

Drug Chemistry Evidence Submission Guidelines

Each case submitted to the laboratory will be evaluated for analyses according to the priority scheme below. Analyses will stop if any of the following criteria are met:

1. Number of items analyzed achieved sufficient weight to meet a trafficking charge.
2. Items analyzed revealed the components required to meet a manufacturing charge.
3. Number of items analyzed achieved sufficient weight to meet an intent to distribute charge.
4. At least one item of non-trafficking weight marihuana or a controlled substance is identified.
See Note.
5. A visually consistent population ($N > 9$) in which hypergeometric sampling plan has not identified a controlled substance.

Note: Using an objective assessment, select the item that best represents a danger to the public, whether that be by schedule or quantity.

Only items requiring analysis to meet a prosecutorial charge will be accepted by the laboratory.

Cases suspected to contain only non-controlled prescriptions will not be accepted. (ex. Viagra, promethazine, etc.)

Residues and syringes will only be accepted if they are the only item in the case. These must be approved by the Laboratory Director, Drug Chemistry Section Chief, or Drug Chemistry Discipline Chief.

Items without a suspect name listed will not be accepted.

Items will not be accepted if the suspect associated with the evidence is deceased. With Laboratory Director, Drug Chemistry Section Chief, or Drug Chemistry Discipline Chief approval, items will be accepted on decedent cases if a supplier is being prosecuted. This case shall be submitted separately from the decedent case with a .1 added to the agency case number at submission.

To reduce case processing times, each item of evidence must be individually packaged and labeled with a brief description of evidence, including suspected analyte and count of contents. (ex. 2 bags of suspected cocaine, 34 suspected hydrocodone tablets, etc.).

Items of drug evidence that are suspected to be the same analyte in one agency case, shall be submitted under one ADFS case number. (ex. Multiple bags of suspected cocaine powder and bags of suspected compressed cocaine should be submitted in the same case; suspected hydrocodone tablets with different imprints should be submitted in the same case; Clandestine tablets with different imprints should be submitted in the same case). The only exception to this requirement is if a case has multiple suspects, and a specific item can be attributed to one specific suspect. In this instance, items should be submitted separately. (ex. If two items of suspected cocaine are attributed separately to Suspect A and Suspect B, the evidence should be submitted as separate agency cases, with a .1 and .2 added to the agency case number. If the suspected cocaine is attributed collectively to multiple suspects and cannot be distinguished by suspect, all applicable suspects should be listed on the case, and the suspected cocaine should be submitted as a single case)

Each suspected analyte requiring analysis to meet a prosecutorial charge will be submitted as a separate ADFS cases. (ex. Prosecutorial charges would support a marihuana and a controlled substance. These suspected analytes should be packaged separately and submitted as separate cases. Prosecutorial charges would support

a marihuana and two controlled substances. Each suspected analyte should be packaged separately and submitted as separate cases. To accomplish this, the Submitting Agency is required to:

Complete a separate ADFS iLIMS Submission form, utilizing the electronic Evidence Submission and Receiving (ESR) portal for each case. This is accomplished by adding .1, .2, .3 to the end of the submitter's agency case number in the "Search/Create Prelog Case" screen.

Suspected analyte groups that are required to be submitted together:

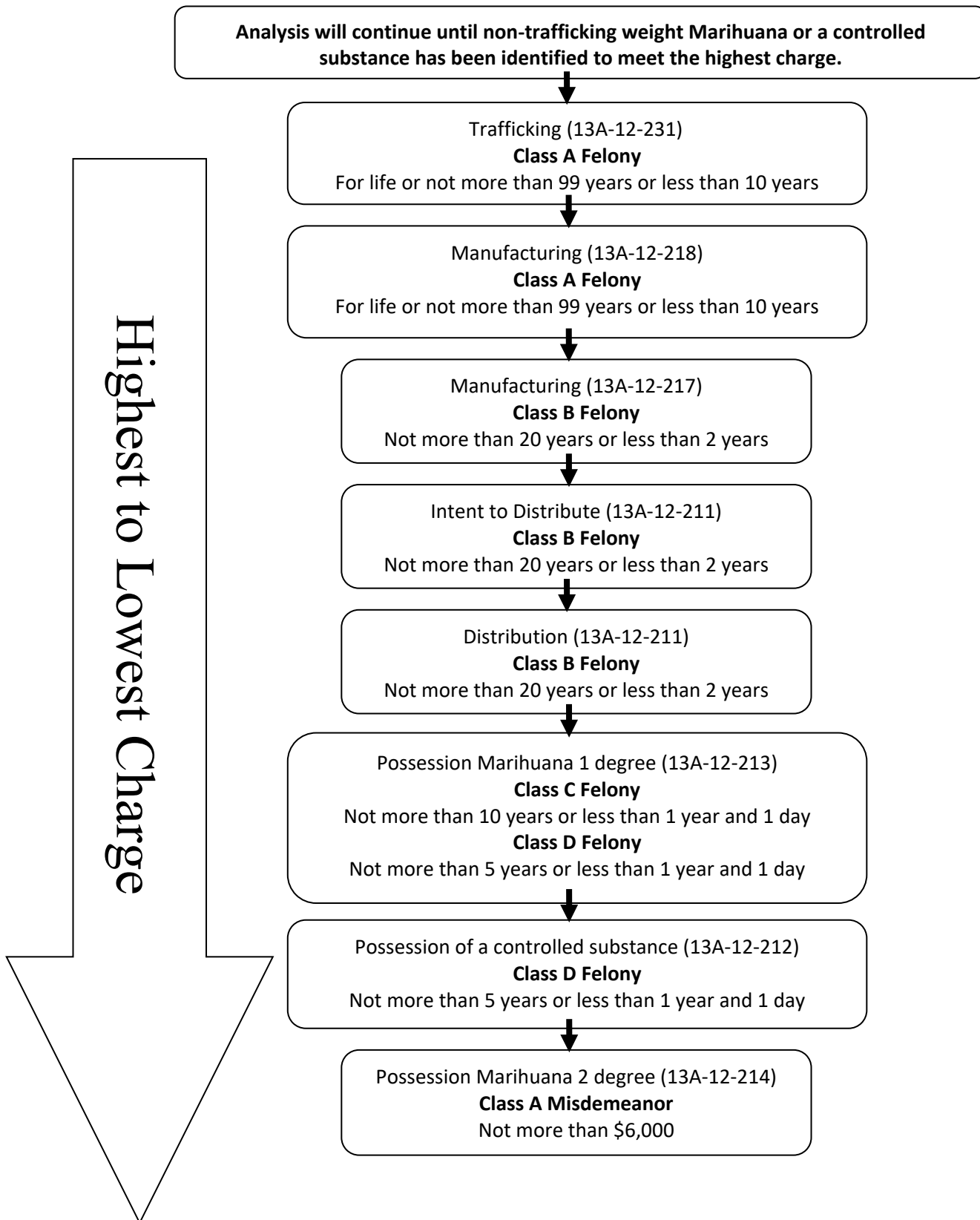
Clandestine tablets and suspected methamphetamine should be submitted together as one case.

All suspected steroids should be submitted together as one case.

All liquids should be submitted together as one case.

Edibles and Vapes should be submitted together as one case. Only one of each type of edible and vape should be submitted.

EVIDENCE EVALUATION FLOWCHART



Multiple Suspects in a Case:

When items are distinctly attributed to individuals in a case, the suspect and the corresponding item(s) should be submitted as separate cases.

Weight Bearing Charges:

Items of evidence are only weighed if they meet a weight bearing charge (Intent to Distribute and/or Trafficking).

Federal Cases:

ADFS reports cases in accordance to the Code of Alabama; cases that require analyses to meet federal sentencing guidelines should be submitted to the nearest federal laboratory facility for analyses.

Evidence Packaging

All evidence submitted for drug analysis must be dry prior to final packaging and submission to the laboratory.

- Fresh (wet) plant material/mushrooms must be air dried and packaged in paper containers prior to submission. Wet plant material results in moldy or decomposed evidence which is usually not analyzed.
- Whole plants must be loosely packaged in cardboard boxes or paper bags. Tightly packed whole plants will continue to generate heat due to microbial activity.
- Samples expected of containing Khat must be stored frozen. This particular plant material is heat sensitive and the controlled substance breaks down quickly over time.

Acceptable evidence packaging includes sealed envelopes, paper bags, plastic evidence bags, cardboard boxes, glass vials in Nalgene bottles placed in an outer evidence container, and puncture proof containers for syringes. All evidence submissions must be accompanied by an ADFS iLIMS submission form, utilizing the electronic Evidence Submission and Receiving (ESR) portal.

Examples of acceptable evidence packaging:



Health and Safety:

Due to health concerns, the ADFS laboratories will not accept hypodermic needles, razor blades or other items capable of puncturing the skin, unless the importance of such evidence can be demonstrated and approval is granted on a case-by-case basis by the **Drug Chemistry Section Chief, Drug Chemistry Discipline Chief** or **Laboratory Director**.

If approval is granted, safety hazards such as hypodermic needles and items with sharp edges (such as razor blades, broken glass, etc.) **will not be accepted unless properly packaged and labeled as a biohazard**.



Drug evidence which may have come in contact with biologically hazardous material **must be labeled as a biohazard** and the nature of the biohazard should be indicated.

Fentanyl-related substances have been identified in the following evidence submission types: powders, tablets, capsules, liquids, and blotter papers. This type of evidence is designated as a hazardous material and should not be handled without the appropriate personal protective equipment (nitrile gloves, dust mask, eye protection, and lab coat). Evidence submissions suspected to contain fentanyl must be sealed within two layers of plastic bag packaging and a notation made on the outer evidence packaging and the submission form that indicate the item is a suspected fentanyl.

Large containers or large quantities of liquids/materials will not be accepted from clandestine laboratories except in unusual circumstances (as determined by the Drug Chemistry Section Chief, Drug Chemistry Discipline Chief, and/or Laboratory Director).

All liquid samples will only be accepted in proper leak proof containers.



Proper leak proof containers include liquid samples placed in individual sealed glass vials which are then further secured in individual sealed Nalgene type plastic bottles. If in doubt of the suitability of an evidence container, it may be necessary for some liquid samples to be placed in heat sealed plastic bags.

Red Phosphorous and Iodine will not be accepted into the laboratory. They are hazardous in nature, constitute a storage problem and are not specifically listed in State Law as a controlled substance or a precursor.

Samples of anhydrous ammonia will not be accepted into the laboratory for analysis.

Only submit items that need analysis. For example, items such as rolling papers, paraphernalia with no residue, personal belongings, and field test kits do not need to be submitted for analysis.

Currency will not be accepted. In the event that currency contains a suspected controlled substance, the suspected controlled substance should be separated from the currency and submitted.

Vape cartridges must be separated from the electronic bodies before submission. Cartridges should be placed in a leak-proof container; the electronic body is to be retained at your agency. If cartridges cannot be separated, the battery must be removed from the body and the pen rendered inoperable.

Electronic cigarettes contain an oil that is vaporized utilizing a heat source. The presence of this heat source can create a fire hazard in the laboratory. Prior to submission, the oil cartridge of an electronic cigarette should be removed and submitted without the electronic cigarette. If the cartridge cannot be removed, then the heat source of the electronic cigarette (e.g. battery) **MUST** be removed. If neither the oil cartridge nor the heat source can be removed, the electronic cigarette **WILL NOT** be accepted for analysis.

Electronic Cigarettes or Vape Cartridges will not be accepted into the laboratory without proper documentation notating the electronic cigarette or vape cartridge has been rendered safe. This will be notated during the entry of the ADFS iLIMS Submission form, utilizing the electronic Evidence Submission and Receiving (ESR) portal. This field is shown below:

7. If present, has the vape cartridge or heat source (e.g. battery) been removed from the electronic body/cigarette and been placed in a leak proof container?

* Yes ▾

Evidence Seals

A proper Seal is a seal that prevents loss, cross transfer, or contamination while ensuring that attempted entry into the container is detectable. A proper seal may include a heat seal, tape seal, or a lock.

Methods of sealing evidence can include, but is not limited to, the use of evidence tape, heat seals, manufactured gum seals, and plastic shipping tape (only on paper evidence containers). Note: Use of plastic tape on plastic bags or plastic containers, or other containers where attempted entry is not detectable, does not meet this requirement.

Additionally, the initials or other identification of the person creating the seal shall be placed on the seal or across the seal onto the container when possible. All outer evidence containers must be sealed in a manner that would allow the analysts to readily recognize any tampering (i.e., clear plastic tape, evidence tape or heat sealing).



Contact Information:

If at any time there are questions about the above policies, please do not hesitate to contact our offices.

Auburn Laboratory

1051 Wire Road
Auburn, AL 36849
Office: (334) 887-7001
Fax: (334) 466-5557
Laboratory Director – Melissa Armstrong
Email: melissa.armstrong@adfs.alabama.gov

Birmingham Laboratory

2026 Valleydale Road
Hoover, AL 35244
Office: (205) 982-9292
Fax: (205) 403-2025
Laboratory Director – Justin Sanders
Email: justin.sanders@adfs.alabama.gov

Huntsville Laboratory

5050 Technology Drive NW
Huntsville, AL 35805
Office: (256) 993-4130
Fax: (256) 533-2855
Laboratory Director – Christina Eggleston
Email: christina.eggleston@adfs.alabama.gov

Mobile Laboratory

1 Forensic Drive
Mobile, AL 36617
Office: (251) 479-2322
Fax: (251) 479-4315
Laboratory Director – Timothy McSpadden
Email: timothy.mcspadden@adfs.alabama.gov

Montgomery Laboratory

525 Carter Hill Road
Montgomery, AL 36106
Office: (334) 261-2703
Fax: (334) 240-3284
Laboratory Director – Joseph Lee
Email: william.lee@adfs.alabama.gov

Dothan Laboratory

1946 Ennis Road
Dothan, AL 36303
Office: (334) 461-3140
Fax: (334) 461-3185
Laboratory Director – Melissa Armstrong
Email: melissa.armstrong@adfs.alabama.gov