



Physical Evidence Bulletin

Controlled Substances

Purpose

The physical evidence bulletin is a guideline intended for law enforcement agencies to follow in order to submit evidence to BFS Laboratories. Physical Evidence bulletins are not intended to be used in lieu of training in the collection of evidence.

Analysis and results that may be obtained

The Bureau of Forensic Services (BFS) provides analytical support to law enforcement agencies through the identification of seized drugs.

The resulting report will include the identification of any controlled substances detected. The reports will usually state the net weight(s), volume(s), or counts (where appropriate) of the items analyzed.

The resulting report may also include the identification of any substances of interest.

Minimum evidence required

Suspected drug evidence may be delivered to the laboratory in person or by common courier.

The minimum weight submission for analysis is 0.01 grams (net) for solid samples. The minimum volume submission for liquid analysis is 0.1 milliliters.

As a guide for submissions, the following is the Bureau's sample testing approach:

- for simple possession cases - one item will be analyzed for each subject
 - for sales - three items will be analyzed for each subject
 - Large submission items (above 1 kg) – one item will be analyzed initially. If additional analysis is needed later on, please contact the laboratory.
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Collection, marking, and packaging

Each individual evidence item needs to be packaged in a tape sealed and initialed container within the Controlled Substances Evidence Envelope (BFS-2). The BFS-2 envelope must be tape sealed and initialed prior to submission.

The information on the BFS-2 envelope must include the following (at a minimum):

- submitting agency and case number
- subjects name
- charge(s) and date of offense
- evidence number, description, and source (especially with multiple subjects)
- chain of custody

Large Submissions:

- The submission of sub-samples is preferred, but if a large submission cannot be avoided, the following guidelines apply:
 - the submission may be in tape sealed and initialed containers (paper bags, buckets, large plastic heat-sealable bags, or boxes) with the BFS-2 envelope properly filled in and attached to the container
 - contact the BFS laboratory prior to submission drop-off or pick-up
- Suspected Fentanyl powder: Gross weights greater than 1 kilogram that include a request for a net weight will be referred to the BFS Fresno Laboratory. Submitting agencies must contact the BFS Fresno Laboratory to arrange drop-off and pick-up of the evidence. BFS personnel are not responsible to arrange for delivery of the evidence to the BFS Fresno Laboratory.

To ensure the safety of BFS staff, all suspected fentanyl evidence should be labeled “suspected fentanyl” on the outer package. To ensure containment, place the package in a plastic chemical resistant heat-sealed pouch.

All evidence must be securely sealed and material cannot be leaking out of its packaging upon submission to the laboratory. Any packaging that is leaking or inappropriately packaged may be returned to your agency unexamined.

CAUTIONS

- All known potential biohazards must be declared.
 - Evidence suspected to contain PCP or liquid LSD must be secured in a thick plastic chemical resistant heat sealed pouch.
 - Wet items must be properly sealed in either a thick plastic chemical resistant heat sealed pouch or an appropriate container.
 - Fresh plant material should be dried and then submitted in paper bags or paper envelopes.
 - Any samples suspected to be directly associated with a clandestine laboratory operation must be properly packaged in a thick plastic chemical resistant heat sealed pouch and sealed within an approved plastic bucket. There needs to be an absorbent material within the bucket. A BFS-1 may also be requested with this submission.
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The lab does not accept or process

Sharp or pointed objects such as syringes with needles and razor blades are not accepted. Syringes need to be evacuated into an appropriate vial and only the vial submitted.

Cannabis infraction and misdemeanor cases, residues (see minimum evidence required), paraphernalia, and found property are not routinely analyzed. A formal request from the District Attorney’s Office may be required for these items to be analyzed.

For further information and additional resources

Please contact your regional BFS laboratory with any further questions that you may have. **For a list of regional laboratories please go to:**
<https://oag.ca.gov/bfs/services>

To locate the most current Physical Evidence Bulletins please go to :
<https://oag.ca.gov/bfs/peb>