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Date: September 23, 2025  
From: Craig O'Connor, Director   
Subject: Forensic Biology Reports and Electronic Signatures  
Memo: 2025-003

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This memo serves to clarify the use of electronic signatures in Forensic DNA reports issued by the NYC Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), Department of Forensic Biology. The Forensic Biology Laboratory ("the Laboratory") generates case reports that compile analytical results and conclusions found in the case notes. Only trained analysts, authorized by the appropriate Technical Leader, are permitted to issue interpretations in a report or notification.

In compliance with accreditation standards, and as stated in the "Forensic Biology Evidence and Case Management Manual, Reports"<sup>1</sup>, the Laboratory's reports contain information mandated by the FBI Quality Assurance Standards (QAS) and ISO/IEC 17025:2017 requirements as well as recommendations concerning report standardization from the New York Crime Laboratory Advisor Committee (NYCLAC). According to these standards and requirements, the DNA reports must include:

- Case identifiers, including the NYPD complaint number and/or Medical Examiner number
- List of evidence and date received
- Description of evidence examined and identification of samples tested
- Description of the methodology used
- Loci tested and/or Amplification Test Kit used
- Results and conclusions for each forensic sample tested
- An interpretive statement, either quantitative (statistics) or qualitative
- Report date
- Disposition of evidence
- Signature and title of person (or electronic equivalent) accepting responsibility for the content of the report
- Appendix containing explanatory statements and definitions of terms.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.nyc.gov/assets/ocme/downloads/pdf/technical-manuals/forensic-biology-technical-manuals/reports\\_090524.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/ocme/downloads/pdf/technical-manuals/forensic-biology-technical-manuals/reports_090524.pdf)

Since 2012, the Laboratory has been using a Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) and is currently fully paperless. The system is used to manage and track samples, data, and workflows within the Laboratory and is maintained on-site at the OCME. Access to the LIMS is restricted to authorized personnel via unique usernames and passwords. The software maintains an audit trail that automatically captures all data and configuration changes, including the date/time the change was made, reason for the change, original values, and updated values. All of this is tied to the user ID of the person logged into the system at the time of the change.

When a reporting analyst completes a case file and DNA report, they must enter their credentials (username and password) to electronically “sign” the report before submitting for technical and administrative review. This also adds their username to each page of the technical documentation within the casefile. After the review process is complete, the LIMS generates the final DNA report in a portable document format (PDF), displaying the analyst’s name as an electronic signature, which serves the same purpose as a physical signature. This electronic signature is saved in the audit trail of the LIMS software, and it cannot be altered once it is captured.