

## SUSPECT EVIDENCE COLLECTION GUIDELINES SEXUAL ASSAULT HARBORVIEW CENTER FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT AND TRAUMATIC STRESS

**The following guidelines are for evidence collection from male suspects in sexual assault cases**

<b>TIME FRAMES</b>	<p><b>WITHIN 72 HOURS OF ALLEGED ASSAULT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Forensic evidence may be collected for both reference specimens and for victim trace evidence or DNA on the suspect</li> </ul> <p><b>AFTER 72 HOURS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence collection is for reference specimens only These items are marked with asterisk*</li> </ul>
<b>WARRANTS AND CONSENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A warrant or signed consent is necessary before collecting evidence from the suspect's body</li> <li>▪ A warrant, although it takes more time to obtain, is a more definite method than consent, as the suspect may withdraw or argue the validity of the consent</li> </ul>
<b>WHO DOES THE EXAM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The exam and evidence collection may be performed by a trained detective, medical provider (nurse, doctor, or physician assistant), or technician</li> <li>▪ The evidence collection should not be done on the same day by the same examiner who does the exam and evidence collection for the victim. This is to minimize risk of cross contamination of evidence.</li> <li>▪ A hospital that routinely sees sexual assault victims may or may not be able to provide exams for suspects. Such arrangement must be made in advance, especially regarding billing and security</li> </ul>
<b>EQUIPMENT NEEDED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A standard evidence collection kit can be used and is typically the simplest way to collect.</li> <li>▪ Alternatively supplies needed would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 20 packages (2 each) of sterile cotton swabs</li> <li>○ Distilled or sterile water or saline</li> <li>○ 2 plastic combs</li> <li>○ 10 clean sheets of paper</li> <li>○ 15 envelopes</li> <li>○ Brown paper bags for clothing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>TRACE EVIDENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Place large paper sheet or bed sheet on floor</li> <li>▪ Place 2<sup>nd</sup> paper sheet (approx 24" x 24") on top of first sheet</li> <li>▪ Suspect undresses while standing on clean large paper sheet</li> <li>▪ Fold top sheet inwards to retain debris</li> <li>▪ Place in clean envelope</li> </ul>
<b>CLOTHING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collect all clothing worn at the time of apprehension</li> <li>▪ Underpants should be collected separately and placed in a small bag</li> <li>▪ Each additional article of clothing should be packaged in a separate bag, and then all the bags should be placed in one larger bag and sealed</li> </ul>
<b>PUBIC HAIR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comb hair over a clean sheet of paper. This is to collect any foreign hairs</li> <li>▪ After combing, place comb in middle of sheet, fold sheet carefully to package comb and any foreign hairs, and place in envelope.</li> <li>▪ Fold in a clean paper sheet and place in envelope</li> </ul>

<b>FINGER AND HAND SWABS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use 1 swab for each hand, lightly moisten with tap or distilled water</li> <li>▪ Swab all fingers, front and back, fingertips, palms, web spaces with one swab</li> <li>▪ Repeat with another swab for other hand</li> </ul>
<b>SKIN SWABS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Swab areas which may be bite marks or fingernail marks (to obtain possible victim DNA)</li> <li>▪ Moisten one swab with one drop sterile or distilled water</li> <li>▪ Swab each area with one moist swab – repeat with one dry swab</li> <li>▪ Repeat for each scratched area</li> </ul>
<b>PENILE SWABS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use 1 swab slightly moistened with sterile or distilled water, and repeat with 1 dry swab for each area</li> <li>▪ Swab the following areas</li> <li>▪ Penile shaft (2 swabs)</li> <li>▪ Glans penis, under foreskin (2 swabs)</li> </ul>
<b>DRYING SWABS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Swabs may be dried in a locked room, cabinet or drying box</li> <li>▪ Air dry swabs for 1 hour before packaging. Do not use heat to dry swabs</li> <li>▪ Maintain chain of custody while drying</li> <li>▪ If drying box is used, place swabs from only one patient at a time in drying box. If necessary, lock specimens from 2nd patient in cupboard until drying box is empty.</li> <li>▪ Clean drying box with hospital approved disinfectant between each use</li> </ul>
<b>LABELING AND PACKAGING SWABS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Affix label to cardboard box or envelope in which dried swabs are packaged</li> <li>▪ Place 2 swabs from same site in one envelope</li> <li>▪ Seal envelopes using tape. Never lick envelope to seal</li> <li>▪ Write on envelope time and date collected, contents</li> <li>▪ Sign over seal</li> </ul>
<b>REFERENCE SAMPLES*</b>	<p><b>Washinton State Crime Lab no longer uses hair samples for comparisons. It is not necessary to collect samples of head, facial or pubic hair from suspects</b></p> <p><b>ORAL (BUCCAL) SWABS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ With 1 sterile cotton swab, rub on inside of cheek and on gums, especially at base of teeth. Use another swabs to repeat on opposite side. Package in swab boxes and mark as oral swabs</li> <li>▪ This is for reference DNA</li> <li>▪ In cases of male on male assault, it would be ideal to also collect a reference blood sample from the suspect, leaving the oral swab as potential sample for victim DNA</li> </ul>