

APPENDIX –Toxicology Autopsy Chain of Custody

Collection and Packaging Procedures

Collection Procedure

- A. Patient Information
1. The MEDICAL EXAMINER (or designated assistant) completes all relevant information requested on the top two-thirds of the chain of custody form.
This information includes the following:
 - a. **Printed** DONOR name, sex, and date of birth.
 - b. Medical examiner number (assigned by ME office-to appear on report).
 - c. Possible cause of death, relevant history/medications.
 - d. Test panel requested based on specimen type submitted.
 - e. Number of specimens submitted for each specimen type, including source (if available).
- B. Specimen Preparation and Collection
1. Urine
The MEDICAL EXAMINER (or designated assistant) transfers two of the gummed number labels from the test request form to the urine collection bottle. One on the container goes within the bracketed space provided for the peel-off label. A second label is placed on the lid of the container. After collection, place the tightly closed and properly labeled urine specimen in a **zip lock** bag. Close bag for shipment.
 2. Blood
The MEDICAL EXAMINER (or designated assistant) transfers one of the gummed number labels from the test request form to each blood specimen collected. Avoid covering original donor information with this label. Positioning the label perpendicular to the tube and at one end allows laboratory labels to be added later without covering this number. Place properly labeled specimens in a **bubble wrap** bag and close bag for shipment.
 3. Other
The MEDICAL EXAMINER (or designated assistant) transfers one of the gummed number labels from the test request form to each specimen collected. Avoid covering original donor information or sample type with this label. Place properly labeled specimens in a **zip lock** bag. Close bag for shipment.
- C. Packaging and Chain of Custody
1. Assemble shipping box and place bagged specimens in box. Use one box per patient or chain of custody form. Close box and secure long side of lid with a small piece of packaging tape.
 2. The MEDICAL EXAMINER (or designated assistant) completes the security seal with collector signature and date of collection. Donor initials are N/A for autopsy specimens. The ME attaches the security seal (over the packaging tape) by starting the Warde logo on the long side of the lid, over the box opening and down the side of the box. The seal ensures that the **contents of the box** are secure. **NOTE:** *Failure to properly seal the box compromises the security of the specimens.*
 3. The MEDICAL EXAMINER (or designated assistant) completes the chain of custody form, completing the SEALED BY with signature, date, and time.
 4. If transfer of SPECIMEN CUSTODY occurs after packaging, the MEDICAL EXAMINER (or designated assistant) completes the RELEASED BY section on the chain of custody form with signature, date and time. The security seal on the box is examined for integrity and SEAL INTACT YES/NO is completed. Security of specimens must be maintained from collection to receipt at the laboratory.
 5. Place the sealed box and completed chain of custody form in a biohazard bag (one bag per patient/chain of custody form) close bag, and send to laboratory.
 6. Contact laboratory for chain of custody and/or packaging supplies.