

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
NCEH /DLS
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Chain of Custody Form

I. Purpose

These instructions are intended to provide CDC users guidance for correctly completing the Chain of Custody Form.

II. Background / Introduction

In the event of a terrorist attack using chemical agents, samples from victims are to be collected and shipped to the CDC. These samples are then processed as part of the Rapid Toxic Screen. Samples collected from victims exposed to chemical agents are regarded as forensic as well as diagnostic samples and must be handled as such. The name of each person who has control of the samples must be documented throughout the sample's existence.

III. FBI Guidance

Each piece of evidence must have an evidence form with a chain-of-custody form attached to the item of evidence. The form documents the when/why/where/who of the evidence. The chain contains the signature of each person who has custody of the evidence at any given time.

The first chain begins with the signature, date and time of the person who collected the item from the scene. **ALL** persons thereafter who take custody of the item must sign their complete name along with the date and time they received the evidence. This method continues for the "life" of the evidence while in the custody of an agency/laboratory.

It is recommended that only CDC personnel sign the chain-of-custody. If the evidence is to be given to personnel outside of CDC, an Official CDC receipt should document this procedure with copies supplied to the receiver and a copy placed in the CDC files.

According to Susanna H. Mullally, FBI Evidence Program Manager, chain-of-custody form is not required for each tube collected, but rather the **set of tubes collected from one victim** (i.e., **50 victims** with samples collected would result in **50 chain of custody forms** being generated).

IV. Instructions for Filling out the Chain of Custody

1. The person collecting the samples must write and sign his/her full name, date, and time of his/her entry on the "collected by" line.
2. Indicate the reason for the specimen collection (i.e., chemical event or drill).
3. Each person thereafter who takes custody of the tubes must write and sign his/her full name and date and time of his/her entry on the appropriate "received by" line.
4. Reasons for receiving must be entered (testing, performing aliquots, irradiating, etc.).
5. This method will continue for the "life" of the evidence while in the custody of CDC.
6. In order for the next person to indicate taking control of the specimens, the previous recipient must observe the next recipient sign the form and physically remove the evidence.
7. **EXCEPTION:** When samples are turned over to FedEx, their courier does not have to sign the CDC Chain of Custody Form. The chain will be presumed to be maintained and evidenced by the FedEx shipping receipt. Retain this receipt for permanent records.

V. Shipping Instructions

The form should be placed in a "Ziploc" waterproof bag and placed in the shipping container on top of the cold packs to facilitate rapid location and removal by those receiving the samples.