

FORENSIC BIOLOGY ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

Staff Roles and Responsibilities		
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Staff Roles and Responsibilities

1 Guiding Principles and Scope

- 1.1 Staff roles and responsibilities within the Department of Forensic Biology are defined and organized so that the services provided by the Department can be conducted to a high standard of professionalism, efficiency, and accuracy.
- 1.2 This document describes the responsibilities, authorities, and interrelationships of Forensic Biology staff.

2 Organizational Structure

- 2.1 The Director of the Department of Forensic Biology holds the dual role of Chief of Laboratories and reports directly to the Chief Medical Examiner. See the [OCME Organizational Chart](#). Some support services, such as Human Resources and Finance, are provided to the Department of Forensic Biology by other departments within the OCME.
- 2.2 The Department of Forensic Biology is a single operational unit organized into various Production Teams and supporting teams. Production Teams consist of casework analysts. Teams that provide supporting services include the Training Team, Research, Development, Validation and Implementation Team and the Quality Assurance/ Quality Control Team. The [Forensic Biology Organizational Chart](#) reflects this structure.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Director
 - 3.1.1 The Director is responsible for the overall scientific and quality operations and will formulate and implement operational policies, goals, and objectives relating to the Department of Forensic Biology. The Director is responsible for ensuring that the Forensic Biology Laboratory remains in compliance with accreditation standards and NYS Commission on Forensic Science accreditation program guidelines. The Director prepares productivity metrics, quality reports, and other reports, as required by the Chief Medical Examiner and/or City, State, or Federal agencies. The Director prepares and reviews annual evaluations of subordinates and establishes guiding principles for the operation of the Department. The Director reviews federal, state and local legislation to determine impact on forensic testing and advises the Chief Medical Examiner on relevant forensic science matters. The Director liaises with OCME's stakeholders in the criminal justice system.

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3.2 Deputy Directors

- 3.2.1 The Deputy Director assumes the responsibilities of the Director in the Director's absence. The Deputy Director is responsible for the overall administrative operations of the Department and will formulate and implement operational policies, goals, and objectives as applicable. The Deputy Director supervises the Assistant Directors and works with them to achieve Department goals. The Deputy Director represents the Department of Forensic Biology in meetings with other NYC law enforcement and criminal justice agencies and communicates with stakeholder agencies regarding testing requests and results. The Deputy Director assists the Director to develop guiding principles for the operation of the Department, performs scientific analyses, performs technical reviews of cases, reviews proficiency tests, trains subordinates, testifies in court, monitors testimony of subordinates, prepares annual reviews of subordinates, and completes miscellaneous projects as assigned by the Director.

3.3 Assistant Directors

- 3.3.1 Each Assistant Director leads an operational or support team within the Department. They manage the work of the team in order to achieve Departmental goals; supervise one or more Criminalist IV's and their subordinates; perform technical reviews of cases, reviews proficiency tests; assist with the training of new hires or promoted staff, police investigators, or attorneys; represent the Department of Forensic Biology in meetings with other NYC law enforcement and/or criminal justice agencies; communicate with stakeholder agencies regarding testing requests and results; and triage evidence. In the absence of the Director and Deputy Directors, a designated Assistant Director will be assigned the responsibility for overseeing the administrative operation of the Department of Forensic Biology. An Assistant Director may perform scientific analyses on casework and testify in court. Assistant Directors prepare and review annual performance evaluations of subordinate personnel.

3.4 LIMS Administrator

- 3.4.1 The Forensic Biology LIMS (Laboratory Information Management System) Administrator is responsible for the implementation, maintenance, and future development of the laboratory's LIMS program. The LIMS Administrator acts as a liaison between Forensic Biology and the OCME Information Technology department in all aspects pertaining to LIMS and other computer applications.

3.5 Technical Leaders

- 3.5.1 Technical Leaders are accountable for the technical operations of the laboratory. The Department has two DNA Technical Leaders (one for nuclear DNA operations and one for mitochondrial DNA operations), one Serology Technical Leader and one Molecular Serology Technical Leader. Each DNA Technical Leader has the authorities and responsibilities described in the FBI DNA Quality Assurance Standards. For specific

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information, see the [DNA TECHNICAL LEADERS document](#) in the Forensic Biology Administrative Manual.

3.6 Assistant Technical Leaders

3.6.1 Where necessary, Assistant Technical Leaders will be appointed to assist the DNA Technical Leader. Under the DNA Technical Leader's direction, an Assistant Technical Leader may be assigned additional duties (e.g., coordination of training, reviewing validations, organization of records, etc.). In addition, an Assistant Technical Leader can serve as the final decision maker involving analytical methods while the DNA Technical Leader is off-site or unavailable.

3.7 CODIS Custodian

3.7.1 The CODIS Custodian is equivalent to the "Casework CODIS Administrator" position described in the "Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Typing Laboratories" and as such is the system administrator of the laboratory's CODIS network. For a specific list of duties and responsibilities see the Forensic Biology [CODIS Manual](#).

3.8 Quality Assurance Manager

3.8.1 The Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for the overall implementation and maintenance of those aspects of the Department of Forensic Biology management system related to quality. The responsibilities are varied and meet accreditation requirements and the FBI Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories. The Quality Assurance Manager supervises the Quality Assurance Unit, which is responsible for conducting numerous quality control activities within the Department.

3.9 Value Stream Manager

3.9.1 Value Stream Manager of the laboratory is responsible for strategizing ways to improve case workflow and turn-around time as well as review LIMS queues to ensure evidence is processed and reports are issued in a timely manner.

3.10 Laboratory Manager

3.10.1 The Laboratory Manager is responsible for the day to day operations of the pre-amplification and post-amplification laboratories. Duties include, but are not limited to, maintaining case sample workflow by allocating staff appropriately, ensuring that instruments are available for staff use and troubleshooting issues that arise during lab work.

3.11 Criminalist, Level IV

3.11.1 The responsibilities of Criminalist IV's are described in the Civil Service specifications for that title and in the Tasks and Standards documents. Generally, a Criminalist IV may

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directly or indirectly supervise one or more Criminalist III's, II's, and/or I's, may indirectly supervise City Research Scientist III's, II's, and/or I's, perform scientific analyses on evidence submitted to the laboratory, perform technical reviews of simple to highly complex cases, review proficiency tests, prepare scientific reports, prepare annual performance evaluations as requested by OCME management, communicate with stakeholder agencies regarding testing requests and results, triage evidence, participate in the training of subordinates, testify in court, take proficiency tests as required by regulating and accrediting bodies, work on designated projects, and supervise analytical tests in the laboratory. These scientists are examiner/analysts as defined by the FBI Quality Assurance Standards.

3.12 Criminalist, Level III

3.12.1 The responsibilities of Criminalist III's are described in the Civil Service specifications for that title and in the Tasks and Standards documents. Generally, Criminalist III's may oversee and perform testing and/or review of DNA extraction, DNA quantitation, STR analysis, molecular serology testing, perform scientific analyses on evidence submitted to the laboratory, prepare written scientific reports, perform technical reviews of molecular serology cases and simple to moderately complex DNA cases, perform administrative reviews on DNA cases, train new Criminalists, take proficiency tests as required by regulating and accrediting bodies, and testify to results. In the absence of a Criminalist IV, a Criminalist III may assume those responsibilities on an interim basis. These scientists are examiner/analysts as defined by the FBI Quality Assurance Standards.

3.13 Criminalist, Level II

3.13.1 The responsibilities of Criminalist II's are described in the Civil Service specifications for that title. Generally, Criminalist II's are responsible for the daily examination and scientific work performed on evidence in casework. They may perform DNA extraction, DNA quantitation, and STR analysis, molecular serology testing, prepare written scientific reports which reflect testing, perform technical reviews of molecular serology cases and simple DNA cases, perform administrative reviews on DNA cases, train new Criminalists, take proficiency tests as required by regulating and accrediting bodies, and testify to results. These scientists are examiner/analysts as defined by the FBI Quality Assurance Standards.

3.14 Criminalist, Level IA & IB

3.14.1 The responsibilities of Criminalist I's are described in the Civil Service specifications for that title. Generally, Criminalist I's assist higher level Criminalists in the laboratory after appropriate training. Criminalist I's who are performing casework must take proficiency tests as required by regulating and accrediting bodies. These scientists are DNA technicians as defined by the FBI Quality Assurance Standards.

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3.15 Laboratory Helper

3.15.1 Laboratory Helper as assigned to laboratory functions maintains inventory of reagents and supplies required for the functioning of the laboratory. Performs non-technical QA/QC work in the laboratory, such as testing of eye wash and water stations. Assists with scheduled laboratory clean-up. Receives stores and distributes supplies and equipment. Verifies laboratory items received from vendor are accounted for. Packs, unpacks and counts material, supplies and equipment, including bio-hazardous materials. Maintains stock rooms by ensuring proper quantities of supplies and equipment necessary for laboratory functioning are maintained at all times. Places and fills orders of laboratory requests for supplies. Maintains office equipment, such as copiers and printers, to ensure they are operational. Escorts laboratory vendors as needed. Assists with interoffice mail distribution. Assists with decommissioning of laboratory equipment. Performs QC of digitized records.

3.16 Stock Worker

3.16.1 Receives, Stores and distributes supplies and equipment. Verifies laboratory items received from vendors are accounted for. Packs, unpacks and counts material, supplies and equipment, including bio-hazardous materials. Maintains stock rooms by ensuring proper quantities of supplies and equipment necessary for laboratory functioning are maintained at all times. Places and fills orders of laboratory requests for supplies. Maintains office equipment, such as copiers and printers, to ensure they are operational. Assists with interoffice mail distribution. Assists with decommissioning of laboratory equipment.

3.17 City Research Scientist

3.17.1 The responsibilities of City Research Scientists are described in the Civil Service specifications for that title and in the Tasks and Standards documents. City Research Scientists conduct research and develop new scientific methods for the Department of Forensic Biology. Some City Research Scientists may be trained in DNA testing and/or molecular serology testing, and those levels that are tasked to supervise may do so for other City Research Scientists and/or those in the Criminalist title. Generally, the responsibilities of a City Research Scientist, Level IV-A or Level IV-B are equivalent to the responsibilities of a Criminalist, Level IV; the responsibilities of a City Research Scientist, Level III are equivalent to the responsibilities of a Criminalist, Level III; the responsibilities of a City Research Scientist, Level I and II are equivalent to the responsibilities of a Criminalist, Level II.

3.18 Training Coordinator

3.18.1 The Training Coordinator is responsible for the scheduling and training of all scientists in the laboratory. The Training Coordinator reports to an Assistant Director. The Training Coordinator is responsible for maintaining training records and ensuring that the Department meets NYS and accreditation standards.

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3.19 Forensic Biology Health and Safety Coordinator

3.19.1 The NYC Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), Health and Safety Unit has an Agency-appointed Safety Officer for the Department of Forensic Biology. The Department of Forensic Biology appoints a Health and Safety Coordinator to assist with safety and compliance efforts in the laboratory, as necessary. The duties of the Safety Coordinator include, but are not limited to:

3.19.1.1 Assisting the Agency-appointed Safety Officer in developing and implementing appropriate laboratory safety policies, practices, and procedures.

3.19.1.2 Conducting an annual review of the Safety-related Manuals to ensure that all documents are up-to-date and to inform the Agency-appointed Safety Officer of any suggested revisions.

3.19.1.3 Ensuring that the [OCME Health and Safety Manuals](#) (including the OCME Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan, OCME Chemical Hygiene Plan, and the OCME Respiratory Protection Plan) is readily accessible to all employees, either as a paper copy, electronic copy online, or by other applicable means.

3.19.1.4 Communicating to Forensic Biology staff any relevant safety information or concerns.

3.19.1.5 Inspecting laboratories for compliance with the OCME Health and Safety Manuals.

3.19.1.6 Assisting Laboratory Supervisors with maintaining laboratory compliance.

3.19.1.7 Acting as a liaison to the Health and Safety Unit by assisting with laboratory safety inspections, coordinating safety training, and maintaining overall lab compliance, including hazardous waste management.

3.20 Administrative Supervisor(s)

3.20.1 Administrative Supervisors (Principle Administrative Associate title) are in charge of the administrative support functions of the Department. Administrative Supervisors supervise a team of administrative professionals and ensures the proper handling of phone coverage; administrative review of casework files and distribution of reports; generation of certified copies of casework files for attorneys; and maintenance of casework files in archive, timecard and payroll handling. Administrative Supervisors may also oversee the management of all Departmental procurement matters and Departmental human resource functions including recruitment, retention, employee relations, and performance evaluations.

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3.21 Administrative Staff

- 3.21.1 Administrative staff (Clerical Associate title) assists in the proper handling of phone coverage; administrative review of casework files and distribution of reports; generation of certified copies of casework files for attorneys; and maintenance of casework files.

3.22 Customer Liaison

- 3.22.1 The Customer Liaison fosters communication between the laboratory and external customers through vetting of priority requests and case inquiries. Supervises the Evidence Control Property Specialists specifically assigned to the Forensic Biology Department. Oversees the Forensic Coordinators in charge of collating and disseminating of Discovery materials for prosecutorial community.

3.23 Forensic Coordinators

- 3.23.1 The Forensic Coordinators are responsible for receiving requests for Discovery materials under the control of the Department of Forensic Biology as issued by the prosecutorial community. Response to such requests includes, but is not limited to, searching various Forensic Biology databases, obtaining certified case records, curriculum vitae, proficiency test summaries, electronic raw data, STRmix files, generating audit trails and/or coordinating their viewing, administrative review of case records and updating databases and or spreadsheets as necessary.

3.24 Evidence and Property Control Specialists

- 3.24.1 The EPCS staff is responsible for creating Forensic Biology cases for evidence that has been submitted to the OCME Evidence Unit. They evaluate the submitted evidence and its associated administrative documentation, create the initial "Schedule of Analysis," and follow-up with the submitting agency for additional information as needed.