



WISCONSIN STATE CRIME LABORATORIES

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WSCL Latent Print Evidence Submission Guidelines

Effective 10/26/2023

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 guidelines in place for all latent print submissions.

PACKAGING REQUIREMENTS

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

- Potentially hazardous evidence must be packaged to ensure safe handling. Examples include:
 - Glass, knives, guns, etc. should be packaged in boxes,
 - Syringes must be packaged in sharps containers.
- An item is expected to be comprised of one piece of evidence. If items are received packaged together, the number of items in the package will be considered to be the number of items submitted (i.e., three baggies packaged together will be considered three items).
- Submission of image media on CD/DVD or via ShareFile should be separated by case (i.e., individual case images should be submitted on separate discs with separate transmittals).
- Drugs must be separated from packaging for latent print processing and the packaging must be submitted as separate items.
- Layers of packaging from only **one** kilo/"brick" of controlled substance (i.e., layers of tape and plastic wrap from one "brick" of cocaine or one "brick" of marijuana) will be accepted per submission.
- All latent lifts should be submitted as one item and packaged together.
- Known standards should be packaged separately from latent lifts.
- Known standards should be submitted even if the individuals have a record on file.
- 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. To avoid the influence of bias, please avoid providing unnecessary details about the case.
- 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 Criminalistics Supervisor or a Forensic Case Manager with any rush request and speedy trial demands.

Latent print rush requests must pertain to:

- Significant public safety concerns regarding violent crimes against a person(s); or
- Approaching jury trial date (when suspect is in custody).

EVIDENCE ITEM ACCEPTANCE

Submission of items of evidence shall relate to felony investigations (Wis. Stat. §165.75(3)(e)). The WSCL requires at least two months to complete analysis prior to any anticipated deadline (e.g., jury trial, etc.). If testing results are needed by the court before the jury trial date, please submit the items at least two months earlier than that date and make a note on the transmittal of evidence. Additional time is necessary if a large number of items need to be tested or if multiple disciplines are requested.

The types and number of evidence items accepted are dependent on the case type.

Limits on the first laboratory submission:

CASE TYPE	NUMBER OF ITEMS ALLOWED
Homicide	10
Other Crimes Against a Person (Armed Robbery, Assault, Battery etc.)	7
Burglary, Property Crimes, Possession cases	5

For all cases, known standards, latent lifts and image media are excluded from this submission guideline and have no submission limit as long as there is a direct probative value to the scene. All latent lifts and image media should be submitted in one submission and reference which image came from which lift, if applicable.

If a probative association is obtained, no further analysis will be performed on the remaining evidence. If no probative association is established from the first submission, a second submission is allowed with the same limit on the number of items in the table on page one.

Items of evidence taken directly from a defendant in a possession case (i.e., body cavity, pockets, or waistband) may not be processed for latent prints.

Based on our experience in analysis of small items of evidence measuring less than one square inch in size (see below), we typically do not obtain any usable latent prints. These items would include but are not limited to:

- Knotted baggie corners,
- Miniature zip lock bags,
- .22 cartridge cases,
- Small syringes.

However, when there is a high degree of likelihood that the evidence submitted may provide probative results or investigative leads, these types of evidence will be examined.

Due to safety concerns, items of evidence that contain fentanyl or fentanyl analogs will not be processed for latent prints.

In addition, fired cartridge cases, heavily textured or soiled items, and improperly scaled items will not be examined. Exceptions to this guideline will be handled on a case-by-case basis if the submitting agency can demonstrate the probative value in examining these items.

Appropriate elimination standards (i.e., residents of the house, owners/drivers of the stolen vehicle, employees who handled items) should be submitted for all individuals with rightful access to locations and items where latent print evidence is collected. Latent Print Examiners may elect to not enter latent prints into AFIS/NGI without receipt of proper elimination standards.

Please notify the laboratory if analysis is no longer needed. Note that additional time is necessary if multiple disciplines are requested on an item. When items are submitted for latent prints, they may not be processed for DNA afterwards. At the time of the submission we must know on the transmittal which units need to examine the items.

It is best to confer with the forensic scientists and identify which items are best suited for testing. By eliminating items that are unlikely to yield probative results, the remaining items can be tested faster and will have greater evidentiary value.

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 a Forensic Case Manager of the WSCL for consideration of acceptance:

Kathy Mahnke
WSCL Forensic Case Manager
(608) 609-6125
mahnkeka@doj.state.wi.us

Any questions concerning the policy should be directed to:

Nicole Roehm, M.S.
Administrator
WI Division of Forensic Sciences
(414) 216-8769
Nicole.Roehm@wisdoj.gov

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