

**ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCES (ADFS)
FORENSIC BIOLOGY EVIDENCE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

FORENSIC BIOLOGY - GENERAL INFORMATION

Forensic Biology (FB) services are performed in the four regional casework laboratories located in Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile, and Montgomery. All four FB sections conduct serological testing for the presence of blood and semen, and each FB section performs nuclear DNA (nDNA) testing. nDNA testing may be performed upon biological stains and also upon items of evidence that may have human DNA present on them (examples include, *but are not limited to*, weapons, clothing, sexual assault kits, cans/bottles, and cigarette butts).

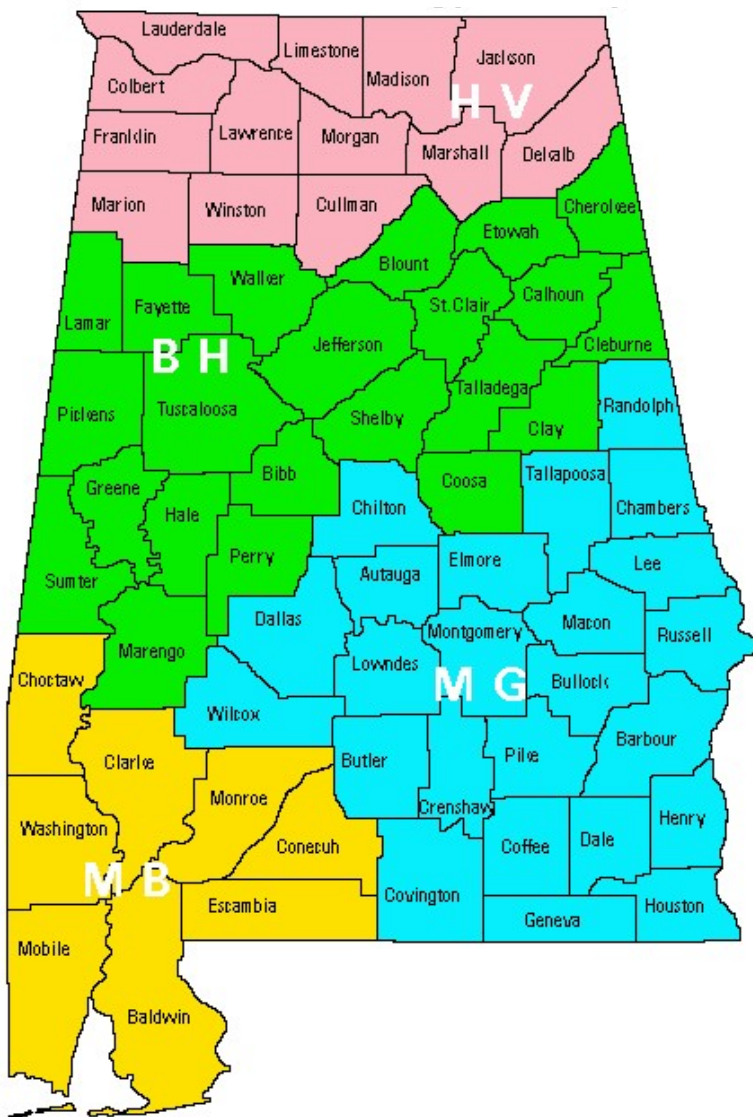
FORENSIC BIOLOGY - CASE SUBMISSION INFORMATION

- **Evidence Packaging:** items of evidence submitted to the Biology section should be packaged in paper bags, paper envelopes, or cardboard boxes. If an item of evidence is wet, it should be allowed to air dry prior to packaging. With limited exceptions (ex. organs and large amounts of tissue), plastic should NOT be used to package evidence items for forensic biology. If an item of evidence is not packaged properly, the submitter will be asked to repackage the evidence prior to submission.
- Items submitted to our laboratory must be properly sealed. 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, and 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. Please note that due to health and safety concerns, ADFS will not accept **hypodermic needles** without the prior approval of the Forensic Biology Section Chief, Forensic Biology Discipline Chief, or the Laboratory Director.
- **"Touch-DNA":** touch-DNA refers to the possible transfer of skin, or other body, cells to an item of evidence through handling or other physical contact. In general, any DNA from cells transferred onto objects through limited contact is not detectable using conventional analytical procedures. Examples of touch DNA samples include firearms evidence (bullets, magazines, cartridge cases, and firearms), swabs collected from steering wheels, and samples collected from "public" surfaces (surfaces that have been in routine contact with many people). Note that "wearer-DNA" samples (ex. swabbing of a shirt collar) are not generally included in the touch-DNA category. Due to limited resources, and the unlikely chance of obtaining an interpretable DNA profile from touch-DNA samples, ADFS will not accept touch-DNA evidence from property crimes without the prior approval of the Forensic Biology Section Chief, Forensic Biology Discipline Chief, or the Laboratory Director.
- When possible, agencies are encouraged to submit all evidence items associated with a case *at one time* to allow for the efficient and timely completion of DNA testing upon their case. In general, ADFS strives to have Biology tests completed and reported to the submitting agency within 90 days of submission.

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FORENSIC BIOLOGY SERVICE TERRITORY

Forensic Biology services are performed in the four regional casework DNA laboratories listed below. Each regional laboratory serves a large segment of the geographic and population centers present within Alabama, and are located in Huntsville, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Mobile. ADFS also maintains Alabama's DNA Databank Laboratory in Birmingham which is responsible for the collection, storage, and analysis of biological samples recovered from individuals arrested and/or convicted of all felonies and certain misdemeanors, as specified in Code of Alabama 1975 § 36-18-20 and 1975 § 15-5-20 *et seq.*



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