

Charleston County Coroner's Office Policy #40

Title: Sample Release For DNA Comparison Paternity Testing

Page: 1 of 2

Effective Date: 01/19/2018

Reviewed: 9/8/21

Updated: 1/29/2024

Authorized By: Bobbi Jo O'Neal, Coroner

40.1 POLICY

The Charleston County Coroner's Office will endeavor to assist families in need of a DNA sample of their loved one for paternity testing where a sample is available. In order to facilitate this assistance in a consistent and timely manner, the following procedures should be followed.

40.2 PROCEDURE

1. Upon receipt of an inquiry as to the availability of a DNA sample for paternity testing, the staff member receiving the request may provide the requestor with the "Application For Release of DNA Sample for Paternity Testing" form. This may be done in person, via email, or US mail service. This is usually accomplished for individuals who are not the next-of-kin who are making the request.
2. Upon receipt of a completed and signed application, the staff member receiving the application shall check the application for completeness and initial the bottom of the form. Only fully completed applications will be accepted. The application should be forwarded to the Evidence Technician for processing. In the extended absence of the Evidence Technician, the Supervisor of Forensic Services may delegate the request to a staff member within the Forensic Services Division.

Sample Release For DNA Comparison Paternity Testing

3. The processing procedures for sample release requests are as follows:
 - a) Based upon the date of death, search the appropriate location for the presence of a sample for decedents who have undergone autopsy. Decedents with a date of death on or before 12/31/2012 have samples held at the MUSC Pathology Department. Decedents with a date of death from 01/01/2013 to the present time, have samples held in the Coroner's Office evidence room. Samples held at MUSC require the Next of Kin to contact MUSC Pathology and pay a \$50 processing fee.
 - b) Regardless of where the sample is stored, provide the applicant and/or the NOK with a "Permission To Release Sample" form and the instruction sheet.
 - c) In the event of a court order in hand, skip step #2 above.
 - d) Upon receipt of the collection kit and chain of custody paperwork from the designated laboratory, fulfill the request for a sample.
 - e) Only a portion of the sample(s) available shall be sent to the designated laboratory. Create an entry in the evidence management system (Tracker) showing the split of the original sample and mark that sample disposed of for testing. Upload or print chain of custody as necessary and ensure the original file (paper or cloud-based) on the decedent is updated.
 - f) Drop off the packaged sample at the appropriate shipping carrier.
 - g) Should a subsequent application for a sample release be received for a decedent whose sample has already been released to a lab, the original Next of Kin or Personal Representative who signed the release agreement shall be contacted and advised. The testing laboratory shall also be contacted regarding previously recorded profiles and the procedures for the release of said profile or use of any remnant sample the lab may have. Generally, this involves the NOK/PR giving the lab permission to release the profile. Should an agreement fail to be reached, the subsequent requestor may have to seek a court order for a profile release or other measures that the Coroner may direct.