

SOP: Documentation and Evidence Gathering Processes

This SOP details the **documentation and evidence gathering processes**, covering systematic collection, accurate recording, secure storage, and proper handling of evidence. It emphasizes maintaining the integrity and chain of custody of all materials, ensuring compliance with legal and organizational standards, and facilitating effective investigation and analysis. The goal is to support transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making through reliable and verifiable documentation practices.

1. Purpose

To provide a standardized method for documenting and gathering evidence, ensuring compliance with all relevant legal, regulatory, and organizational requirements.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all personnel involved in evidence collection, handling, storage, and documentation activities within the organization.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Evidence	Any physical or digital material or information that supports investigation or analysis.
Chain of Custody	The chronological documentation of evidence handling, transfer, and storage.
Documentation	The accurate and systematic recording of evidence and activities related to its handling.

4. Responsibilities

- **Investigators:** Collect and document all evidence according to this SOP.
- **Supervisors:** Ensure compliance and proper training of staff.
- **Custodians:** Oversee storage and integrity of all collected evidence.

5. Procedure

1. **Systematic Collection**
 - Identify and secure evidence at the scene or digital location.
 - Use appropriate tools and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as required.
2. **Accurate Recording**
 - Label all evidence clearly, including time, date, location, and collector's name.
 - Photograph and describe each item in detail before collection.
 - Document all actions in an official log or evidence form.
3. **Secure Storage**
 - Store evidence in secure, access-controlled environments.
 - Use tamper-evident packaging and document storage conditions.
4. **Proper Handling**
 - Minimize unnecessary handling to prevent contamination or damage.
 - Follow established protocols for all transfers of evidence.
5. **Chain of Custody Maintenance**
 - Log every instance of evidence access, transfer, or analysis.
 - Ensure that all entries are signed and dated by responsible personnel.

6. Documentation Requirements

- Evidence collection logs
- Chain of custody forms
- Photographic records

- Incident or case reports

7. Security and Confidentiality

- Restrict access to documented evidence to authorized personnel only.
- Ensure all digital and physical records are securely stored and backed up.
- Follow data protection and privacy regulations at all times.

8. Review and Compliance

- This SOP will be reviewed annually or following any significant incident.
- Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action and compromise the integrity of investigations.

9. Revision History

Date	Version	Description
2024-06-01	1.0	Initial SOP release.