



Forensic & Technical Services Section

Firearm and DNA Swab Submission Guidelines



Firearm Processing Protocol

- Unless otherwise directed by the submitting agency, the NJSP Crime Scene Investigations Unit (CSI) will examine firearms for any trace or biological evidence. A visual examination will determine if the surface area is suitable for the presence of latent fingerprints. Firearms will then be chemically processed and re-examined for any developed latent prints. Additionally, the firearm will be swabbed for possible DNA. NIBIN analysis will then follow these steps.
- CSI will typically collect one (1) swab from the firearm and one (1) swab from the magazine. If an area of suspected blood is observed, the stained area will be swabbed and listed as a possible blood stain.
- Cartridge casings, including fired / damaged casings, will be visually examined to determine if the surface area is suitable for the possible deposition of latent fingerprints. The cartridge casing will only be chemically processed for latent fingerprints if the surface area of the cartridge casing is deemed suitable and only on a case by case bases.

Requirements for DNA analysis:

- DNA analysis of firearm swabs requires **pre-approval** from the DNA Laboratory. The swabs collected by CSI will be returned to the submitting agency, **without DNA analysis**, if pre-approval is not received.
- When submitting swabs directly to the laboratory for DNA testing, the same protocol as that used by NJSP CSI should be followed. Only one (1) swab from firearm and one (1) swab from magazine will be accepted for analysis, unless a stain is observed. **Swabbing of cartridge cases will not be routinely performed.** Refer to the **NJSP Evidence Field Manual** for firearm swabbing recommendations or contact the laboratory.
- The following swabs are not routinely accepted: swabs from firearms taken directly from an individual, swabs from firearms handled by law enforcement officer(s) (LEO) without gloves* or swabs from casings/unfired ammunition.

*This scenario requires the submittal of a DNA reference sample from LEO at the time of submission.

DNA analysis is predicated on the eligibility requirements of the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS)

- **Firearm possession** related offenses or found firearms are **not** CODIS eligible and DNA analysis will be denied, without further information. If applicable, list all offenses that may affect CODIS eligibility (i.e., CDS distribution, eluding, assault, etc.)
- Qualified offender profiles in the CODIS database cannot be searched against DNA profiles developed from evidence (including firearms) that is not eligible for CODIS entry.
- A **direct comparison** to a DNA profile recovered from CODIS ineligible evidence can be conducted with the submission of a DNA reference sample from the suspect.

Brief History is required for all submission requests.

- Include description of event, where the firearm was recovered, and if the firearm has been identified as stolen. Immediately contact the laboratory with **NIBIN/AFIS** hit documentation once obtained.
- **If firearm is recovered from a residence:**
 - Include the firearm location. If related to CDS offenses, include proximity to CDS.
- **If firearm is recovered from a vehicle:**
 - Include the name of the registered owner/primary driver of the vehicle and firearm recovery location. If related to CDS offenses, include proximity to CDS. Indicate if the vehicle was stolen or used during the commission of another offense such as robbery, etc.