

# Submitting Evidence to the Bureau of Forensic Services



# Types of Testing Offered

- The laboratory offers several types of forensics tests. The most common tests that we perform are:
  - > Ignitable liquid analysis for its presence in fire debris.
  - > Identification of ignitable liquids
  - > Unidentified Chemicals for clandestine laboratories (no drugs either controlled or over the counter may be submitted).
  - > Chemical reaction bomb testing (all devices must be rendered safe before submission).
  - > Explosives testing (all devices must be rendered safe before submission).



# Submission Requirements

- Because of the nature of materials handled in the laboratory, we have strict packaging and submission requirements.
- Each test may have different requirements. Please be certain evidence meets the packaging requirements for the test requested before sending it to the laboratory.
- Improperly packaged evidence will be refused.



# Ignitable Liquid/ Fire Debris Testing

- All fire debris evidence must be packaged in previously unused, airtight, and impervious containers such as sealed metal cans or glass jars (with secondary packaging).
- Evidence that can't be placed in cans may be packaged in Kapak<sup>®</sup>, Ampac<sup>®</sup>, or nylon evidence bags.
- Plastic bags or paper bags will not be accepted as they are not airtight and moisture and vapors can migrate through the paper.



# Ignitable Liquid/ Fire Debris Testing cont.

- Do not overfill the cans. Cans should not be more than 75% full.
- Some items, such as bulky clothing may need to be divided into multiple cans or placed into Kapak )<sup>®</sup>, Ampac <sup>®</sup> or Nylon bags if they will overfill a single can.
- Label any hazards such as sharps or biohazards.
- Exterior of cans should be clean of fire debris material.



# Ignitable Liquid/Fire Debris Testing (cont.)

- Lids of evidence cans must be completely closed.
- Evidence tape (that will shred when disturbed) must be used to seal the lid.
- Labels should be placed on each can that identify the submitter, case number and item number.



# Tissue Samples

- Tissue samples must be sealed in metal cans and frozen overnight prior to shipping.
- Label all cans with biohazard stickers, case number and item numbers.
- Ship tissue samples by overnight service, do not send over the weekend or holidays.
- Do not place ice or dry ice into the shipping container.
- Alert the laboratory when samples are sent.





# Liquid Samples

- Liquid samples require special packaging.
- Liquid sample should be placed in a small glass bottle.
- No more than ½ ounce (15 mL) should be submitted.
- The liquid in the vial should further be secured by placing an absorbent material in the bottle (paper towel or gauze pad) so there is no free liquid.
- A Control standard of the absorbent material should also be sent as a separate exhibit.
- Each glass bottle should be packaged in a secondary container such as a metal can or plastic bottle.





# Liquid Samples (cont.)

- Each secondary container must be tape sealed and marked with the case number and item number.
- Shipments containing liquid samples should have absorbent materials placed in the shipping boxes around the bottles.
- Known hazardous materials must be in compliance with federal shipping regulations.



# Clandestine Laboratory Testing

- No drugs (either controlled substances or over the counter (OTC)) will be accepted by the laboratory.
- Follow all liquid packaging requirements for both liquid and solid samples.
- If your agency does not regularly submit clandestine laboratory materials, please contact the laboratory prior to submission.




# Explosives/ CRB Testing

- Please contact the laboratory prior to all submissions.
- All devices must be rendered safe prior to submission!
- Powder or liquid samples must follow the requirements for liquid samples previously described.
- Post blast debris or components should be individually packaged in glass jars or paper bags to prevent static electrical charges.



# Evidence Submission Form

- Please fill out all portions of the submission form.
- Please make sure that Your Agency Case # matches the case number on the evidence items.
- Ensure that item numbers and descriptions match those on the evidence packages.




**Department of Financial Services**  
*Division of State Fire Marshal - Bureau of Forensic Fire and Explosives Analysis*  
 38 Academy Drive, Havana, FL 32333, Phone: 850-539-2700, Fax: 850-539-9662

EVIDENCE SUBMISSION FORM			
Please complete all relevant blank areas.			
Submission of evidence relinquishes all decisions regarding analytical processing and choice of methods to BFFEA.			
<input type="checkbox"/> New Case	<input type="checkbox"/> Suspect Homicide	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Testing (explain in Remarks)	BFFEA (Lab) Assigned #
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional Evidence	<input type="checkbox"/> Fatality	<input type="checkbox"/> RUSH Request (explain in Remarks)	Your Agency Case #
Submitting Agent:		Email:	
Agency Name:		Tel. # ( ) -	
Agency Address:		Cell. # ( ) -	
Property Owner or Occupant:			
Incident Address:			
Nature of Incident (Please describe):		Incident date:	
List of Laboratory Tests (Choose one of the letter codes below to be put into the "Test Requested" column:			
(A) Determine presence/identity of ignitable liquids	(V) Video/Digital Analysis		
(E) Explosives/Incendiaries	(CR) Chemical Reaction Bomb Determination		
(H) Hold only - No test requested	(C) Comparison Sample		
(CL) Unidentified Chemicals/Clandestine Lab (NO)	(O) Other requests - Explain in remarks section		
List of evidence submitted (Container, content, location collected):		Test Requested	
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
Chain of Custody (Indicate who had possession, to whom or where it was transferred, and when it was done):			
Print Agent Name	Agent Signature	Transfer	Date and Time
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
REMARKS (any specific precautions or notes concerning the evidence?):			
For BFFEA Use Only:	Received via:	Returned Via:	

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AN ASCLD LAB-International ACCREDITED LABORATORY  
 (SINCE July 20, 2010 in the subdisciplines of Explosives, Analysis of Unknowns, and Fire Debris)



# Sending Evidence to the Laboratory

- Evidence may be hand delivered to the laboratory between 8 am and 4:30pm Eastern time Monday through Friday.
- Evidence that is shipped must have a tracking number such as those used by FedEx, UPS, registered mail, or certified mail.
- Remember that certain types of testing require laboratory permission before being sent.



# Frequently Asked Questions

- How long will it take to get testing results?
  - › Most results will be available within 10 days. Special testing may take longer.
- Is there a way to request a rush on analysis?
  - › Yes, for certain cases such as fatalities, injuries, court pending, etc. a rush may be requested. Depending on resources, results may be available in 2-3 working days.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## cont.

- Can you tell me the exact chemical or the kind of gasoline that was found?
  - > No, brand compositions frequently change. Results will be given as a class such as gasoline, petroleum distillate, or oxygenates (alcohols and acetone).
  - > These are based on the classifications recognized for ignitable liquids by the American Society for Testing and Materials. A listing with examples of common commercial products can be found in our [Guideline for Submission](#) document on our website.
- How do I get my evidence back?
  - > Evidence will be usually be shipped back after testing. Due to hazardous materials regulations, some evidence may not be shipped and will be held by the laboratory until your agency can pick it up.





# More Questions?

- Please contact the laboratory with any questions. Our phone number is (850) 539-2700.
- For questions about packaging or shipping, please contact our Forensic Technologist at (850) 539-2711
- Our complete submission guide can be found at

