



WISCONSIN STATE CRIME LABORATORIES

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WSCL Firearms/Toolmarks Evidence Submission Guidelines

Effective 02/01/2020

The Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories (WSCL) works to provide quality forensic results to assist agencies throughout Wisconsin. To be both as effective and efficient as possible, we have the following policies for all Firearms/Toolmarks case submissions:

PACKAGING REQUIREMENTS

Upon receipt, evidence items must be packaged to protect them from loss, cross contamination, and/or deleterious change.

- Potentially hazardous evidence must be packaged to ensure safe handling. Examples include:
 - Knives, guns, etc. must be securely packaged in boxes using zip ties to secure it to the packaging.
 - Unfired ammunition and magazines from the gun should be secured in the same package.
- Each individual piece of fired evidence must be packaged separately.
- Biological evidence should be dried and packaged in breathable material to prevent deterioration of evidence.
- Items for multiple disciplines must be clearly noted on the Transmittal. Swabs for DNA must be taken before the item is submitted to WSCL. Please contact the WSCL for guidance on areas best suited for swabbing. Only Latent Prints and Firearms/Toolmarks will work the same item.
- Suspected tools in a Toolmarks case should be packaged separately, with the critical surface protected from possible damage.
- All evidence packages must be sealed and initialed prior to submission to the WSCL.

LABORATORY REQUEST DETAILS

- I. Provide a Transmittal of Criminal Evidence form and a case synopsis of the case facts. The case synopsis should include:
 - How the evidence relates to the crime in question;
 - To whom the evidence belongs; and
 - Where and when the evidence was located/collected from.
- II. To accommodate timely results for all agencies throughout Wisconsin, WSCL works evidence in the order of submission. Rush requests impede the process; therefore, they will be accepted on a limited basis. Consult with a WSCL Supervisor or Forensic Case Manager with any rush request.

EVIDENCE ITEM ACCEPTANCE

Submission of items of evidence shall relate to **felony** investigations (WI Statute §165.75).

The WSCL requires at least one month prior to the jury trial date to allow the Firearms/Toolmarks Unit time to complete analysis before the court date. Additional time is necessary if multiple disciplines are requested.

A case scenario must be provided with the submitted evidence. Examples of evidence submitted requiring a Firearms report (for charging and/or court purposes):

- Examination of a firearm for function, serial number restoration, barrel length, or overall length
- Microscopic examination of fired evidence for positive identification and/or exclusion for investigation and charging
- Examination of items for possible distance determination (powder or pellet pattern)
- Death investigations of a questionable suicide
- Any other examinations requiring an official Firearms report

The following cases will not be accepted for Firearms/Toolmarks:

- Shootings without a named victim or suspect being charged
- Suicides without questions
- Toolmark cases without a tool for comparison
- Misdemeanor crimes.

Based on the circumstances of the case, the possibility of additional testing may be warranted. In such cases, the evidence items and testing requested should be discussed with the Forensic Case Manager of the WSCL for acceptance consideration.

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Any questions concerning the policy should be directed to:

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Thank you for your cooperation in helping the WSCL provide consistent, quality service to agencies throughout Wisconsin. We look forward to working with you.