

Forensic Evidence Collection

STEP 1-FOREIGN MATERIAL

- Inside this bag is a paper “sheet”. Open bag and remove paper “sheet”. Place a hospital sheet on the floor of the exam room. Place the paper “sheet” on top of the hospital sheet. Have the patient undress on the paper “sheet”. This will collect any foreign material that can fall from the body in the process of undressing. Have paper bags available for the patient to deposit their clothes as they undress. If no paper bags are available, have a sheet/towel placed on the floor or on a stand so the patient can deposit clothing. Instruct the patient to place the clothing in such a manner as the clothing does not touch so as not to cross contaminate. Once the patient has undressed, have the patient don a gown and assist the patient to the exam bed/table. When collecting the paper “sheet”, fold the “sheet” in a bindle fold/druggist fold. This a fold where the edges fold upon themselves so as to keep any foreign material securely in the paper. Place the folded paper inside the “Step 1-Foreign Material” Collection bag. Seal the bag with evidence tape. Sign/date the evidence tape. Complete the form on the outside of the bag. Place step 1 collection in the “Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit” Envelope.
- If the patient has changed clothes several times, had several bathes, or there is another reason as to why the patient would not have foreign material upon their body, then this step can be skipped. Complete the form on the outside of the bag and check “NO” beside the question “WAS SAMPLE COLLECTED? YES/ NO”. Under this question document the reason the evidence was not collected and place the bag in the evidence collection kit envelope.

STEP 2/3-CONTACT/OUTER CLOTHING

- Place the outer clothing the patient had on during or immediately after the assault in bags 2 and 3. On the outside of the bags is a chain of custody grid. This can be completed so as to keep these large items out of the “Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit” Envelope. Another option for this collection, so as to keep the steps together, is to have a facility stock paper bag (similar to a paper grocery bag), place the clothing in the separate collection envelopes (STEP 2 CONTACT/OUTER CLOTHING; STEP 3 CONTACT/OUTER CLOTHING), then place the clothing collection bags inside a facility stock paper bag. The clothing should not touch so as not to cross contaminate. If the patient has more than 2 outer clothing items to collect, use facility paper bags to collect

the other items. Complete the information on the outside of the envelope STEPS 2/3. Seal STEPS 2/3 collection bags with evidence tape. Date and sign the evidence tape. If facility stock bags are used, document the same information on the outside of the bags as if they were from the evidence collection kit. (Name, Date Collected, Time, Collected by). Seal the bags with evidence tape. Date and sign the evidence tape. If placing all clothing bags inside a facility stock bag, document on the outside of the facility stock bag the steps that are inside the bigger collection bag. EXAMPLE: If steps 2, 3, 4, 5 are collected and placed inside a facility stock bag, Document on the outside of the facility stock bag "Steps 2, 3, 4, 5". Date and time items were placed in the bag, signature, then seal the larger bag with evidence tape. Date and sign the evidence tape. If patient has changed clothes and is not wearing the clothing that was worn during or immediately after the assault this step can be skipped. Document on the form on the outside of Steps 2/3 in line "IF NO, WHY NOT?" the reason this was not collected. Place the empty envelope back inside the evidence collection kit envelope. (If the patient has the clothing that was worn during the assault or immediately after the assault but did not bring that clothing to the facility, offer the patient a facility stock paper bag to collect the clothing and turn over to the investigating entity. Do not give the patient the collection bags from the Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit)

STEP 4/5 UNDERGARMENTS

- Place the undergarments the patient was wearing during or immediately after the assault in bags 4 and 5. If the patient has changed clothes several times and had several baths, the step can be skipped. **HOWEVER, REGARDLESS OF THE TIME LAPSE SINCE THE ASSAULT, UNDERWEAR/PANTIES/GARMENTS WORN IN CONTACT WITH THE GENITALIA SHOULD BE COLLECTED!** There is evidence that DNA can be on/in the genitalia several hours/days post assault. The evidence collected in this step can also be placed in a hospital stock collection bag. As stated above, document on the outside of the facility stock collection bag the steps (envelopes) that are included in the bag. Seal the bags with evidence tape, sign and date the evidence tape. If no undergarments are collected, document the reason for no collection and place the envelope back inside the sexual assault evidence collection kit envelope.

STEP 6 DEBRIS COLLECTION

- Inside envelope 6 is a "bindle". This is a piece of paper that is pre-folded upon itself so as to hold any evidence collected. Debris is any foreign material

observed on the patients body. Examples of debris (but not limited to these items) include sand, leaves, dirt, fibers, pine straw, hair fibers, clothing fibers. Debris can be described as “anything that is not usually seen on the human body”. Remove the bindle from inside the envelope. Open the bindle and place on a stand within easy access of the medical care provider and patient. Do a thorough assessment of the patients body, remove the debris and place in the opened bindle. The patient can assist with this step by self removing debris and placing in the bindle. Upon completion of this step, fold the bindle upon itself (as it was folded prior to collection), place a piece of evidence tape on the bindle (date and sign the evidence tape) to keep it folded and place inside the debris collection envelope. Step 6 envelope has a glue on the outer flap. Moisten a paper towel/wash cloth and moisten the glue on the flap to seal the envelope. **DO NOT “LICK” THE GLUE ON THE ENVELOPE! THIS COULD INTRODUCE YOUR DNA INTO THE SAMPLES COLLECTED FROM THE PATIENT!** If the glue does not seal, place evidence tape over the flap to seal the envelope. (Per the MS Crime Lab Technician, if the envelope flap seals with glue there is no need to duplicate a seal with the evidence tape on the collection envelope). Complete the information on the outside of the envelope. If no debris is noted or collected, complete the section “IF NO, WHY NOT?” and place inside the sexual assault evidence collection kit.

STEP 7/8 RIGHT/LEFT HAND FINGERNAIL SCRAPINGS

- Inside envelopes 7/8 is a bindle with a “pick” inside the bindle. Remove the bindle from the envelope and place the opened bindle on the lap of the patient. Hand the “pick” to the patient and instruct the patient to “clean” under each nail of the specified hand over the bindle area. This will allow the sample from the nail area to fall on the opened bindle. (Step 7 is for the right hand only. Step 8 is for the left hand only). If the patient is unable to “clean” under the nails or defers for the medical provider to do this step, please be gentle with the patients nail area. The pick is very sharp and can be uncomfortable to the patient. Once the nail area has been cleaned, place the pick on the bindle, fold the bindle back to its original state making sure the pick stays within the bindle and does not tear the bindle, seal the bindle with evidence tape, date and sign the evidence tape and place inside the step 7/8 collection envelope. If the patient has very short nails or broken nails, take a hospital stock swab, moisten the swab with sterile water, wipe each nail/finger junction area of the designated hand (one swab for the left hand, one swab for the right hand), place the swab in the swab dryer to complete drying. Once the

swab has dried, place the swab back inside the paper container from which it was removed, seal the paper container with evidence tape, sign and date the evidence tape and place the swab inside the step 7/8 collection envelope. Moisten the glue on the flap of the collection envelope, seal the envelope and complete the documentation on the outside of the envelope. If the patient denies using nails during the assault or this step is deferred, document the reason for not collecting on the outside of the envelope by IF NO, WHY NOT? and place the envelope inside the sexual assault evidence collection kit envelope.

STEP 9 DRIED SECRETIONS

- Inside envelope 9 is swab container with 2 sterile swabs and box for swab placement once the sample is collected and the swabs are dry. Dried secretions can be a substance seen on the patients body with the naked eye or a substance seen with an Alternative Light Source. Complete a visual assessment of the patients body and/or use the Alternative Light Source on the patients body. If using an alternative light source, be sure to utilize the filter goggles or filter attachment with the alternative light source. If the patient is aware of a dried secretion stain, assess the area the patient indicates. Once a stain is recognized, remove the swabs from the container, moisten the swabs with sterile water, go over the secretion area with the moistened swab, place the swabs in the swab dryer. Indicate on the “body gram” with an “X” where the sample was located on the patients body. On the envelope is an area that states “BODY FLUID COLLECTED”. ***DO NOT SPECULATE WHAT THE SECRETION IS!*** In this area, describe the stain as visualized. EXAMPLE: “White secretion noted with the naked eye”. Keep in mind that many substances can be seen with the naked eye and an alternative light source. It is not our place to make a decision on the source of the secretion. The Crime Lab will be able to test the sample collected and possibly make a determination of the secretion. Once the samples are collected and the swabs are dry, place the swabs in the box that is included in the envelope. Indicate on the box in the area noted “OTHER” dried secretions. Place the box inside the envelope, seal the envelope, complete the documentation on the outside of the envelope and place inside the sexual assault evidence collection kit. If no sample is collected, indicate the reason by IF NO, WHY NOT? and place the envelope in the sexual assault evidence collection kit.

- Multiple assailant scenario: If the patient gives a history of multiple assailants and there are multiple areas of dried secretions then there will have to be multiple swabs used in the collection of the samples to avoid cross contamination. Assess the body of the patient, collect each sample with 2 moisten swabs. Use hospital stock swabs in addition to the swabs provided within the kit. Indicate on the body gram where each sample is located on the patients body with an “X”. Extend an identifying line from the “X” and label with a number or letter. Once all the swabs have dried, place 2 swabs in the box provided within the envelope, identify with the corresponding area on the body gram indicating the source area and place inside the STEP 9 envelope. For the next swabs, place the swabs back in the original container, identify the container with the corresponding area on the body gram, seal the swab container with evidence tape, date and sign the evidence tape and place inside the STEP 9 envelope. Repeat each collection step as stated above until all areas of dried secretions are collected. Example: secretion seen on right upper thigh, collected with moistened swabs, “X” placed on right upper thigh of the body gram, line drawn from “X” with “1” placed at end of line, “1” placed on swab container. Secretion seen on right lower abdomen, collected with moistened swabs, “X” placed on right lower abdomen of the body gram, line drawn from “X” with “2” placed at end of line, “2” placed on swab container.

STEP 10 ORAL/SKIN CONTACT EVIDENCE

- Inside this envelope is a container with 2 swabs and a box holder. Ask the patient where there was contact between the assailants mouth and the patients body. Be careful not to communicate this question in a way so as to suggest this was a “consensual” event. Language such as “kissing”, “hickey”, etc. can be suggestive of consensual activity. When the patient indicates the area of contact, remove the swabs from the STEP 10 envelope, moisten with sterile water and collect the sample from the area indicated by the patient. Place the swabs in the dryer, once the swabs have dried, place them in the box included within the envelope. Indicate on the box beside the area listed as “other” “oral/skin contact”. Indicate on the body gram with an “X” the area on the body where the sample was collected. Complete the information on the outside of the envelope, seal the envelope by moistening the flap and sealing the swab inside the collection envelope. If the sample is not collected, indicate the reason beside IF NO, WHY NOT? Place the envelope inside the sexual assault evidence collection kit.

- Multiple assailant scenario: If the patient gives a history of multiple assailants and there are multiple areas of oral/skin contact then there will have to be multiple swabs used in the collection of the samples to avoid cross contamination. Assess the body of the patient, collect samples with 2 moisten swabs. Use hospital stock swabs in addition to the swabs provided within the kit. Indicate on the body gram where each sample is located on the patients body with an "X". Extend an identifying line from the "X" and label with a number or letter. Once all the swabs have dried, place 2 swabs in the box provided within the envelope, identify with the corresponding area on the body gram indicating the source area and place inside the STEP 10 envelope. For the next swabs, place the swabs back in the original container, identify the container with the corresponding area on the body gram, seal the swab container with evidence tape, date and sign the evidence tape and place inside the STEP 10 envelope. Repeat each collection step as stated above until all areas of oral/skin contact are collected. **Example:** Oral/skin contact indicated on right upper thigh, collected with moistened swabs, "X" placed on right upper thigh of the body gram, line drawn from "X" with "1" placed at end of line, "1" placed on swab container. Oral/skin contact indicated on right lower abdomen, collected with moistened swabs, "X" placed on right lower abdomen of body gram, line drawn from "X" with "2" placed at end of line, "2" placed on swab container.

STEP 11 PUBIC HAIR COMBINGS

- Inside this envelope is a large bindle with a comb. Open the bindle and place the edge of the bindle under the patients buttocks so that the bindle area is under the genital area of the patient. Give the comb to the patient and tell the patient to comb through the pubic hair from top of the genitalia area to bottom of the genitalia area. Next, comb from the outer aspects of the genitalia to the inner aspects of the genitalia. When the patient has completed the pubic hair combing, ask the patient to drop the comb on the bindle. Ask the patient to lift the buttocks and remove the bindle with the comb from under the patient. If the patient defers and request the medical examiner to comb through the pubic hair, collect as instructed above. Be careful not to be forceful when combing through the pubic hair as this can be uncomfortable for the patient. Once this is collected, fold the bindle upon itself, holding the comb within the bindle. Seal the bindle with evidence tape. Date and sign the evidence tape. Place the bindle and comb inside the STEP 11 envelope, moisten the envelope flap and seal the envelope. Document the information on the

outside of the envelope. If no sample is collected indicate the reason beside IF NO, WHY NOT? Place the envelope in the sexual assault evidence collection kit. Only collect this step if the patient has pubic hair.

STEP 12 PULLED PUBIC HAIR

- Inside this envelope is a bindle for collection of pulled pubic hair. Open the bindle and place on a stand within easy access of the patient and medical provider. Inform the patient of the reason for the step is to have a reference pubic hair sample. This could be compared to any foreign pubic hair samples that may be removed from the patients body. Ask the patient to grasp the pubic hair strands and pull 12-15 strands from the region. The hair has to be pulled and not cut. The hair can not be removed with appliances such as tweezers or forceps due to appliances can damage the hair shaft. The patient always has the right to defer this step as it is very painful. If the sample is collected, place the pubic hair on the bindle, fold the bindle upon itself as it was in the envelope, seal with evidence tape, sign and date the evidence tape and place inside the STEP 12 envelope. Complete the information on the collection envelope and seal the envelope. If no sample is collected, indicate the reason beside IF NO, WHY NOT? Place the envelope in the sexual assault evidence collection kit.

STEP 13 ORAL SWABS

- Inside this envelope are swabs and a box for the swabs. This step can be used for 2 purposes. The first purpose is to collect samples from the oral cavity if the patient was exposed to genital/oral contact. The second purpose is to collect buccal swabs for patient reference DNA. For a sample of possible foreign DNA due to genital/oral contact, remove the 2 swabs from the swab container, place the swabs in the patients mouth and swab every surface within the mouth. This includes teeth, gums, cheeks, palate, tongue, and under the tongue. If the patient has dental appliances, ask the patient to remove the dental appliances after the oral cavity sample has been collected. Swab the entire surface of the dental appliance with the same swab that was used on the inside of the oral cavity. Next, swab the mouth of the patient with the dental appliances removed to cover the area's that were previously covered with the dental appliances. Place the swabs in the holder to dry. As a courtesy to the patient, wash the dental appliances with soap and water after swabbing the entire area of the appliances. Offer the patient water and/or mouthwash to rinse their mouth. Then offer the clean dental appliances back to the patient.

If the patient does not disclose oral/genital contact this step can be used for patient reference DNA. This will be a buccal swab. Place both swabs inside the patients mouth and vigorously swabs the inner aspect of the right and left cheek. Place the swabs in the holder to dry. Once the swabs have dried, place them in the box and check the box marked “oral”. Complete the information on the STEP 13 envelope. Indicate under ORAL SWABS if this collection is “oral/genital contact” or “buccal swab for reference DNA”. If no sample is collected indicate the reason beside IF NO WHY NOT? Seal the envelope and place inside the sexual assault evidence collection kit.

STEP 14 VULVAR SWABS

- Inside this envelope are 2 swabs in a container and a box for the swabs. This step is to collect samples from the vulva area. Moisten the swabs with sterile water and swab the entire outer vulva area. Swab from top to bottom and outer to inner aspects of the genitalia. Be sure to swab the labia majora, labia minora, folds of the skin, fossa navicularis and posterior fourchette. Be careful in the area of the urethral meatus. Place the swabs in the dryer to dry. When the swabs are dry, place them in the box included in the envelope and check the box by “VULVAR”. Complete the information on the envelope. If no sample collected, indicate the reason by IF NO, WHY NOT? Place the envelope in the sexual assault evidence collection kit. **This step can also be performed on the pediatric patient.**

STEP 15 VULVAR/PENILE SWABS

- Inside this envelope are 2 swabs in a container and a box for the swabs. This step is to collect samples from the Vulva or Penile area. Moisten the swabs with sterile water and swab the entire outer vulva area. Swab the area from top to bottom and outer to inner aspects of the genitalia. Be sure to swab the labia majora, labia minora, folds of the skin, fossa navicularis and posterior fourchette. Be careful in the area of the urethral meatus. For a penile swab, moisten the swabs with sterile water. Swab the shaft of the penis on the anterior and posterior aspects, the glans of the penis, and the testicles on the anterior and posterior aspects. If the penis is not circumcised, swab the outer foreskin, have the patient retract the foreskin and swab the glans of the penis. Swab the corona of the penis, especially in the junction of the skin at the corona and the shaft of the penis. Place the swabs in the dryer to dry. Once dry, place the swabs in the box and indicate with a check either PENILE or VULVAR. Place the box with the swabs inside the STEP 15 envelope, seal the

envelope. Complete the information on the envelope. If no sample is collected indicate the reason by IF NO, WHY NOT? Place inside the sexual assault evidence collection kit.

STEP 16 VAGINAL SWABS

- In this envelope are 4 swabs in 2 separate containers and 2 boxes. This step is for collection within the vaginal cavity. There will not be a need to moisten these swabs as the vaginal cavity is a moist area. However, if this is a post-menopausal patient there may be a need to moisten the swabs prior to insertion. Use a speculum to open the vaginal cavity, insert 2 swabs inside the vaginal cavity and swab the surface of the vagina and the surface of the cervix. Be careful not to insert the swab into the cervical os unless you are licensed to do so. Remove the swabs and place in the dryer to dry. Insert 2 more swabs into the vagina, swab the entire surface of the vagina and the surface of the cervix. Remove the speculum. If there are secretions from the vagina on the speculum, take the swabs that were used to swab the vagina and “clean” the speculum with the swabs. (The speculum and swabs are from the same source so this practice is acceptable). Once the swabs have dried, place 2 swabs in each box. Indicate on the box with a check by “VAGINAL”. Place the boxes inside the STEP 16 envelope. Seal the envelope. Complete the information on the envelope. If no sample is collected, document the reason beside IF NO, WHY NOT? Place the envelope in the sexual assault evidence collection kit.
- If the patient defers a speculum insertion, 2 swabs at a time can be inserted in the vagina for possible sample collection.
- ***DO NOT TELL THE PATIENT YOU SEE SEMEN/SEMINAL FLUID IN THE VAGINA!*** There can be many causes of secretions in the vaginal cavity. Document what is seen descriptively without drawing a conclusion.
- **This step will not be performed on a pediatric patient!**

STEP 17 RECTAL SWABS

- In this envelope are 2 swabs in a container and a box for the swabs. Even though the title of this collection step is “RECTAL”, the anal area will be the source for the collection. Remove the swabs from the container and moisten the swabs with sterile water. Assess the anal area by spreading the left and right buttocks to expose the gluteal cleft and anal opening. Ask the patient to “push down” as if “passing gas or a bowel movement”. This will expose the

anal folds. Swab the anus, all anal folds and the cleft of the buttocks including the perineum. Do not insert swabs into the anal opening. Place the swabs in the dryer to dry. Once the swabs have dried, place them in the box and indicate with a check beside "RECTAL". Place the box inside the STEP 17 envelope. Seal the envelope. Complete the information on the collection envelope. If no sample is collected, indicate the reason by IF NO, WHY NOT? Place the envelope in the sexual assault evidence collection kit.

- **Pediatric Patient: Swab the cleft (crack) of the buttocks with sterile water moistened swabs. Also swab the perineal area.**

STEP 18 PULLED HEAD HAIRS

- In this envelope is a folded bindle. This step is for reference head hair from the patient to compare to foreign hair samples that could be collected from the patients body. Open the envelope and remove the bindle. Open the bindle and place it on the patients lap. Ask the patient to pull 12-15 strands of hair from the scalp area. The hair has to be pulled from the scalp to include the root. The hair can not be cut. The hair can not be "plucked" with appliances such as tweezers or forceps as that would damage the hair shaft. The patient may defer this step as it is painful. If the hair is collected, have the patient place the hair in the bindle, fold the bindle upon itself as it was in the envelope. Place a piece of evidence tape on the bindle. Date and sign the evidence tape. Place the bindle with the sample in the STEP 18 envelope. Seal the envelope. Complete the information on the envelope. If the sample is not collected complete the section IF NO, WHY NOT? Place the STEP 18 envelope in the sexual assault collection kit.

STEP 19 KNOWN BLOOD SAMPLE

- In this clear bag is a purple top blood collection tube inside a clear bubble wrap container for patient reference DNA. You will need to use hospital stock collection equipment to collect the blood from the patient. Collect 7 ml of blood from the patient and place the blood inside the purple top tube. Place the tube in the bubble wrap container, seal the container (self seals once tape is removed), place the bubble wrap container with the sample inside the clear, plastic STEP 19 bag. Seal the zip top of the plastic bag then place evidence tape over the zip top. Sign and date the evidence tape. Complete the information on the clear bag. If patient defers this step please indicate the

reason by IF NO, WHY NOT? Place the STEP 19 bag inside the sexual assault evidence collection kit.

- If there is an indication for blood toxicology sample to be collected this can also be placed in the bubble wrap container and placed in the clear STEP 19 bag. Retrieve a gray top tube from hospital stock, collect enough blood from the patient to fill the purple top DNA tube and the gray toxicology tube, place the blood in the designated tubes, write “DNA” on the purple top tube label, write “TOXICOLOGY” on the gray top tube, place both tubes in the bubble wrap bag, place the bag in the clear STEP 19 bag. Note on the sexual assault exam form that drug toxicology was collected. By noting this on the form and writing “TOXICOLOGY” on the collection tube, the Crime Lab will process both blood tubes as indicated.

STEP 20/21

- This envelope is for any other samples/evidence that have not been included in the collection procedures. Some examples of other evidence can be: a condom, tampon, piercing, diaphragm, foreign bodies. This is just an example of what can be included. Each patient can have samples of evidence that is not included within the kit sample list. There is no such thing as insignificant samples or evidence.
- Make sure the samples/evidence are completely dry and packaged appropriately. Indicate on the envelope what the sample/evidence is and the area from which it was collected.
- Complete the information on the envelope. If no sample/evidence is collected complete the area IF NO, WHY NOT? Place the envelopes in the sexual assault evidence collection kit.