

FORENSIC BIOLOGY ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

CONTROL OF RECORDS		
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Control of Records

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND SCOPE

All Department of Forensic Biology quality and technical records will be legible and readily retrievable from storage.

This section will establish the procedures for the identification, collection, indexing, access, filing, storage, maintenance, and disposal of quality and technical records.

PROCEDURE

Quality Records include, but are not limited to, audit reports, personnel qualifications, management system reviews, validation studies, proficiency test records, archived manuals, court testimony monitoring records, quality incident review reports, preventative actions, and reagent and equipment performance verifications and maintenance.

Technical Records are defined as examination and administrative documentation as part of individual laboratory case files. These include, but are not limited to, written reports of analytical findings, interpretations, and conclusions formed from these findings; bench notes, worksheets, computer data files associated with electropherograms, printed electropherograms, etc. used to reach these conclusions.; records of phone conversations, court orders, and discovery requests.

A. Identification

Technical records are prepared whenever examinations are performed and are marked (either handwritten or computer printed) with a laboratory number for identification and association to a case record.

Quality records are identified by appropriate information on the records, such as a header with the title of the record.

B. Indexing

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Technical records are indexed by the laboratory case numbers. Quality Records are indexed according to the type of record (i.e., audit reports, management system reviews) and by the date the record was created.

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C. Collection

Records are collected for filing and/or storage in a timeframe which varies according to the specific type of record. For example, electropherograms are collected with other records that are associated with the same laboratory number; calibration records are collected with other calibration records associated with the same equipment.

D. Maintenance – Filing, Storage, and Access to Records

All Departmental Technical records that are in-progress are maintained in the LIMS. All Departmental records are filed or otherwise stored in designated areas within the DNA Building, the Forensic Biology network, or the LIMS after all necessary reviews are completed.

Access to Department records is restricted to those individuals with approved access to the secure areas of the building where records are stored or approved access to the LIMS. Access to the LIMS is granted to all Department of Forensic Biology members. The Director of the Department of Forensic Biology may grant limited access to the LIMS to non-Forensic Biology personnel as deemed necessary for support of Department of Forensic Biology activities.

- Most hard-copy case files are stored in the OCME Records department.
- Electronic case files are stored in the LIMS.
- Hard-copy quality records that have any degree of confidentiality (such as personnel qualifications and court testimony monitoring records) are stored in the Quality Assurance Unit and are accessible only to Quality Assurance personnel.
- Electronic quality records that have any degree of confidentiality (such as non-conforming work forms) are stored on the Forensic Biology Network in a secure manner accessible to Quality Assurance personnel only.
- Electronic quality records that are not of a confidential nature are stored on the Forensic Biology Network in an appropriately designated folder.
- Other hard-copy technical and quality records are stored appropriately with the person/unit responsible for the record, such as the OCME Records department, the Quality Assurance Unit, the Training Unit, or with the DNA Technical Leaders.

Electronic records saved on the Department's secure network, or in LIMS, are accessible only to Department of Forensic Biology personnel. The Department's network is backed-up by the NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DOITT) to ensure the availability of data.

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Records produced by the Department of Forensic Biology may be converted to another format should storage space become an issue (e.g., hard copies scanned and uploaded to a secure network). Alternatively, the New York City Department of Records and Informational Services (DORIS) can arrange for storage space of hard copy records for all New York City agencies. Should the services of DORIS be needed, the OCME Legal Department will be consulted and will act as the Department's liaison with DORIS.

E. Retention

The Department of Forensic Biology follows the New York City Charter which prohibits the destruction of any record without consent from the New York City Department of Records and Informational Services (DORIS), Corporation Counsel and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

F. Disposal

In the unlikely event that the destruction of records becomes necessary, the OCME Legal Department will be consulted first, and will act as a liaison with DORIS and the Corporation Counsel.

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