

Evidence Packaging

To provide information to submitting agencies on the standard procedures for packaging evidence that will be submitted to the MSP Crime Laboratory (MSPCL)

General Guidelines

- Packaging material should protect the evidence from contamination, alteration, or tampering.
- All evidence being submitted should be sealed prior to submission to the MSPCL.
- All evidence being submitted to the MSPCL must be identified and inventoried prior to submission.
- Always wear a new, clean pair of gloves when handling raw, unpackaged evidence.
- Never re-use evidence packaging material.
- If there is a safety issue concerning items for submission, the submitting officers may be required to repackage these items prior to being accepted.



EVIDENCE CONTROL UNITS

Sudbury Crime Laboratory
59 Horse Pond Road
Sudbury, MA 01776
Phone: 508-358-3155
Fax: 508-358-3222

Springfield Crime Laboratory
190 Carando Drive
Springfield, MA 01104
Phone: 413-205-1837
Fax: 413-205-1838

Lakeville Crime Laboratory
30 Riverside Drive
Lakeville, MA 02347
Phone: 508-946-1310
Fax: 508-946-1041

Danvers Crime Laboratory
485 Maple Street
Danvers, MA 01923
Phone: 978-538-6111
Fax: 978-538-6048

Packaging Material

Paper (e.g., paper bags or cardboard boxes) should be used to package evidence items containing biological materials. Plastic is not recommended for packaging or storing moist or wet evidence items due to the acceleration of the decomposition of biological materials on the evidence.



Sealing Evidence

All seals must be initialed and dated, or otherwise marked to document the person sealing the evidence. These markings must cross from the tape onto the packaging. The purpose of the seal is to ensure that evidence has not been contaminated or altered in transport or storage. A container is “properly sealed” only if its contents cannot readily escape and if entering the container results in obvious damage/ alteration to the container or its seal. Manufacturer seals do not need to be taped and sealed.



Inventory of Evidence

The delivering officer or scene responder is responsible for the proper identification of each piece of evidence submitted. All items being submitted must be inventoried on the appropriate Evidence Submission Form. The item description should include the location the item was found or whom the item came from.

1. [Shirt—Victim](#)
2. [Swab-RBS Kitchen Window](#)
3. [Latent Lifter-T.V. Living Room](#)

Separation of Items

The delivering officer is responsible for ensuring that items collected from different locations or belonging to different people are identified as such and packaged in separate containers.

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Special Points of Interest:

Evidence Unit personnel must be informed of the following types of evidence items:

- Wet or Damp
- Decomposition
- Flammables
- Firearms
- Ammunition
- Knives
- Sharps
- Glass
- Liquids
- Currency
- Hazardous Materials
- For information on the packaging of specific types of evidence please contact the Evidence Control Unit.

Important Information

All knives and sharps must be packaged in an appropriate container. Knives and sharps cannot be submitted in bags or envelopes.

Print Cards and CDs are considered evidence and should be sealed prior to arrival.

Packaging Materials

Bags

In cases where a bag is used, tape shall be placed over the folded mouth of the bag in order to secure the contents of the bag. Tape used to seal containers must be initialed and dated to document the person sealing the evidence.



Boxes

In cases where a cardboard box is used, tape shall be used along all of the seams of the box including the seam at the bottom of the box. Tape used to seal containers must be initialed and dated to document the person sealing the evidence.



Paper Envelopes

In cases where an envelope is used, tape shall be placed over the folded mouth of the envelope in order to secure the contents of the envelope. Tape used to seal containers must be initialed and dated to document the person sealing the evidence.



Firearms & Knife Boxes

In cases where a cardboard firearms box is used, tape shall be used along all of the seams of the box including the seam at the bottom of the box. Tape used to seal containers must be initialed and dated to document the person sealing the evidence. Firearms should not be packaged in plastic bags.



Plastic/Heat Sealed Bags

(For Non-Biological Evidence Only)

In the case of a heat-sealed plastic bag, tape is not required. Only the initials and date of the person sealing the container is required across all non-manufactured seals.



Arson Cans

All cases being submitted for accelerants must be packaged in an Arson Can. Refer to the Arson & Explosives Unit Information Paper.