



WISCONSIN STATE CRIME LABORATORIES

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WSCL Footwear Evidence Submission Guidelines

Effective 05/01/2025

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 footwear case 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.
- Items of physical evidence should be packaged separately if possible.
- 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).
- Casts should be allowed to dry for at least 24 hours prior to packaging in cardboard or paper (not plastic).
- Electrostatic dust lifts should be submitted in a box, taped down with the impression side up.
- Due to their fragility, casts and electrostatic dust lifts should be photographed with a scale prior to packaging to preserve the impression(s). These images should be submitted to the laboratory for examination.
- Known standards should be submitted if available. If no known standards have been located, unknown footwear impressions can still be submitted for a **Footwear Investigative Lead Search**.
- Each known standard should be packaged separately in paper or cardboard. Please include the date of collection on the Transmittal of Criminal Evidence form.
- 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.

Footwear 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, submit the items at least two months earlier than that date and make a note on the Transmittal of Criminal Evidence form. Additional time is necessary if a large number of items need to be tested or if multiple disciplines are requested.**

All physical items, lifts, casts, and image media should be submitted in one submission and reference which image(s) came from which physical item, lift, or cast, if applicable.

Appropriate elimination standards (i.e., residents of the house, employees or law enforcement who walked through the crime scene) should be submitted for all individuals with rightful access to locations and items where footwear evidence is collected whenever possible.

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 footwear examination, 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 acceptance consideration:

Kathy Mahnke
WSCL Forensic Case Manager
(608) 609-6125
Kathy.Mahnke@wisdoj.gov

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.