

12.725 BLOOD DRYING : PROCESSING OF EVIDENCE EXPOSED TO BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

Reference:

Procedure 12.310, Waste and Medical Debris Used at Crime Scenes and Traffic Accidents

Procedure 12.715, Property and Evidence: Confiscation, Accountability, Processing, Storage, and Release

Procedure 12.720, Evidence: Submitting for Physical Analysis

Cincinnati Police Department Training Bulletin #142: Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan

Investigations Manual

Definition:

Evidence - Items collected and submitted to a court of law as proof to ascertain the truth regarding an offense that occurred. It must be legally obtained to be admissible in court.

Information:

The Police Department's blood drying cabinets are located at Criminal Investigations Section (CIS), 824 Broadway Street. As there are only two blood drying cabinets, careful thought must be given when deciding if items are of evidentiary value. **Only evidence which must be analyzed by the Hamilton County Coroner's Office or submitted as evidence in a court of law should be considered for processing.** Items which do not have evidentiary value should be photographed, placed in a biohazard bag, and transported to a fire station or hospital for disposal.

Refer to Procedure 12.310, Waste and Medical Debris Used at Crime Scenes and Traffic Accidents, for questions concerning medical debris, blood, and body fluids from a crime scene, traffic accident, or in public places such as sidewalks and streets.

Purpose:

Provide a safe working environment for employees who deal with the processing and drying of contaminated items that have EVIDENTIARY value.

Provide maximum protection for those employees and citizens who work or conduct business in the facility where the evidence is processed.

Policy:

Do not use the blood drying cabinets merely for the purpose of drying items coming into police custody. The on-scene supervisor of an incident must determine if contaminated items are EVIDENTIARY in nature and whether they will be needed as evidence in a court proceeding. If the on-scene supervisor is uncertain whether the contaminated items are of evidentiary value, the supervisor should contact a Homicide Unit supervisor for guidance and assistance.

Do not accept any contaminated evidence, i.e., blood soaked clothing, from a hospital without contacting a Homicide Unit supervisor to ensure there is sufficient room in the blood drying cabinets to house the evidence.

Procedure:**A. Packaging of Evidence for Transport to CIS:**

1. Place all contaminated evidence in an evidence bag or leak proof container.
 - a. Process each item separately to avoid cross contamination.
 - b. Avoid using plastic for transporting evidence. If evidence is received from a hospital or other source enclosed in plastic, it should be transported to CIS and removed from the plastic within two hours.
 - c. Leak proof containers are available from Supply Unit.
2. Use a sufficient amount of packaging material to prevent any leakage during transporting.
3. Contaminated evidence will not be permitted inside CIS if it is not properly packaged.

B. Evidence Processing:

1. Contact a Homicide Unit supervisor to ensure a drying cabinet is available and whether a Criminalist is on duty. The Criminalist will assist the submitting officer in processing the evidence.
 - a. If no Criminalist is on duty, a Homicide Unit supervisor may recall one.

2. If a drying cabinet is available, respond to the rear entrance of CIS and enter through the rear door.
3. Respond immediately to Criminalistics on the fifth floor.
4. All personnel processing evidence must wear rubber gloves, shoe coverings, a mask, and eye protection when handling contaminated items.
 - a. Officers transporting the contaminated items are responsible for processing the evidence with the assistance of a Criminalist.
 - b. After evidence has been processed, place contaminated rubber gloves, shoe coverings, and masks in biohazard bags located at Criminalistics. Decontaminate protective eyewear.
 - c. Evidence must remain in the blood drying cabinet for a minimum of 24 hours. The processing officer must contact a Homicide Unit supervisor after 24 hours to arrange for pick-up of the evidence.
 - d. After removal of an item by an officer/investigator, a Criminalist will ensure the blood drying cabinet is decontaminated.
 - e. A Homicide Unit supervisor will inspect the drying cabinets, review the log book, and restock the supply room throughout the week.