Attachment 3: FBI Quality Assurance Guidelines for Laboratories Performing Microbial Forensic Work

Section 7. Sample Control

7.1 The laboratory should have and follow a documented sample inventory control system. This system should ensure that:

7.1.1 Samples are marked with unique identifiers.

7.1.2 Documentation of sample identity, receipt, storage, and disposition is maintained.

7.1.3 The laboratory follows documented procedures that minimize sample loss, contamination, and/or deleterious change.

7.1.4 The laboratory has secure areas for sample storage including environmental control consistent with the form or nature of the sample.

7.2 The laboratory should have available guidelines for sample collection and should request the following information from the submitter of samples:

7.2.1 Sample collected from an individual: If available, type of sample (method of collection and anatomical site from which collected), age, gender, population affinity, weight, body temperature, current medications, who collected sample, time and date of collection, and postcollection and transportation conditions. When multiple samples are collected from the same individual, appropriate delineation should be provided to distinguish samples. Additionally, for nonhuman samples, species, animal, or plant identification number should be recorded.

7.2.2 Sample collected from a location: If available, type of sample, sampling tool, date and time collected, and who collected the sample. When multiple samples are collected from the same site, appropriate delineation should be provided to distinguish samples. Sample location and condition of location at time of sample collection should be recorded. Conditions of storage and transport should be documented.

7.3 The laboratory should maintain a chain of custody for forensic samples from the time of receipt in the laboratory. Individual items should be tracked. Time and date of sample transfers should be documented. Derivative evidence should be tracked.

7.4 When the laboratory consumes tested samples, that fact should be documented in the case notes.

7.5 If tested samples, or derivative evidence thereof, are released to a database, this should be recorded in the case notes and the chain-of-custody documentation.

7.6 A laboratory should document and provide appropriate guidelines for sample submission, packaging, and return.

7.7 A laboratory should document a policy of long-term sample storage, retention, disposal, and/or return.