



Solano County District Attorney

Bureau of Forensic Services

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE BULLETIN

Drugs / Controlled Substances

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Approval: Laboratory Director

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Category: Evidence

Type: Administrative

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INTRODUCTION

Controlled substances appear in a greater variety of forms than any other type of physical evidence. The investigator should routinely expect to encounter liquids, tablets, capsules, powders, irregular masses, and nearly invisible deposits on blotter and other paper.

SAMPLING, COLLECTING, PRESERVING, AND MARKING

1. Only those items which are being used to file charges should be submitted for analysis.
2. Where the item is a large quantity of material; i.e., over fifty kilos of marijuana, representative samples should be withdrawn and submitted to the laboratory. Sample size should be sufficient to meet the requirements for the charges and any enhancements if applicable.
3. Where the evidence consists of large quantities of marijuana plants, the plants should be photographed, leaf material stripped from plants and dried before submission.
4. Paraphernalia (syringes without needles or pipes etc.) should not be submitted except:
 - a. Where this is the ONLY evidence in the case and,
 - b. The prosecuting attorney has requested the analysis.

PACKAGING

1. All evidence should be submitted in a sealed condition. Seals must include date and initials or other identifying mark.
2. Evidence should be packaged in a standard submission envelope (SC-BFS-1A). Where use of a standard submission envelope is not feasible, a suitable container, eg. envelopes, plastic bags, etc. should be submitted with a standard SC-BFS-1A attached.
3. Marijuana shall be dried before placing in suitable containers. Plastic bags encourage the formation of mold or in many cases cause decomposition in wet exhibits such as marijuana, peyote plants, or other materials with high moisture content. Water should be removed.
4. Used syringes with needles will not be accepted for controlled substance analysis. These are potential sources for transmission of infectious diseases such as hepatitis and AIDS. **In all situations needles will not be accepted for analysis.**
5. Do not submit clothing. Remove suspected material from pockets and place in separate marked containers.
6. Guns, money or personal property should not be submitted unless they are to be examined.
7. Evidence items should be appropriately packaged to prevent cross contamination.

QUANTITATION

Quantitative analysis (% purity) is specialized testing and will not be performed by the laboratory at this time.

EXAMINATION

The laboratory will determine the best methods to employ in the analysis of submitted evidence items. Methods used will be approved and validated by the laboratory. Sampling of submitted evidence may be performed in the interest of efficiency and will be clearly stated in the laboratory case record.

RE-EXAMINATION

The laboratory does not routinely examine materials that have been previously examined by another laboratory. Re-examination requests must be made in writing by the submitting agency with an endorsement by the prosecuting attorney having jurisdiction in the case.

EVIDENCE DISPOSITION

Controlled substances submitted for analysis will be retained by the laboratory during analysis only. When the analysis is complete the evidence will be returned to the submitting agency as soon as possible.

Evidence from outside agencies will not be stored for destruction.

For further information on handling of controlled substances contact the laboratory directly.

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