
Administrative Policy and Procedures

- 1.0 Purpose** - To establish the policy and procedure system for the Digital Evidence Section (Section) within the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory (Laboratory).
- 2.0 Scope** - These administrative policies and procedures shall apply to all personnel of the Digital Evidence Section.
- 3.0 Objectives**
 - 3.1** Ensure uniformity and accountability in Section operations.
 - 3.2** Monitor personnel, operations and performance to ensure compliance with Department of Justice and Laboratory Policy and Procedures.
 - 3.3** Provide administrative and operational guidelines to personnel assigned to the Section.
 - 3.4** Ensure that personnel performing case examination and analysis have the required level of training and education.
 - 3.5** Ensure personnel maintain adequate skillsets through continuing education and the administration of proficiency testing.
 - 3.6** Provide a safe workplace and ensure all operations are conducted in a safe manner.
- 4.0 Organization Overview**
 - 4.1** The primary purpose of the Section is to perform examinations and analyses of digital devices, digital storage media, and data that may be stored in both.
 - 4.2** The organizational chart for the Section reflects the chain of command and can be located on the Laboratory internal network.
 - 4.3 Roles and Responsibilities**
 - 4.3.1 Forensic Scientist Manager** – The Forensic Scientist Manager shall assume responsibility for all operations within the Section.
 - 4.3.2 Special Duty Assignments** - To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Section, Forensic Scientists or the Section Office Assistant may be assigned Special Duties in addition to their regular duties. Any Special Duties not specifically listed here shall be the responsibility of the Forensic Scientist Manager or designee.
 - 4.3.2.1 Technical Leader** – In addition to the duties listed in the Quality Manual, the Technical leader shall:
 - 4.3.2.1.1** Oversee technical operations of the discipline for which they are the technical leader.
 - 4.3.2.1.2** Ensure technical procedures are updated as needed.

- 4.3.2.1.3 Ensure Section instruments and software receive proper validation, verification, maintenance, and repair.
- 4.3.2.1.4 Ensure that quality control procedures are followed, and proper records are maintained.
- 4.3.2.1.5 Oversee the work of other Forensic Scientists assigned to the Section and ensure that correct technical procedures and documentation procedures are being followed.
- 4.3.2.1.6 Authorize equipment use.
- 4.3.2.1.7 Authorize deviations from casework when required.
- 4.3.2.1.8 Suspend Section casework or operations if technical or quality problems arise.
- 4.3.2.2 **Document Control Custodian** - Comply with duties and responsibilities as outlined in the *Procedure for Document Control and Management*.
- 4.3.2.3 **Training Program Coordinator**
 - 4.3.2.3.1 Administer training, testing, and practical exams in the Section training program.
 - 4.3.2.3.2 Document a Forensic Scientist Trainee's progress.
 - 4.3.2.3.3 Update and modify training programs to ensure they remain current.
 - 4.3.2.3.4 Coordinate training assignments with the Forensic Scientists in the Section.
- 4.3.2.4 **Equipment Inventory Coordinator**
 - 4.3.2.4.1 Maintain current inventory of all equipment assigned to the Section.
 - 4.3.2.4.2 Coordinate with Logistics Section to confirm all records of equipment transfer.
- 4.3.2.5 **Forensic Advantage (FA) Administrator**
 - 4.3.2.5.1 Update and manage the Section FA worksheets and communicate any changes to the Section.
 - 4.3.2.5.2 Assist Section personnel with the FA system including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Case/case record detail information changes.

- Chain of custody and header information corrections.
- Training on the use and application of the worksheet and the core system.

4.3.2.6 Safety Officer

- 4.3.2.6.1** Oversee health and safety procedures for the Section as outlined in the *North Carolina Department of Justice Safety & Health Policy Manual* and the *North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Safety Manual*.
- 4.3.2.6.2** Conduct safety and health inspections in the Section.
- 4.3.2.6.3** Conduct safety training for new employees in the Section.
- 4.3.2.6.4** Oversee accident investigations and reporting for Section personnel.

5.0 Personnel

5.1 Qualifications and Training of Personnel

- 5.1.1** All employees involved in the analysis and interpretation of evidence submitted to the Section shall successfully complete the appropriate training program.
- 5.1.2** Employees may be hired who are already trained in their respective discipline. The Forensic Scientist Manager shall obtain a copy of all available training records for the new employee. The Forensic Scientist Manager, in consultation with the Training Coordinator, shall assess the competency of an employee by reviewing training records and administering a written test, a practical test (mock case), and moot court/round table. A training checklist shall be completed for the new employee. Successful completion will result in a release to perform independent casework.

5.2 Education, Training, and Continuing Education

- 5.2.1** General requirements are detailed in the job specifications for each position. The Statement of Qualifications contains details specific to each employee.
- 5.2.2** Forensic Scientists shall receive continuing education in each discipline. The amount of continuing education received will be dependent upon the continuing education requirements for the certification(s) the Forensic Scientist holds. The Forensic Scientist shall meet the certification requirements for continuing education so that certification(s) is/are maintained.
- 5.2.3** Records of continuing education shall be maintained in each Forensic Scientist's training record.

5.3 Proficiency Testing - The Section shall follow the procedure for proficiency testing as described in the *Procedure for Ensuring the Quality of Test Results*.

5.4 Records - The Forensic Scientist Manager or designee shall maintain training files.

5.5 Mental Health – As part of the insuring the psychological well-being of Forensic Scientists assigned to the Section, an annual stress evaluation with a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist shall be mandatory. The Laboratory will retain the psychologist or psychiatrist and cover costs associated with the evaluation.

5.5.1 Forensic Scientists will be afforded one follow-up session annually, when requested. Any subsequent sessions will require the approval of the Assistant Director of Administrative Services and the DOJ Human Resources Section.

5.5.2 Spouses of Forensic Scientists will be permitted one individual visit annually, when requested. The visit will be with the licensed psychologist or psychiatrist retained by the Laboratory. The Laboratory will cover costs associated with the visit. Any additional visits requested by the spouse shall be approved by the Assistant Director of Administrative Services and the DOJ Human Resources Section.

5.5.3 When a critical event occurs that affects the entire Section, a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing may be requested by the Forensic Scientist Manager. The debriefing will be facilitated by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist retained by the Laboratory and requires the approval of the Assistant Director of Administrative Services.

6.0 Quality Assurance - The Section shall adhere to the *North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Quality Manual* and all supporting policies and procedures.

7.0 Safety - The Section shall adhere to the *North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Safety Manual* and the *North Carolina Department of Justice Safety & Health Policy Manual*.

8.0 References

Procedure for Document Control and Management
Procedure for Ensuring the Quality of Test Results
Procedure for Laboratory Security
North Carolina Department of Justice Safety & Health Policy Manual
North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Quality Manual
North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Safety Manual

Revision History		
Effective Date	Version Number	Reason
06/13/2018	1	Original Document
07/02/2019	2	5.4 – removed personnel file Added Subsection 5.5 Mental Health