Procedure for Reporting Results

1.0 Purpose – To define the process for preparing and issuing Laboratory Reports.

2.0 Scope – This procedure applies to all employees who issue Laboratory Reports.

3.0 Definitions

- **Amended Report** – A Laboratory Report which has been revised, corrected, or remediated after the original Laboratory Report has been issued.
- **Original Report** – The Laboratory Report resulting from the initial forensic analysis conducted on evidence.

4.0 Procedure

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The Laboratory Report is the official document used to report results of analysis of evidence and shall include the following information, as applicable:

- Title.
- Identification of the State Crime Laboratory location performing the laboratory activities.
- Unique identification of the report, identification on each page, and a clear indication of the end of the report.
- Name and address of the submitting agency.
- Test methods used.
- Type of analysis requested.
- Description of the items analyzed.
- Date of receipt of the items analyzed as well as the date of analysis.
- Date of issue of the report.
- Sampling plan used.
- Test results, including the unit of measurement, if applicable.
- Name and signature of the individual authorized to report the results.
- Statement that the results relate only to the items analyzed, when relevant.
- Deviations from, additions to, or exclusions from the test method.
- Clear identification when results are from external provider, where applicable.

4.1.2 Forensic Scientists shall ensure that the results of analysis are reported accurately, clearly, unambiguously, and objectively in accordance with the analysis methods used. The significance of an association shall be clearly communicated and qualified in the Laboratory Report. When a conclusion cannot be reached, the reason shall be stated in case documentation.

4.1.3 Forensic Advantage (FA) shall be used to generate all Laboratory Reports.

4.1.4 The Laboratory Report shall be titled as such.

4.1.5 The Laboratory Report shall identify the author of the Report.

4.1.6 The Laboratory Report shall be identified by the unique Laboratory number assigned to the evidence for which it contains results.

4.1.7 As provided by statute, the format of DWI case reports shall be regulated by the NC Department of Health and Human Services.

4.2 Administrative Information

4.2.1 Each Laboratory Report shall reflect the date generated and the Laboratory case number. When multiple original Laboratory Reports are issued for the same case and exam type by the same Forensic Scientist, the subsequent Report number shall be included in the Report header, as appropriate (e.g., REPORT #2, etc.).

4.2.2 The Laboratory Report shall contain the name and address of the submitting agency. Additional information supplied by the submitting agency shall be included as appropriate (county, type of case, SBI file number, agency file number, date of offense, and subject).

4.2.3 Each page of the Laboratory Report shall be numbered beginning with page 2.

4.2.4 Cross referenced case numbers shall appear on the first page of the report.

4.2.5 Authorized recipients of Reports (other than the submitting officer) shall be listed on the Report. In addition, the following statement shall be included: "This Report contains the opinions/interpretations of the examiner(s) who issued the Report."

4.2.6 Each Laboratory Report shall contain the following statement:

I, (name), Attorney General of the State of North Carolina, hereby certify that the form identified as: North Carolina State Crime Laboratory, Department of Justice, Laboratory Report is a form approved by me for the purpose stated in G.S. 90-95(g) and G.S. 8-58.20 and approved by me in compliance with the said statutes..

4.2.7 The Laboratory is responsible for all information provided in the report except when the information is provided by the customer.

4.3 Listing and Description of Evidence

4.3.1 The Laboratory Report shall include a description of the evidence received and/or analyzed by the Forensic Scientist or Laboratory employee and any items sub-divided (except sub-items created during Toxicology examinations) during analysis. If additional pieces of evidence requiring examination, other than those described on the submission form, are noted upon opening the evidence packaging, the analyst shall describe in the report additional evidence that was analyzed.

4.3.2 The Laboratory Report shall reflect the date the evidence was submitted and the method by which submitted.

4.3.3 When two or more Forensic Scientists analyze evidence from a submission, each Forensic Scientist shall list only those items analyzed, used for comparison, or received into his/her custody.

4.4 Type of Analysis - The Laboratory Report shall identify the type of analysis performed.

4.5 Results and Conclusions of Analysis

4.5.1 The test method(s) used to generate the results and conclusions shall be included. In addition, any authorized deviation to the test method must be included.

4.5.2 The results, opinions, interpretations and /or conclusions for all items examined shall be stated in the Laboratory Report.

4.5.3 If any items are not examined, the Forensic Scientist or Laboratory employee shall state that they were not examined in the Laboratory Report. This requirement does not apply to outer packaging when the contents are completely subdivided into sub-items for examination (e.g., sexual assault evidence collection kits).

4.5.4 The wording of the results and conclusions shall be consistent with that approved by the Forensic Scientist Manager or Section Supervisor.

4.5.5 The results shall include initial database entry of evidence items.

4.5.6 The following additional information shall be included in reports when necessary for the interpretation of the analysis results:

- Information on test conditions, such as environmental conditions.
- A statement of conformance or non-conformance with requirements and/or specifications.
- A statement of the estimated uncertainty of measurement, when applicable.
- Opinions and interpretations.
- Additional information that may be required by submitters.

4.5.7 The significance of an association shall be communicated clearly and qualified properly in the Laboratory Report or documented in the analysis Case Record.

4.5.8 Negative Results or Eliminations - All eliminations shall be communicated clearly in the Laboratory Report.

4.5.9 Inconclusive Results - When a definitive conclusion cannot be reached, the reason shall be stated clearly in the Laboratory Report.

4.5.10 All opinions and interpretations shall be clearly marked as such in the Laboratory Report. The basis for any opinions and/or interpretations shall be documented in the analysis Case Record.

4.5.11 Testing Results Obtained from Subcontractors - Subcontractors shall report their results to the Laboratory either in writing or electronically. Data or test results from subcontractors shall be clearly identified as such in a Laboratory Report and included after

approval from the subcontractor is obtained. The accreditation symbol of the subcontractor may not be used on the Laboratory Report unless the subcontractor is accredited by ANAB.

4.5.12 A quantitative numerical measurement result for barrel length, overall firearm length, drug weight (net only), alcohol/acetone quantitation, and reported drug quantitation shall be included in the Laboratory Report and the uncertainty of measurement (when established) shall be reported clearly.

4.5.12.1 All quantitative results shall be reported to include the measured value, y, along with the associated expanded uncertainty, U, and the coverage probability.

4.5.12.2 The quantitative results shall be reported in the format of y +/- U with the units of y and U being consistent.

4.5.12.3 If the final quantitative result will be rounded, the expanded measurement uncertainty value may be rounded to at most two significant figures unless there is a documented rationale for reporting additional significant figures. The rounded expanded uncertainty must be reported to the same level of significance as the measurement result.

4.5.13 Sampling Results - The following supporting information regarding sampling shall be included in the Case Record (Full) packet and noted in the Laboratory Report, where necessary for the interpretation of the test result:

- Identification of any item sampled.
- Date of sampling.
- Reference to the sampling plan and procedures used including confidence levels and corresponding inferences.
- Location of sampling, including any diagrams, sketches or photographs.
- Details of any environmental conditions during sampling that may affect the interpretation of the test.
- Any standard or other specification for the sampling method or procedure, and deviations, additions to or exclusions from the specification concerned.
- Information required to evaluate measurement uncertainty for subsequent testing or calibration.
- Where the Laboratory has not been responsible for the sampling stage, it shall be stated in the report that the results apply to the sample as received.

4.6 Disposition - The disposition of each item received for analysis shall be described. Instructions for special evidence handling and storage may be included.

4.7 Authorization, Approval, Issuance, and Release

4.7.1 The individual whose signature appears on the report is the one authorizing that report. The presence of the signature documents the review of all information and data contained within the report and associated case record by the authorizer.

4.7.2 Once the Laboratory Report and case file have undergone the appropriate reviews, the Laboratory Report may be released. The signature of the Forensic Scientist or Laboratory employee shall be attached to the Laboratory Report. Laboratory Reports shall be released within 20 business days after all reviews have been completed. The Forensic Scientist Manager or Section Supervisor may grant a time extension for the release of reports for extenuating circumstances.

4.7.3 Official Laboratory Reports shall be issued to the submitting officer, or published electronically to the officer, District Attorneys or U.S. Attorney, and other authorized officials.

4.7.3.1 If the U.S. Attorney's Office has adopted the case or a special prosecutor has been appointed to the matter, the appointing documents or the federal indictment shall be requested. Once the Lab has received notification of the change in the prosecuting agency, the notification shall be imported into the case file and the District Attorney for the county of submission shall be removed from the electronic publication list.

4.7.4 A duplicate copy of the Laboratory Report may be issued with authorization from the submitting agency, District Attorney and/or U.S. Attorney. Written documentation of the authorization shall be placed into each Case Record. If written authorization is not available, an entry shall be made in the communication log.

4.8 **Stop Work Orders –** If the Laboratory receives notification that the evidence no longer needs testing, the Laboratory shall report to the customer that the testing has been terminated as directed in the Procedure for Stop Work Orders.

4.9 Amended Reports

4.9.1 Any amendments to analytical findings after issuance of the Laboratory Report shall be made in the form of an additional document. Amendments shall meet all reporting criteria and be flagged as an Amended Report.

4.9.2 The words '**Amended Report**' in bold type shall appear automatically through the report-writing function in FA. A statement describing the amendment shall be noted by the Forensic Scientist or Laboratory employee after the 'Disposition of Evidence' section. This statement shall be written using complete sentences and shall detail the change(s).

4.9.3 If a report needs to be amended and the analyst is no longer employed by the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory, the Forensic Scientist Manager (FSM) or Section Supervisor shall prepare a memo detailing the change(s). The memo shall be attached to the original report, scanned into the case record object repository, and mailed to the submitting agency. The case record shall be republished.

4.9.4 Administrative and technical reviews shall be conducted prior to issuing an amended Report in FA.

4.10 **Notarized Copies -** Cases that may be charged as impaired driving shall be written on revocation report forms which require notarization.

4.11 Technical Field Assistance Reports - Technical Field Assistance (TFA) Reports shall follow the procedures found in **4.1**, **4.2** and **4.7**. The following categories shall be included:

- Scene examined.
- Date.
- Time.
- Procedure.

Additionally**,** activities shall be documented.

4.12 CODIS Hit Notification Report - Reports shall follow the procedures found in **4.1**, **4.2** and **4.7**. The body of the report shall adhere to the Forensic Biology Section Procedure for CODIS.

4.13 SAFIS Hit and Reverse SAFIS Hit Notification Reports – Reports shall be issued in accordance with the Latent Evidence Procedure for Friction Ridge Analysis and Comparison.

4.14 Reporting on Testing of Individual Characteristic Database Samples – Section procedures shall include the process for reporting on the testing of Individual Characteristic Database samples.

5.0 Records

- Laboratory Reports
- Communication logs
- Amended Reports

6.0 Attachments – N/A

Revision History		
Effective Date	Version Number	Reason
06/01/2021	17	4.1.1 – updated requirements 4.2.7 – added requirement for responsibility of reported information 4.5.2 – clarified wording 4.5.3 – exempted outer packaging 4.5.13 – added additional requirements for sampling 4.7.1 –added authorizer review documentation 4.7.3 – updated for Federal cases