

KERN REGIONAL CRIME LABORATORY
Laboratory Services Section, Evidence Control Unit



Policy on the Submission of Evidence for Firearms Analysis

QT41348 v31

Creation Date: 09/19/2012

The purpose of this document is to provide law enforcement and criminal justice officials with guidance regarding the submission of physical evidence for examination/analysis by the Kern Regional Crime Laboratory Firearms and Toolmarks Unit (FTU).

Services offered in Portal under the Firearms & Toolmarks Unit (FTU) Discipline

Discipline	Service Type
Firearms & Toolmarks Unit	Firearm Analysis v2.0
	Firearm Database Search – Tier I
	Firearm Database Search – Tier II
	Serial Number Restoration v2.0
	Fracture Match Analysis

Evidence items analyzed under each Service (narrative follows)

Service Type	Evidence item	Can be tested for:
Firearm Analysis v2.0	Firearm	Condition
		Class & individual characteristics
		Functionality
		Trigger pull function (e.g., “functional” or “not functional”)
		Full-automatic firing mode (not test fired)
	Bullets	Class & individual characteristics
		List of possible firearms
		Compared to test-fires from submitted firearm(s) or other evidence bullets

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	Fired cartridge cases or shot shells	Class & individual characteristics
		Compared to test-fires from submitted firearm(s) or other evidence cartridge cases
	Shot pellets, buckshot or slugs	Size
		Gauge
		Possible manufacturer
	Wadding	Gauge
		Possible manufacturer
		Suitable markings for comparison
	Unfired cartridges or shot shells that may have been cycled through a firearm	Manufacturer
		Caliber or gauge
		Suitable markings for comparison
Firearm Database Search – Tier I or II	Firearm	Entry of test-fires to identify possible association(s) to other shooting incidents
	Fired cartridge cases or shot shells	Entry to identify possible association(s) to other shooting incidents
	Bullets (requires pre-approval)	Entry to identify possible association(s) to other shooting incidents
Serial Number Restoration v2.0	Firearm	Restoration of obliterated or altered serial numbers
Fracture Match Analysis	Broken, cut or torn pieces such as broken car pieces, plastic, glass, wood, metal, tape, plastic bags, fabric, etc.; Recovered items for comparison	Class & individual characteristics Broken, torn or cut unknown pieces compared to recovered items for a physical fit/match

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Analysis recommendations:

1. For all submitted firearms and/or fired cartridge cases, select a Firearm Database Search request;

Service Name	Case Type(s)	Turnaround Time
Firearm Database Search – Tier I	All homicide, attempted murder, assault with deadly weapon, robbery, shooting at a dwelling cases, and other accepted offense codes* with dates < 2 years old	10 days
Firearm Database Search – Tier II	Cases with accepted offense codes with dates > 2 years old except homicide, attempted murder, assault with deadly weapon, robbery, and shooting at a dwelling cases	45 days

*See Restrictions section below for offense codes that are not accepted

2. For a confirmation of a Firearm Database Search image association, select a Firearm Analysis v2.0 request (pre-approval is not needed); and/or
3. For one or more fired bullets, select a Firearm Analysis v2.0 request.
 - a. Note: Firearm Database Search requests for a bullet require pre-approval from Supervising Criminalist Alison Kennedy, due to the small size of the current bullet database and therefore limited value to any results thereof.

Restrictions

Firearm comparisons between cases **without a database image association** require pre-approval from the unit Supervisor who may be contacted at firearms@kernda.org.

To be searched in the laboratory's Firearms Database, a firearm must be suspected of being used in a crime. Consequently, the Firearms and Toolmarks Unit will not accept guns recovered as a result of the following offense codes unless previously approved by the unit Supervisor. Email approval requests to firearms@kernda.org:

1. Found property (PC 485);
2. Mental Instability (WI 5150)(PC 1367);
3. Safekeeping (PC 2080);
4. Surrender (PC 527.9);
5. Domestic violence (PC 243);
6. Malicious mischief (PC 594); or

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7. Miscellaneous investigations.

The laboratory reserves the right to compare items of evidence that appear to be related, including between agencies. When an interagency comparison has been completed, the report of examination will be released to all agencies involved in the comparison.

The laboratory will not pick up evidence items to be analyzed. Agencies are responsible for transporting items to and from the laboratory for analysis.

The laboratory will not supply gun boxes.

SUBMISSION OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE TO THE LABORATORY FOR ANALYSIS

Agency Responsibilities

In general, minimally handle all items to avoid loss, damage, or destruction of evidence. If DNA analysis of the item(s) is desired now or in the future, appropriate PPE (i.e., gloves, mask) should be worn when handling items.

When submitting a firearm to the Kern Regional Crime Laboratory for examination:

1. Unload the firearm and render it safe;
2. Remove ammunition components and magazine (if it has one) from the firearm;
3. If desired, swab items for DNA. See the Policy on the Submission of Evidence for Biological Analysis ([QT41330](#)) for information about submission of DNA evidence and requests for analysis.
4. Secure the firearm (with action open, if possible) with plastic ties in a properly sealed¹ evidence gun box. One piece of tape along the long edge of the box with initials and date across the tape and onto the box is sufficient.
 - a. Ammunition components and magazine can be placed together inside of the gun box with the firearm, if packaged or secured separately (unless prohibited by your agency policy); and
5. If the magazine of the gun is available, **it must be submitted** at the same time as the firearm so that test firing can be completed.

All non-laboratory sealed gun boxes will be opened at the Evidence Control Unit counter in the presence of the agency representative in order to verify that the

¹ A proper seal is one that prevents loss, cross transfer, or contamination while ensuring that attempted entry into the container is detectable. A proper seal may include heat seal, tape seal, or a lock. The Kern Regional Crime Laboratory requires that the initials of the person creating the seal and the date that the seal was created be placed across the seal onto the container.

weapon has been rendered safe. Gloves, masks, and evidence tape will be provided. Once verified to be safe, the agency representative will re-seal the gun box with evidence tape. This step is necessary to ensure that all firearms entering the laboratory are safe and to ultimately protect all personnel who handle them.

When submitting firearms-related evidence items such as cartridge cases, shot shells, or bullets to the Kern Regional Crime Laboratory for examination:

1. If desired, swab items for DNA. See the Policy on the Submission of Evidence for Biological Analysis ([QT41330](#)) for information about submission of DNA evidence and requests for analysis.
2. Package the item in a properly sealed evidence container with the outermost package preferably larger than 1 inch by 4 inches (large enough to affix a barcode label). Every edge of a container does not need to have tape applied. There just needs to be enough tape applied to ensure the container cannot be breached undetected.

When submitting fracture match related evidence items:

1. Package each item in a separate, properly sealed evidence container; and
2. Package securely in such a way as to prevent any further breakage of items.

SUBMISSION OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE TO THE LABORATORY VIA PORTAL

Full instructions for the use of Portal is available on the laboratory's website, www.kerncounty.com/government/departments/kern-regional-crime-laboratory. Click on the link "Getting started with Portal" and there you will find basic instructions for use with a link to in-depth instructions by clicking on "Instructions for using Portal."

Submitting Evidence in Portal

Use the following example when submitting item(s) for firearms analysis.

Evidence Type	Evidence Description
Box (gun box)	Sealed gun box labeled as – [Agency property # or item #], [Exact description as on label or evidence box]
Envelope (other envelope)	Sealed envelope labeled as - [Agency property # or item #], [Exact description as on label or evidence envelope]
Bag	[Agency property # or item #], [Exact description as on label or evidence bag]
Box (other box)	Sealed box labeled as - [Agency property # or item

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	#, [Exact description as on label or evidence box]
Add/Edit Evidence Evidence Type Box (gun box) ▼ Description Sealed gun box labeled as - 112233-4, <u>Ruger</u> LC9, serial number N11223 Note Submitting Rep Tammi Noe ▼ ✓ Save ✓ Save & Add Another Cancel	Add/Edit Evidence Evidence Type Envelope (other envelope) ▼ Description Sealed envelope labeled as - 112233-5, Spent casing, .22 cal <u>Winchester</u> Note Submitting Rep Tammi Noe ▼ ✓ Save ✓ Save & Add Another Cancel

Submitting Request(s) in Portal

See page 1 for the *Discipline(s)* and *Service Type(s)* available for submitting physical evidence for firearms analysis request(s) in Portal.

Add Request

×

Discipline

Firearms and Toolmarks Unit
▼

Service Type

Firearm Analysis v2.0
▼

Requesting Rep

Tammi Noe
▼

Complexity

Case Work
▼

Reason

Standard
▼

Due Date

Notes

✓ Save

✓ Save & Add Another

Cancel

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Case Information

ACN: Test-123

Lab: Kern Regional Crime Laboratory

Type: Standard

Requesting Agency: Kern Regional Crime Laboratory

Requesting Rep: Tammi Noe

[Edit](#) [Submit to LIMS](#) [Print Evidence List](#)

Select “**Submit to LIMS**” to submit the Portal entry so the laboratory has access to the case information. Please print the Evidence List and submit along with your evidence to the Evidence Control Unit of the Laboratory.

Evidence submitted without a printout may not be accepted.

Laboratory Responsibilities

In order to accept physical evidence from law enforcement officials a member of the Kern Regional Crime Laboratory’s Evidence Control Unit (ECU) shall:

1. Ensure that the following information is included in the Portal request or is provided by some other means (e.g., email, evidence item, or courier):
 - a. Incident date;
 - b. Subject and/or victim names (first and last);
 - c. Offense(s);
 - d. List of items submitted; and
 - e. Requested analysis.
2. Ensure that the information on the evidence is properly completed. The following information, at a minimum, is **required** for acceptance:
 - a. Agency;
 - b. Agency case number;
 - c. Requesting officer; and

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- d. Subject and/or victim names (first and last), if the item was taken directly from a person (e.g., known reference samples, sexual assault kits, toxicology samples, seized drugs).
3. Ensure that the outer packaging of the evidence is properly sealed; and
4. Record the date, time, and received from and by in the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS).

END OF DOCUMENT

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