

Toxicology

Policy:

Toxicology specimens must be taken on all case types when requested to conduct an examination of the body.

This includes cases in which an external examination is done at the scene, the body is transported to the morgue for further examination, or information later reveals a concern for toxicology involvement.

Cases requiring a complete toxicological analysis include:

- Homicides
- Child and elder abuse
- Suspected drug-related death
- Infant and child deaths
- Deaths in custody
- Motor vehicle/traffic-related deaths
- Drownings
- Suspected suicides
- Fire Deaths
- Persons with natural disease in which ethanol and/or drugs of abuse may have contributed to the death.
- Unattended deaths of those under the age of 70

Toxicology specimens include blood and vitreous humor. On certain cases urine, stomach contents, bile, spleen, or liver may be submitted for toxicological analysis.

Sample collection:

The assigned investigator will obtain (2) grey top tubes of blood (peripheral preferred) as well as (1) red top tube of urine upon return to the morgue, unless otherwise directed by the on-call supervisor.

- If the examination is done at the scene, the investigator will also collect (2) vials of vitreous humor from the eyes.

The assigned investigator will perform a preliminary drug screen using the collected urine and the provided T-cups. The assigned investigator will record the results (photograph and documentation in *pathology/autopsy section*).

To perform a T-cup Urinalysis:

1. Obtain urine (at minimum 7 mL)
2. Pour 10mL of urine into the T-cup
3. Wait 2-4 minutes before documenting results (photograph)
4. All positives need to be reported in MDI log in the *pathology/autopsy section* as well as on the toxicology request form.
5. Retain remaining urine with additional samples.
6. Discard T-cup in biohazard trash bin.

Toxicology Cont.

The assigned investigator will make sure all toxicology samples are labeled with the case number, name of decedent, date of birth, date collected, and sample type.

The assigned investigator will heat seal each specimen individually to prevent leakage or contamination.

The assigned investigator will place (1) grey top tube of blood aside to later be sent to the toxicology lab for analysis. This will be placed in a designated bin in the freezer.

The remaining specimens will be placed in a clear biohazard bag with the identifying labels and put into the freezer. The bag should be placed in sequential order by case number.

The assigned investigator will add the case number, specimens and their quantities to the toxicology logbook in the morgue along with date and initials.

The investigator will document in MDI log (*pathology/autopsy section*) the specimens collected and how many were collected. If there are any additional samples needed or if samples could not be obtained, this needs to be noted in the *pathology/autopsy section* as well as relayed to the on-call supervisor.

Toxicology Lab

The Skagit County Coroner's Office submits samples for toxicological testing to the Washington State Toxicology Lab. The Washington State Toxicology Lab will send specimens with toxicology concerns to NMS.

If the case requires toxicology results to be expedited due to suspicion of controlled substance homicide, then the Coroner's Office will submit the samples directly to NMS for testing.

If additional lab testing is needed, the Coroner's Office will send samples to the University of Washington or another lab that can handle those specific tests.