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Controlled Substance Syringe Contents Reporting Policy

The BCA Forensic Science Services Drug Chemistry Section is issuing a revised procedure for the reporting of volumes and weights for submitted items of evidence that were removed from syringes.

The new procedure is as follows:

- Volumes and/or weights less than 3 milliliters and/or 3 grams will not be reported.

If you believe that the circumstances of your case merit an exception to this procedure, please contact the Drug Chemistry Section. Examples of such exceptions might include: tampering with legitimate pharmaceutical syringes, large volume syringes, or sales of syringes containing controlled substances. In these instances, with prior approval, we will issue a report with the volume and/or weight of the syringe contents. In all other cases, we will attempt to identify the substance(s) found in the syringe contents, and will report that the volume and/or weight of the contents is "less than 3 milliliters and/or 3 grams."

As a reminder, the current laboratory submission requirements for syringe contents are:

- The evidence has a visible amount of substance in the syringe.
- One item per suspect per case may be submitted.
- The evidence must be clearly marked with a biohazard sticker on the outer package.
- Syringes (with or without needles) will not be accepted. The liquid contents of the syringe should be expressed into a clean vial for submission. Swabs of the interior of syringes will not be accepted. Please ensure that the evidence is clearly identified as "syringe contents"
- The case information includes a written statement from the prosecuting attorney indicating that the suspect has pled not guilty or rejected a plea agreement and a trial has been scheduled. The date of the trial must be included.
- The evidence must be received by the laboratory at least 10 business days prior to the trial date.

Best practices dictate that the contents of the syringe should be expressed into a small, clean vial for submission. Care must be used when attempting to presumptively test the contents for charging purposes. A positive presumptive test may be required by your county attorney to charge the individual.

In general, syringes should not be rinsed in order to remove the contents. However, if there is absolutely no other viable method for removing the contents, the syringe may be rinsed, but this information **must be communicated when submitting the evidence to the BCA**. This should be done only as a last resort and when the syringe is the only evidence (or critical evidence) in the case. Please keep in mind the following considerations if you choose to rinse a syringe:

- A source of sterile water or saline is needed.
- You may have to explain your procedure in court.
- You may be required to document the condition of the contents of the syringe before and after rinsing.
- Rinsing the syringe may dilute the amount of any controlled substance present to a level where it cannot be conclusively identified.

