

POLICY 46. DNA COLLECTION

A. Overview

1. DNA can be recovered from blood, semen, saliva, hair, skin, touch/contact, and other biological material. DNA recovered from crime scenes is an effective forensic tool available to law enforcement. Field personnel should use the following procedures when collecting potential DNA evidence.

B. Procedure

1. In situations involving the response of an investigative unit, patrol deputies should discuss the collection of evidence with the investigator(s) before proceeding. In some situations, it may be more appropriate for investigators to process the crime scene themselves.
2. Before collecting potential DNA evidence, investigators and deputies should consider if the evidence is appropriate for latent fingerprint development. There are many situations where latent prints are a more effective tool than DNA. After latent print development, the item may still be swabbed to collect possible DNA, if appropriate. Additional information on this subject is provided in the "Guidelines for the Collection and Submission of DNA Evidence" brochure (available from the "Ask the Crime Lab" link on the Sheriff's Intranet site).
3. While conducting preliminary investigations, deputies will make a reasonable effort to collect potential biological material from items that are not easily or safely packaged for submission to Property and Evidence. This can include swabbing possible biological stains or contact DNA on vehicles, immobile objects, perishable items, or similar. Smaller items that can be reasonably packaged will each be packaged in a paper container (envelope, paper bag, cardboard box, or similar). Wet items can be temporarily packaged in plastic, if the item can be dried quickly and packaged in paper before submission to Property and Evidence
4. In extraordinary situations, a supervising criminalist may authorize Crime Lab personnel to respond or otherwise assist station personnel in collecting possible DNA evidence.
5. Questions about DNA collection in the field can be addressed over the phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by contacting the Communications Center and asking for the on-call forensic evidence technician to call the deputy.

The procedure outlined in this policy applies solely to area station personnel and not to situations involving the Major Crimes Division.