



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDERS

SOP 1-87 (Formerly 5-5)

Effective: 07/20/2022 Review: 07/20/2023 Replaces: 01/13/2016

1-87 SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE DIVISION

Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):

A. Related SOP(s)

[1-57 Identification/Disposition Unit \(Formerly 3-03 and 5-7\)](#)

[1-67 Multi-Agency Task Force \(MATF\)](#)

[2-2 Department Property \(Formerly 3-75\)](#)

[2-73 Collection, Submission, and Disposition of Evidence and Property \(Formerly 2-08\)](#)

B. Form(s)

MCST Crime Scene Log

[PD 3079 Major Crime Scene Team OIS Firearm Issuance Form](#)

[PD 4201 Request for Forensic Service](#)

C. Other Resource(s)

City of Albuquerque Code of Resolutions § 3-11-6 Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Testing Resolution

N.M. Code R. § 16.19.20.65 Schedule I

N.M. Code R. § 16.19.20.66 Schedule II

N.M. Code R. § 16.19.20.67 Schedule III

N.M. Code R. § 16.19.20.68 Schedule IV

N.M. Code R. § 16.19.20.69 Schedule V

NMSA 1978, § 30-31-6 Schedule I

NMSA 1978, § 30-31-7 Schedule II

NMSA 1978, § 30-31-8 Schedule III

NMSA 1978, § 30-31-9 Schedule IV

NMSA 1978, § 30-31-10 Schedule V

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

SO 21-134 Amendment to SOP 5-5 Scientific Evidence Division

1-87-1 Purpose

The purpose of the Scientific Evidence Division (SED) is to provide timely, high quality, modern scientific and technical support for the processing, collection, preservation, and analysis of evidence to all areas of the Albuquerque Police Department (Department), Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office, and other law enforcement agencies upon request.

1-87-2 Policy



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It is the policy of the Department to investigate, document, process, preserve, collect, securely store, and analyze evidence related to criminal investigations. It is also the policy for SED personnel to support and train Department personnel and outside law enforcement agency personnel as needed.

N/A

1-87-3 Definitions

A. Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS)

A searchable biometric recognition system that uses digital imaging techniques to obtain, store, and analyze fingerprint and palm print data.

B. Crime Scene Specialist (CSS)

A civilian Department employee who is responsible for recognizing, collecting, and preserving all forensically-significant evidence at crime scenes and properly submitting that evidence to SED personnel for analysis.

C. Life-threatening Injury

Any injury that involves serious physical harm that may result in significant or permanent disfigurement or the loss of a major bodily organ or function, including, but not limited to, the loss of a limb, paralysis, or the loss of eyesight that may necessitate medical or surgical intervention to prevent permanent impairment; that could potentially cause a significant reduction in the quality of life; or that has the likelihood of causing death.

D. Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)

A digital platform designed to improve lab productivity and efficiency by keeping track of data associated with samples, testing, laboratory workflows, and instruments.

E. Metropolitan Forensic Science Center (MFSC)

The Department's crime laboratory located at 5350 2nd St. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107.

F. New Mexico DNA Identification System (NMDIS)

The system that maintains the State of New Mexico SDIS level Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) database.

G. New Mexico Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory (NMRCFL)

A partnership between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies that operate a regional, digital forensic task



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force. The laboratories provide forensic services and expertise to support law enforcement agencies in collecting and examining digital evidence for a wide range of investigations, including child pornography, terrorism, violent crime, and fraud.

H. Next Generation Identification (NGI)

A federal-level electronic repository of biometric and criminal history information.

I. State Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) Index System (SDIS)

The State-level Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) database.

7 1-87-4 **General Rules and Responsibilities**

A. Scientific Records and Case Files

1. SED personnel shall:

- a. Appropriately document all examinations and investigations performed by SED personnel;
- b. Complete and review case reports promptly after the examinations;
- c. Maintain administrative records, including budget and expenditure logs;
- d. Maintain photographic negatives and original digital photograph compact discs (CD)s, which include all photographic evidence, and other incidents of interest to the Department are kept in the photography laboratory for three (3) years;
 - i. After three (3) years, photographic evidence is moved and stored in the Evidence Unit until approved for disposition.
- e. Maintain case files;
 - i. SED personnel shall store case files in the MFSC case file room or in the MFSC case management system unless a case is being actively examined.
 - ii. Only authorized SED personnel shall have access to the MFSC case file room.
- f. Distribute case files as follows:
 - i. SED personnel shall distribute the official report to Records Division personnel through the Department's records management system;
 - ii. SED personnel shall distribute copies of the official report to the requesting investigative case agent/unit assigned the case; and
 - iii. SED personnel shall store the original report in the MFSC file room or in the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS).
 1. SED personnel shall distribute crime laboratory reports electronically; however, SED personnel may also distribute crime laboratory reports as a hard copy.
- g. Respond to requests for copies of case files as follows:
 - i. SED personnel shall submit all requests for copies of case files in written or electronic form; and



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- ii. SED personnel shall email all requests for blood alcohol reports or blood alcohol case files, and breath alcohol instrumentation records to apd.alcohol@cabq.gov.
- 2. SED personnel shall not take original case files out of the MFSC under any circumstances unless approved by the SED Commander or their designee.
- 3. Due to the nature of their investigations, Major Crime Scene Team (MCST) detectives are not required to have their scientific records and case reports completed by the end of their shift.

7 1-87-5 Criminalistics Investigations

A. Major Crime Scene Team (MCST)

- 1. MCST personnel shall:
 - a. Respond to and take charge of crime scenes for:
 - i. Homicides;
 - ii. Suspicious or unexplained deaths;
 - iii. Officer-involved shootings (OIS);
 - iv. In-custody deaths; and
 - v. Violent incidents in which death or life-threatening injury may result.
 - b. Establish the boundary of the inner perimeter of a crime scene with red crime scene tape and verify it is secure;
 - i. Non-MCST call-out personnel is required to check in by signing the MCST Crime Scene Log.
 - ii. MCST call-out personnel shall escort non-MCST personnel once inside the secured inner perimeter of the crime scene.
 - c. Be responsible for all documentation, collection, and preservation of evidence and for the reconstruction of the crime scene, if possible;
 - d. Provide case updates in the MCST case management system;
 - e. When an officer is involved in an OIS with their Department-issued firearm:
 - i. Process the officer for evidence, including collecting the firearm that was used during the OIS;
 - ii. Tag the firearm into evidence;
 - iii. Only issue the officer a replacement primary Department-issued handgun; and
 - 1. If the officer works in a specialized unit/Special Operations Division, they shall contact their Division supervisor for replacement of their second duty handgun, patrol rifle, 12-gauge shotgun, or enhanced shotgun.
 - 2. Before returning to duty, the officer must contact the Firearms Training Unit to advise them of their OIS in order to set up a New Mexico Department of Public Safety (NMDPS) OIS platform qualification to qualify for their new firearm.



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iv. Submit the Major Crime Scene Team OIS Firearm Issuance Form to Property Unit personnel within twenty-four (24) hours of leaving the scene of the OIS.

N/A

f. Attend a mental wellness check-up conducted by a Behavioral Sciences Section (BSS) clinician biannually due to the possibility of significant psychological trauma caused by the investigation of violent crimes.

2. On-Call Status

a. MCST detectives, secondary personnel, and Criminalistics Investigations supervisors are in an on-call rotation at all times.

N/A

i. The MCST sergeant and the Criminalistics Section Lieutenant shall respond to all Multi-Agency Task Force (MATF) critical incident OISs and in-custody deaths, and Crimes Against Children Unit (CACU) criminal child death call-outs, when available, consistent with SOP Multi-Agency Task Force (refer to SOP Multi-Agency Task Force for sanction classifications and additional duties).

1. The MCST Sergeant and Criminalistics Section Lieutenant may claim an additional eight (8) hours of compensatory time per month for being on-call for MATF critical incident OISs and in-custody deaths and Crimes Against Children Unit (CACU) call-outs.

ii. On-call status requires personnel to be available to respond to call-outs within one (1) hour of notification.

iii. MCST call-outs are determined by the on-duty CSS supervisor or the on-call Criminalistics Investigations supervisor.

iv. Supervisors shall assess the manpower needs of each scene and call out only those needed to efficiently and effectively process the scene.

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B. New Mexico Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory (NMRCFL) Task Force Officer (TFO)

1. The NMRCFL Task Force Officer (NMRCFL TFO) shall:

a. Provide technical and forensic computer and telecommunications expertise to assist Department personnel in the investigation of cases involving computers and telecommunication devices;

N/A

b. Be responsible for all tagging documentation and preserving evidence in accordance with current task force requirements and SOP Collection, Submission, and Disposition of Evidence and Property (refer to SOP Collection, Submission, and Disposition of Evidence and Property for sanction classifications and additional duties);

c. Train Department personnel to attempt to heighten their awareness about the increasing use of high-tech devices in the commission of crimes; and

d. Provide Department personnel with training in the use of computers that enhance investigative and/or patrol activities.



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2. SED detectives assigned to the NMRCFL as a TFO shall respond to and direct the collection of digital evidence when requested.
3. On-Call Status
 - a. NMRCFL TFOs shall be on-call at all times.
 - i. Department personnel who require assistance from NMRCFL TFO after normal business hours can request for the Emergency Communications Center (ECC) to contact the on-call Criminalistics Investigations Supervisor.

7 1-87-6 Scientific Evidence Division Units

A. Chemical Analysis Unit

1. Chemical Analysis Unit personnel shall:
 - a. Physically and chemically analyze physical evidence of controlled substances in criminal cases;
 - b. Store and maintain Schedules I, II, III, IV, and V controlled substances, according to New Mexico state statutes (N.M. Stat. Ann. §§ 30-31-6 through 30-31-10) and the New Mexico Administrative Code (N.M. Code R. §§ 16.19.20.65 through 16.19.20.69), for the purpose of analytical standards;
 - c. Analyze blood specimens for alcohol content in criminal cases; and
 - d. Provide instrument maintenance and instruction to sworn personnel and for courtroom testimony.

B. DNA Unit

1. DNA Unit personnel shall:
 - a. Collect, preserve, and analyze biological evidence as detailed in the Unit's procedure manuals, in criminal cases and provide expert testimony in a court of law; and
 - b. Enter eligible profiles into CODIS.

N/A C. Evidence Unit

The Evidence Unit personnel maintains the integrity of all evidence, found items, and property held for "Return to Owner" by the Department, the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office, and outside law enforcement agencies (refer to SOP Identification/Disposition Unit for sanction classifications and additional duties).

D. Firearm and Tool Mark (FATM) Unit

FATM Unit personnel shall use valid scientific procedures for forensic examinations of firearms, ammunition components, tool marks, serial number restoration, gunshot



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residue distance determination, bullet trajectories, and other closely related physical evidence.

N/A E. Identification/Disposition Unit

Identification/Disposition Unit personnel shall attempt to identify all adults and juveniles arrested in Bernalillo County, consistent with SOP Identification/Disposition Unit (refer to SOP Identification/Disposition Unit for sanction classifications and additional duties).

F. Latent Print Unit

1. Latent Print Unit personnel shall:

- a. Process and examine items of evidence for the detection and development of latent prints;
- b. Analyze and compare latent and known prints; and
- c. Enter unidentified latent prints into AFIS and NGI if applicable.

G. Photograph Unit

1. Photograph Unit personnel shall:

- a. Provide the highest quality photographic services possible for the Department;
- b. Be responsible for:
 - i. Taking Department portrait-type photographs of Department personnel;
 - ii. Enlarging black and white photographs;
 - iii. Archiving all Department-related photographs;
 - iv. Department award plaques; and
 - v. Maintaining service contracts for photo equipment.

2. Photograph Unit personnel shall not photograph ceremonies or special events without permission from the SED Commander or their designee.

6 1-87-7 **Evidence Handling by CSS and MCST Personnel**

A. Preliminary Measures

1. A CSS or MCST detective shall:

- a. Before disturbing items of evidence at a crime scene, ensure the scene is properly photographed, including the use of indicator cards and scales when appropriate;
- b. In most instances, collect all evidence;
 - i. In some cases, such as pools of blood or paint from a wall, the CSS or MCST detective shall collect only carefully selected specimens.
 - ii. When evidence is collected, the CSS or MCST detective shall document the reasons why it is needed to establish the facts of the case.



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N/A

- c. Collect comparison standards from known sources whenever possible; and
- d. Properly document collected evidence in their Uniform Incident Report on the evidence label (tag) and on the evidence container (e.g., heat-sealed bag, paper bag, envelope, etc.), consistent with SOP Collection, Submission, and Disposition of Evidence and Property (refer to SOP Collection, Submission, and Disposition of Evidence and Property for sanction classifications and additional duties).

B. Drying Evidence

- 1. A CSS or MSCT detective shall ensure that wet or bloody evidence that has been collected from crime scenes or received from the Office of the Medical Investigator (OMI) is thoroughly dried and stored in paper bags or paper envelopes to avoid possible detrimental biological changes.
- 2. A CSS or MCST detective shall not package bloody or wet evidence until the evidence has been in a drying cabinet for a minimum of five (5) days.

C. Packaging Evidence

- 1. A CSS or MCST detective shall:
 - a. When possible, place items of evidence in a clear plastic container to prevent contamination and to permit visual identification;
 - b. Package items that may be sensitive to static electricity in paper opposed to plastic to prevent the build-up of static and possible loss of evidence upon opening;
 - c. Package firearms in a plastic bag;
 - i. The CSS or MCST detective shall:
 - 1. Seal empty magazines in smaller plastic bags, which shall be accompanied by the firearm with which they were found;
 - 2. Package the ammunition, cartridge casings, or projectiles separately;
 - 3. Dry firearms that have been contaminated with biological materials, moisture, etc. before packaging; and
 - 4. Attach evidence stickers to the plastic bags appropriately.
 - d. Label each item of evidence either on its container or by an attached tag in the case of large items;
 - i. The label should include a unique designation (Department or other case numbers), coinciding with the item or assigned to the item in the Uniform Incident Report and on the crime scene sketch.
 - ii. The following lower case letter prefixes are to be used in designating items of evidence as indicated:

a	Ammunition (Cartridge)
b	Blood
c	Cartridge Case



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cl	Clothing
d	Documents
f	Firearms
g	Glass
h	Hair, fiber, or another trace
i	Bullet hole (or impact site)
k	Knife
l	Latents
m	Miscellaneous
n	Drugs
p	Projectile (Bullet)
s	DNA Swab

1. Upper case letters of the alphabet are reserved for use as designators on diagrams for measurement points, except for upper case “k” and uppercase “q.”
- f. Seal packaged or repackaged evidence with a tamper-evident seal, which they shall initial and date; and
- g. Promptly tag all evidentiary items into evidence after the collection or examination process is complete.

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D. Evidence Storage

1. MCST and CSS personnel may store evidence on a short-term basis within the triage processing room lockers.
2. MSCT and CSS shall place evidence in the triage processing room evidence lockers once it is ready for submission.

E. Evidence Service Request Triage Process

1. An MCST detective shall:
 - a. Assess the evidence in a case;
 - b. Contact the investigative case agent to determine what evidence should have a service request submitted; and
 - c. Present the evidence in a case to the forensic scientists/technicians in the service request triage meeting.
 - i. Triage personnel shall determine whether and how the evidence can be processed by the forensic scientists/technicians.

F. Chain of Custody of Evidence

1. Department personnel shall ensure that the minimum amount of employees is involved in the handling of evidence.



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2. The chain of custody is maintained within the property evidence management system.

G. Known DNA Standards

1. Department personnel certified to collect buccal swabs shall only do so when they are accompanied by one (1) of the following authorizing documents:
 - a. Court order;
 - b. Search warrant; or
 - c. Permission to search.
 - i. The case agent shall keep a copy of the document in the case file.
 - d. Department personnel shall make an appointment for the collection of the known standards.
 - e. Unless accompanied by a corrections officer or detective, the case agent shall verify the identity of the individual, providing the known DNA standard, such as the individual's driver's license, date of birth, or social security number.
2. DNA Unit personnel shall only accept a buccal swab for DNA evidence collection.
3. The case agent who collects the known DNA standard(s) shall note the following on the authorizing document:
 - a. Case number;
 - b. Date and time the standard was collected;
 - c. Verification of identity (if needed); and
 - d. Who collected the standard.
4. Department personnel shall package, seal, and tag the known DNA standard into evidence.

H. Sexual Assault Evidence Kits (SAEK)

1. A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) collects, tags, and stores SAEKs at the Family Advocacy Center (FAC) evidence collection lockers.
 - a. An Evidence Unit Technician shall pick up the tagged SAEK from the FAC during normal business hours and transport them to the MFSC, where they shall be stored until processing.
 - b. When the Department receives a SAEK in connection with the investigation of a criminal case, the Department must submit evidence from the case within ten (10) business days of receipt of a forensic laboratory or a laboratory approved and designated by the Chief of Police, consistent with City of Albuquerque Code of Resolutions, § 3-11-6.
2. The Evidence and Disposition Unit personnel shall destroy a SAEK on a non-reported case, consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between



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the Department and SANEs two (2) years from the original collection date unless the reporting status changes.

- a. The Evidence and Disposition Unit shall keep a SAEK on a non-reported case that involves a juvenile victim until the victim's twenty-third (23rd) birthday, which shall be five (5) years after they turn eighteen (18) years old.

7 1-87-8 MFSC Pretrial Subpoena Policy

A. Scheduling and Location of Expert Witness Interviews

1. SED personnel shall agree to be interviewed as expert witnesses upon request.
 - a. A person who needs an MFSC forensic scientist/technician to serve as an expert witness in a court case will request a pretrial meeting through mail or in-person, by emailing the SED personnel being subpoenaed, or by contacting the MFSC Administrative Assistant.
 - i. The person may obtain contact information for all MFSC forensic scientists/technicians by contacting the MFSC Administrative Assistant at (505) 823-4200.
 - b. The MFSC forensic scientist/technicians shall schedule to be interviewed as an expert witness between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and no later than 4:00 p.m.
2. MFSC forensic scientists/technicians shall conduct their interviews at the MFSC either telephonically or by video after determining a time and date that is agreeable to all parties.

B. Subpoenas

1. SED personnel shall respond to all subpoenas.
2. Other than the MFSC Administrative Assistant, SED personnel shall not accept subpoenas for individuals other than themselves.
3. SED personnel shall only accept subpoenas that are hand-delivered to the MFSC during normal business hours or delivered electronically.

7 1-87-9 Budget and Property

A. Budget and Purchasing

1. The SED Commander or their designee shall oversee and manage the SED budget.



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2. SED personnel shall provide the SED Commander or their designee copies of all receipts, invoices, and/or requisitions associated with purchases made with SED funds.
3. The SED Commander or their designee shall provide a monthly budget report to the Investigative Bureau Deputy Chief of Police.

N/A B. Property Inventory

SED personnel shall follow the requirements outlined in SOP Department Property (refer to SOP Department Property for sanction classifications and other duties).

7 1-87-10 **MFSC Tours**

- A. The SED Commander or their designee may allow community members to tour the MFSC on a limited basis.
 1. A community member will submit a request for a tour of the MFSC to the MFSC Administrative Assistant a minimum of seven (7) days in advance.
- B. Tour groups shall be limited to twenty-five (25) people at a time.
- C. Tours for groups of people who are younger than high school age are conducted at the discretion of the SED Commander.
- D. Tour groups may view working laboratories through the observation windows.
 1. No one is permitted in work areas without approval from the SED Unit Supervisor or the SED Commander or their designee.
- E. Tours of laboratories other than those approved by the SED Commander shall not be authorized.
 1. Observation by outside forensic specialists shall only be done through a court order.
 2. Outside forensic scientists shall not be permitted to use any Department equipment or Department facility to conduct their own examinations.
 - a. Equipment purchased by the City is for use by City personnel only.
 - b. Outside forensic scientists do not have the appropriate training or legitimate claim to use City-issued property.