



INDIANA STATE POLICE LABORATORY DIVISION

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE BULLETIN

EVIDENCE PACKAGING and SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION: For any questions or concerns regarding this or any other Indiana State Police (ISP) Laboratory Division Physical Evidence Bulletin, please contact an ISP Laboratory for assistance or refer to <http://www.in.gov/isp/labs/2332.htm>. If you are unsure whether or not an ISP Laboratory can perform the type of examination/analysis you need, call the laboratory serving your area before bringing or mailing any evidence. For specific collection, packaging and submission instructions refer to the Physical Evidence Bulletin for that type of evidence. This Physical Evidence Bulletin is designed to address evidence packaging in general and the “Request for Laboratory Examination” form specifically.

I. GENERAL PACKAGING GUIDELINES

- A.** Package each item in a clean, unused container that is large enough for the item (do not try to stuff items into containers that are too small). If the item is packaged in a plastic or paper bag, the bag should be big enough that the item can move loosely around in the bag; keeping in mind that the container will need to be repackaged and sealed following examination. Packaging must also be large enough to allow the laboratory barcode label to be fully affixed to it. Each container must be sealed, and the seal initialed, in such a way that it cannot be opened without obvious signs of tampering. At a minimum, mark each container with the agency name, case number, item number*, and date of collection using a permanent marking pen.

NOTE: Do not duplicate item numbers. Each item in a case must have a unique identifier.

B. ACCEPTABLE PACKAGING CONTAINERS CAN INCLUDE:

1. Paper bags
2. Plastic bags
3. Cardboard boxes
4. Manila envelopes (do not use windowed envelopes)
5. Small glass vials/bottles with leak-proof seals (lids) (do not use glass jars)
6. Metal cans (for arson evidence)

C. ACCEPTABLE SEALS:

1. Evidence tape
2. Packaging tape, clear or brown (e.g. Mylar or reinforced)
3. Heat seal (for plastic packaging)
4. Chemical seal on a plastic bag, if all gaps in the plastic bag are sealed

NOTE: Do not use medical tape, masking tape, duct tape, staples, or cable ties.

D. ACCEPTABLE MINIMUM INITIAL MARKINGS ON SEALS:

1. Paper bags: - initial top and bottom edges of tape
2. Heat seal: - initial over heat seal, front and back
3. Cardboard boxes: - tape over top and bottom flaps and sides – initial top, bottom and sides or ends of tape.
4. Manila envelopes: - initial top and bottom edges of tape
5. Glass vials: - vials and small bottles should be sealed inside a plastic bag
6. Metal cans: - tape over top and sides – initial top and both sides

NOTE: Initials must cross over from tape to packaging. Initials must be identifiable to the person sealing the evidence and made using indelible ink (e.g. Sharpie).

E. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PACKAGING CERTAIN ITEMS OF EVIDENCE:

1. Questioned Documents: - Mark packaging before placing the item inside. Use minimal pressure when initialing seals.
2. Latent Prints: - Do not use plastic packaging for any item that may require latent print examination. Paper bags or manila envelopes better preserve latent print evidence.

3. Biological Evidence: - Securely affix a biohazard sticker to the outside packaging of biological evidence in a conspicuous place.

F. GENERAL EVIDENCE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

1. Do not submit items for continuity only. The ISP Laboratory only accepts items for examination/analysis.
2. Do not submit multiple items in one (1) sealed container/package. Cross-contamination may occur when multiple items are packaged together, which may interfere with examination/analysis.
3. Do not submit functioning explosive devices for laboratory analysis.
 - a. No evidence shall be accepted that contains explosive material in the form of a granular, solid, liquid, or gas, which is capable of igniting resulting in deflagration, explosion, or detonation.
 - b. Rendered safe explosive devices (IED), hoax devices, and debris from post blast investigations may be accepted with the approval of the Laboratory Manager.
 - c. The Laboratory must be notified of such evidence prior to submission.
 - d. A letter or an electronic communication from a certified Explosive Ordinance Disposal person shall be required indicating that the submission has been examined and determined to be safe.
 - e. This type of submission shall be disassembled so it is evident no explosive material or other hazards remain, and shall be hand delivered in unsealed packaging for inspection upon arrival.
 - f. The description of the evidence on the Request for Laboratory Examination form shall be detailed as to fully describe the item(s).
4. Do not use abbreviations or ditto marks on any laboratory form. All information must be complete and accurate to ensure Laboratory Certificate of Analysis reports are correct and available for the appropriate department or agency. When known, suspect and/or victim names must be included on laboratory forms in order to match necessary information with department or agency inquiries and subpoenas.

G. MAILING EVIDENCE:

1. It is not recommended to mail evidence that has a court date within 90 days. Please contact the ISP Laboratory to schedule an appointment for evidence submission.
2. Do not submit any evidence for biological examination through the mail. These items are best preserved when stored in a cool, dry condition (i.e. refrigerated, frozen).
3. Do not submit arson evidence or ignitable liquids through the mail. Flammable or combustible liquids should not be sent through the mail.

4. Do not submit corrosive materials or liquids for examination through the mail (i.e. acids, bases, oxidizers).
5. Do not submit any clandestine drug lab evidence through the mail.
6. Mailed evidence must be packaged in bubble wrap or other crush resistant packaging.
7. If you choose to mail evidence, please use one of the following methods
 - a. United States Postal Service – Certified or Registered
 - b. Commercial delivery service with traceable shipping
8. Do not place any markings on the mailing container which would identify the contents as evidence.
9. Do not seal the Request for Laboratory Examination form inside the item of evidence. Place the form inside the mailing container but not inside the item of evidence.

For additional information contact the State Police Laboratory in your area or visit the State Police Laboratory website.

Indianapolis (317) 921-5300 or toll free (866) 855-2840

Evansville (812) 867-3157 or toll free (800) 852-3970

Fort Wayne (260) 436-7522 or toll free (800) 552-0976

Lowell (219) 696-1835 or toll free (877) 874-0009

Website <http://www.in.gov/isp/labs/index.htm>

II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE “REQUEST FOR LABORATORY EXAMINATION” FORM

- A.** Print legibly or type all requested information. Submit a Request for Laboratory Examination form with each case. Use the most current edition of the Request for Laboratory Examination form, available at <http://www.in.gov/isp/labs/2332.htm>.
- B.** The numbers below refer to the numbered blanks on the attached reference form.
 1. For ISP Laboratory personnel use, leave blank.
 2. Check the “New Case” box if this is the first submission of evidence for this case to any ISP Laboratory. Check the “Additional” box if items of evidence have previously been submitted for this case to any ISP Laboratory.
 3. If only one (1) form is submitted for this case, indicate “Page 1 of 1”. If multiple forms are required, indicate the appropriate page and total number of pages.

4. For ISP Laboratory personnel use, leave blank.
5. Rank or title and full name of the investigating officer(s).
6. Email address of the investigating officer(s).
7. Name of submitting agency. Do not abbreviate.
8. Name of the county in which the crime occurred.
9. Complete mailing address of submitting agency (street, city, zip).
10. Telephone number, including area code, of submitting agency or division of investigating officer(s) (i.e. Investigation Division).
11. Nature of the incident or crime under investigation.
12. Case number of the submitting agency. This number will appear on the ISP Laboratory Certificate of Analysis report(s) issued upon completion of the examination(s).
13. Name(s) of the person(s) or business(es) who is/are the victim(s) of the crime. Indicate "State of Indiana" for victimless crimes (i.e. clandestine drug lab).
14. Name(s) of any suspect(s) in the case. Indicate "unknown" if no suspects are identified at the time of submission. Please notify the laboratory if any suspect(s) name(s) become(s) known after submission.
15. Indicate court date.
16. For Drug Case only, indicate date of seizure.
17. For ISP Laboratory personnel use, leave blank.
18. Summarize the case or incident. Write a brief summary of the crime – who, what, when, where, how. Also, indicate any need for urgent examination such as court date, imminent threat to public safety, probable cause to obtain arrest/search warrant, etc. Please include information that helps determine if an item submitted for CODIS is eligible. It is acceptable to include drug field test results in this block only on the Request for Laboratory Examination Form.
19. Indicate the item number followed by a complete description of the packaging and item (e.g. "Sealed plastic bag containing plant material"). Use brand names, model and/or serial number(s), color(s), size(s), style(s), identifying mark(s), etc. as appropriate. (e.g. "Sealed cardboard box containing one (1) Sig Sauer 9mm semi-automatic pistol model P226 serial number 54321"). Do not include any opinions or presumptions regarding the nature or origin of the item (e.g. "suspected cocaine", "suspected bloodstain", or "field test results"). Do not list weight for drug items. When describing the item start with the outer most container and describe the item from the outside in.
20. Indicate which examination(s) is/are to be performed on the item(s) (e.g. Items 1 and 3 DNA exam, Items 2 and 4 latent fingerprint exam, Item 5 compare with any fingerprint developed from items 2 and 4). If the case is complex, contact the laboratory to discuss it prior to completing this section.

