relevant Station Exhibit or Miscellaneous Property Book
 - 8.1.7.2 If an exhibit/item is conveyed to a Crime Scene Section without being entered in a Police Station Exhibit/Miscellaneous Property Book, direct the conveying officer to the exhibit handling Police Station nearest the incident
 - 8.1.7.3 All items received at a Crime Scene Section for examination or storage must be entered in the Exhibit Book
 - 8.1.7.4 Where security, or tamper evident seals have been applied to an exhibit/item the seals must be inspected at time of receipt to ensure they have not been damaged or opened
 - 8.1.7.5 Upon receiving any sealed evidence bag, conduct a close inspection of the bag and seals in the company of the Submitting Officer
 - 8.1.7.6 If you detect any damage to the packaging or evidence of tampering with the

seals, report and record it immediately

- 8.1.7.7 If, upon inspection, you find the seals have been broken, breached or opened:
- a) Notify the Submitting Officer and the Section Leader of the Crime Scene Section or, if the Section Leader is not present, notify another Forensic Investigator present at the time
 - b) make a notation in the Exhibit Book indicating the nature of the damage to the seal
 - c) have the Submitting Officer co-sign the notation
 - d) examine the case notes and exhibit/item package for a relevant notation indicating a justified opening of the item (eg opened by SIO to show a witness)
 - e) notify the SIO that the seal of exhibit/item was received in a damaged condition
 - f) package and reseal the exhibit/item correctly

8.1.8 *Storing Evidence*

- 8.1.8.1 Once they have been relocated to a Crime Scene Section, items of evidence may be held while technical or trace evidence examinations are conducted by the crime scene examiner, and/or for forwarding to an external laboratory
- 8.1.8.2 As soon as practicable after completion of examinations, or upon their return from an external laboratory, the items must be returned to the Police Station from which they were originally received
- 8.1.8.3 Store items in an approved secure Exhibit Room within the Crime Scene Section until additional examinations have been completed
- 8.1.8.4 Accurately record all movements of items into and out of the Crime Scene Section in the Exhibit Book
- 8.1.8.5 Short term storage
This is required while specimen/items must be on hand at the Crime Scene Section for specific examinations and tests
- 8.1.8.6 Long term storage
Upon completion of all necessary tests, seal and return the item to the originating Police Station or the exhibit handling Police Station nearest to the scene/incident location
Refer also to [Police Service Circular 99/1, Forensic Evidence Management](#).
- 8.1.8.7 Consider individual needs for the storage requirements of various items (e.g. refrigeration for perishable/biological specimens, ventilated storage for arson samples)
- 8.1.8.8 Refrigerate all biological and arson ashen samples pending transportation to the respective laboratories and forward them to those laboratories at the earliest opportunity
- 8.1.8.9 Where appropriate, affix suitable warning stickers to the outside of the exhibit/item package (e.g. biohazard/contaminated waste)
- 8.1.8.10 Record movement of items through the TNT Failsafe Courier system, noting the security bag or tub number, seal number and consignment note number

- 8.1.8.11 The Laboratory Manager, Zone Supervisor, or Section Leader must conduct regular audits of the Exhibit Book to minimise the number of exhibit/items on hand
Refer to Command Management Framework.
- 8.1.8.12 When conducting audits, the Laboratory Manager, Zone Supervisor, or Section Leader must check that:
- a) Exhibit Book have been completed correctly
 - b) All items are correctly packaged, labelled and sealed
 - c) All exhibits are locked in the Exhibit Room when not being examined
 - d) Items are examined and/or forwarded for analysis within reasonable time frames
 - e) Exhibits are returned to LACs as soon as practicable after the completion of examinations
- 8.1.9 *Evidence Examinations*
- 8.1.9.1 Examinations of evidence items may be conducted only at a Crime Scene Section, a nominated satellite laboratory, or an external facility with suitable examination facilities
- 8.1.9.2 To avoid contamination or loss of evidence, remove items from their original packaging and examinations only under controlled conditions with appropriate precautions
Refer to Crime Scene Procedures Manual - General, Section 4 Contamination Prevention
- 8.1.9.3 To maximise the potential evidentiary value of an exhibit, develop an analysis sequence in consultation with the SIO and a practitioner qualified in the relevant forensic discipline
- 8.1.9.4 In developing a sequence of analysis, the following issues may need to be considered:
- a) whether evidence may be lost in the course of analysis
 - b) the value of the potential analysis results to the investigation
 - c) which course of action to take regarding potential analyses
- 8.1.9.5 Opening a sealed item bag
- a) do not attempt to remove the original evidence seal tape from bag
 - b) using a sharp blade, cut along the length and both sides of the evidence seal tape
 - c) sign and date the “opened by” section of the field item label on the front of the paper bag
- 8.1.9.6 Do not leave items unpackaged and exposed within the examination area overnight.
- 8.1.9.7 At the completion of each rostered shift during the examination period, return the specimen/item to the field item bag, apply a temporary sealing device, and store the item in the approved secure Exhibit Room.
- 8.1.9.8 If the examination of the item/specimen cannot be completed within the rostered shift period:
- a) lock the examination area and restrict access to the individual examiner

- b) items being examined may be locked in the examination area overnight until the examination has been completed

8.1.9.9 Resealing an item still under examination

Refold the paper flap to the front and affix a temporary sealing device (e.g. a bulldog clip).

8.1.9.10 Recommence the examination of the specimen/item within the next rostered shift period or at the first available opportunity.

8.1.9.11 If examination of the specimen/item has not been completed prior to periods of extended absence (e.g. annual leave), the item/s must be returned to the field item bag, sealed with the approved seal, and stored in the Exhibit Room.

8.1.9.12 When all examinations of the item have been completed, seal the item and return it to wherever it had previously been entered in an Exhibit Book (i.e. either the exhibit handling Police Station nearest to the scene/incident location or the originating Police Station).

Refer to [Police Service Circular 99/1 Forensic Evidence Management](#).

8.1.9.13 Resealing an item at completion of examination

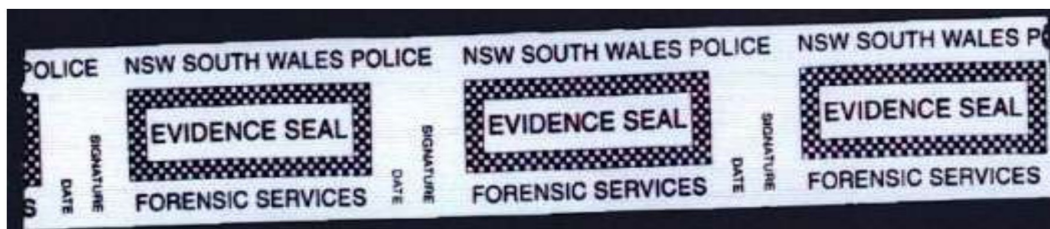
- a) return the item to the original item bag
- b) refold the paper flap to the front and reseal the bag [See 8.1.5.1](#)
- c) Sign and date the “sealed by” section of the field item label on the front of the paper bag

8.1.9.14 If the original paper bag is damaged, either from opening and resealing or storage, repackage the item in a new, fully labelled bag:

- a) retain the original damaged packaging within the new bag
- b) in the examination notes, make a suitable notation of the need to carry out repackaging procedures

8.1.9.15 Before returning items to their respective Police Station, ensure that if appropriate, warning stickers are affixed to the outside of the exhibit/item package (eg contaminated waste/biohazard). Notify the SIO of the presence of a contaminant.

8.2 METHODS





Annexure A



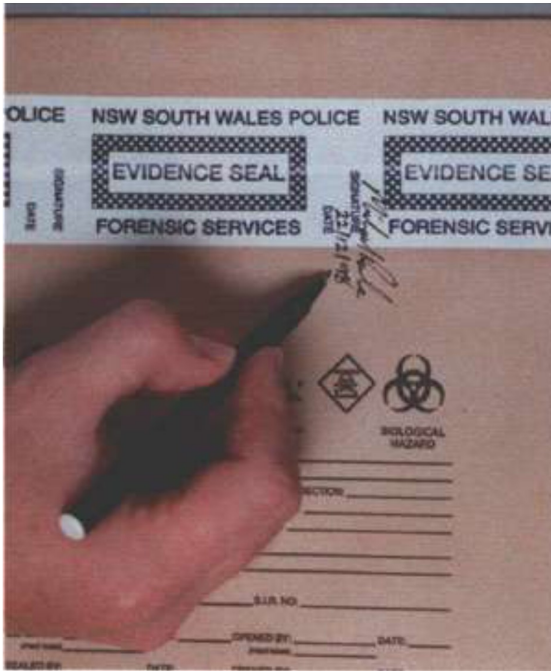
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Annexure C



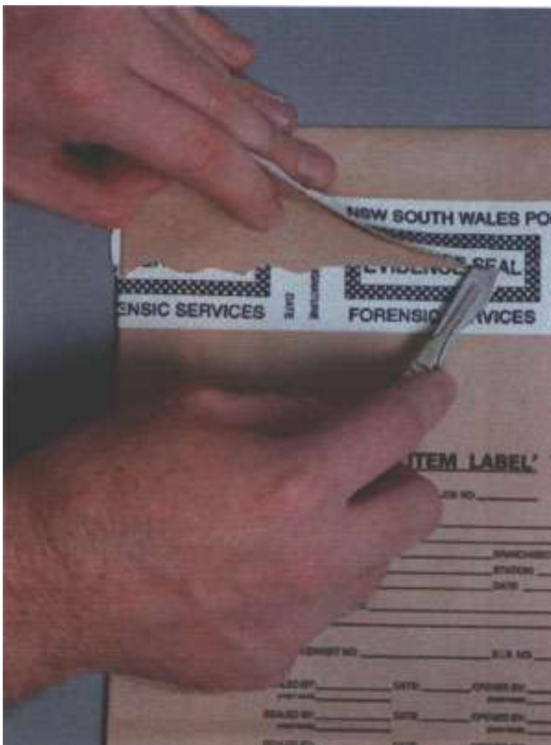
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Annexure E



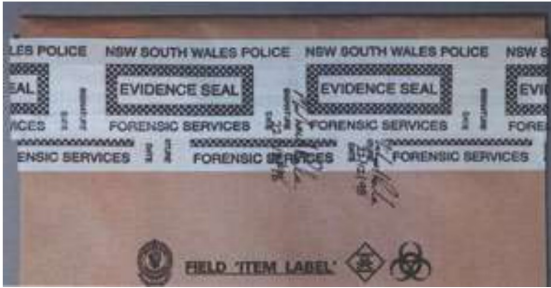
Annexure F



Annexure G



Annexure H



Annexure I



Annexure J



Annexure K