



INDIANA STATE POLICE LABORATORY DIVISION

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE BULLETIN

EVIDENCE PACKAGING and SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION: This Indiana State Police (ISP) Laboratory Division Physical Evidence Bulletin (PEB) provides general evidence packaging and submission guidelines. For specific collection, packaging, and submission instructions refer to the PEB for that type of evidence. If you are unsure the ISP Laboratory can perform the type of analysis you need or have any questions or concerns regarding this or any other PEB, please contact the Regional Laboratory serving your area before submitting any evidence.

I. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE PACKAGING GUIDELINES

- A.** Package each item in a clean, unused container that is large enough for the item. Do not try to pack 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 analysis. Packaging shall also be large enough to allow the laboratory barcode label to be fully affixed to it. Each container shall 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, agency case number, agency item number*, and initials on the seals using indelible ink (e.g. Sharpie).

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

B. ACCEPTABLE PACKAGING CONTAINERS CAN INCLUDE:

1. Paper bags or envelopes (do not use windowed envelopes)
2. Plastic bags
3. Cardboard boxes (do not use windowed boxes)
4. Small glass vials/bottles with leak-proof lids
5. Metal cans with leak-proof lids

C. ACCEPTABLE SEALS:

1. Evidence tape
2. Packaging tape (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 duct tape, medical tape, masking tape, scotch tape, staples without tape seals, or twist 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 shall cross over from tape to packaging. Initials shall be identifiable to the person sealing the evidence and made using indelible ink.

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.
4. Taser cartridges - package each probe separately in a pill box leaving the wire leads attached. Place the two pill boxes, wires, and cartridge all together in paper packaging. Wire leads should not be cut because of electronic function testing that can be performed by the manufacturer. The outside of the packaging should be marked with the word "Sharps" in a conspicuous place.

II. EVIDENCE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

A. GENERAL EVIDENCE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

1. Do not submit items for continuity only. The ISP Laboratory only accepts items for 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 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 ISP Laboratory shall 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 sufficient detail to describe the item(s) completely.
4. Do not use abbreviations or ditto marks on any laboratory form. All information shall 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 shall be included on the Request for Laboratory Examination Form in order to match necessary information with department or agency inquiries and subpoenas.

B. MAILING EVIDENCE:

1. The contributor shall email a copy of the Request for Laboratory Examination Form to a Regional Laboratory for review and approval by the Laboratory Manager, prior to mailing the evidence. Do not mail the evidence until approval is received.
2. It is not recommended to mail evidence that has a court date within 90 days. Contact the ISP Laboratory to schedule an appointment for evidence submission when this circumstance arises.

3. Do not submit any evidence for biological examination through the mail. These items are best preserved when stored in a cool and dry condition (i.e. refrigerated or frozen).
4. Do not submit arson evidence or ignitable, flammable, or combustible liquids through the mail.
5. Do not submit corrosive materials or liquids for analysis through the mail (i.e. acids, bases, oxidizers).
6. Do not submit any clandestine drug lab evidence through the mail.
7. Mailed evidence shall be packaged in bubble wrap or other crush resistant packaging.
8. If you choose to mail evidence, use one of the following methods:
 - a. United States Postal Service – Certified or Registered
 - b. Commercial delivery service with traceable shipping
9. Do not place any markings on the mailing container that would identify the contents as evidence.
10. 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.
11. Shipments containing more than one case or numerous items are discouraged and contributors may be asked to deliver the evidence to an ISP Laboratory by appointment.

C. SUBMISSION OF EVIDENCE BY ELECTRONIC METHODS (EMAIL)

1. Electronic submission of evidence may be permitted through the department email address at esubmission@isp.in.gov or file sharing site as directed by ISP Laboratory personnel.
2. All electronic evidence shall be accompanied by a Request for Laboratory Examination Form.
3. On the Request for Laboratory Examination Form, all electronic items submitted for examination shall have file names associated with an agency item number and each item shall be described as electronically submitted.
4. The potential for examination is directly related to the digital image quality, therefore minimum standards shall be met for electronic evidence submissions. Any deviations in image quality shall require the approval of ISP Laboratory personnel.

III. RETURN OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

- A.** Physical evidence submitted for analysis will only be retained by the ISP Laboratory during analysis except for biological subitems created during the analysis process.

- B. Any subitems created from biological evidence will be retained by ISP Laboratory for potential testing with new technology in the future.
- C. The submitting agency will be advised on the Certificate of Analysis when biological subitems are created and retained by the ISP Laboratory.
- D. When the analysis is complete, the physical evidence will be returned to the submitting agency or the ISP district except for biological subitems created during the analysis process.

IV. Request for Laboratory Examination Form

- A. A completed Request for Laboratory Examination Form shall be emailed to the appropriate Laboratory prior to the date of evidence submission:
 1. Evansville Regional Laboratory: ERLEvidence@isp.in.gov
 2. Fort Wayne Regional Laboratory: FWRLEvidence@isp.in.gov
 3. Indianapolis Regional Laboratory: IRLEvidence@isp.in.gov
 4. Lowell Regional Laboratory: LRLEvidence@isp.in.gov
- B. Evidence Clerks will check the completeness of the request(s) and correspond via email and/or phone to make any required changes.
- C. For each item of evidence, the submitting agency shall indicate on the Request for Laboratory Examination Form the type of forensic analysis to be performed.
- D. The Request for Laboratory Examination Form is dynamic. When completing the form, additional fields may appear depending on the fields in which the information is entered or boxes checked.
- E. The Request for Laboratory Examination Form is available on the ISP Laboratory website (<http://www.in.gov/isp/labs/2332.htm>).
- F. The expiration date is clearly recorded on the Request for Laboratory Examination Form. The current version of the form can be downloaded from the [ISP Laboratory website](#).
- G. Instructions for completing the Request for Laboratory Examination Form will appear when the cursor is placed over a field in the form. An instructional PowerPoint® is also available for review on the [ISP Laboratory website](#).

V. Contact Information

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

Evansville	(812) 867-3157 or toll free (800) 852-3970
Fort Wayne	(260) 436-7522 or toll free (800) 552-0976
Indianapolis	(317) 921-5300 or toll free (866) 855-2840
Lowell	(219) 696-1835 or toll free (877) 874-0009
Website	http://www.in.gov/isp/labs/index.htm