

SOP Template: Evidence Collection and Documentation Procedures

This SOP details the **evidence collection and documentation procedures** critical for maintaining the integrity and chain of custody of physical and digital evidence. It includes guidelines for proper identification, packaging, labeling, preservation, and transportation of evidence, as well as thorough and accurate documentation practices. The goal is to ensure evidence is collected systematically and documented precisely to support investigations and legal processes effectively.

1. Purpose

To outline standardized procedures for the collection, handling, documentation, and preservation of evidence to maintain its integrity and admissibility in legal proceedings.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all personnel involved in the identification, collection, storage, transportation, and documentation of physical and digital evidence.

3. Responsibilities

- **Evidence Collectors:** Ensure evidence is collected, preserved, packaged, and labeled appropriately.
- **Supervisors:** Verify adherence to procedures and provide guidance to staff.
- **Documentation Personnel:** Maintain accurate and complete records for all evidence collected.

4. Procedure

1. **Evidence Identification**
 - Photograph evidence in its original location before moving.
 - Describe evidence in detail, including size, shape, color, and condition.
 - Assign a unique identification number to each item.
2. **Collection**
 - Use appropriate PPE and collection tools to avoid contamination.
 - Collect physical and digital evidence systematically, ensuring minimal handling.
3. **Packaging and Labeling**
 - Place evidence in suitable containers (e.g., paper bags for biological, antistatic bags for digital).
 - Seal containers securely and apply tamper-evident tape if required.
 - Label each package with:
 - Case number
 - Item number
 - Date and time of collection
 - Name and signature of collector
 - Description of item
4. **Preservation**
 - Store evidence in designated, secure areas with controlled access.
 - Maintain environmental conditions suitable for evidence type (e.g., temperature, humidity).
5. **Transportation**
 - Transport evidence promptly to the laboratory or storage facility following secure chain-of-custody protocols.
 - Document transfer by recording date, time, and individuals involved.
6. **Documentation**
 - Record all activities and observations in the evidence log and chain-of-custody form.
 - Include the following for each item:
 - Unique identifier
 - Date and time collected
 - Location of collection
 - Description
 - Persons involved in collection/transfer

5. Chain of Custody

Complete a chain-of-custody form each time evidence is transferred or handled. The form must include:

- Evidence identification
- Date and time of transfer
- Names and signatures of individuals involved
- Purpose of transfer

6. Documentation Template (Sample)

Evidence ID	Date/Time Collected	Collected By	Location	Description	Packaging Type	Witness (if any)	Chain of Custody Record
EX-12345	2024-06-01 15:30	J. Doe	Room 201	USB Flash Drive, red	Antistatic bag, sealed	M. Smith	Attached

7. References

- Company Policy: Evidence Management
- Applicable Laws and Regulations
- ISO/IEC 17025: General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories

8. Revision History

Date	Version	Description	Author
2024-06-01	1.0	Initial SOP template created	Admin