



Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine

Recommended equipment for obtaining forensic samples from complainants and suspects

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General guidance¹

- The individuals taking samples and handling modules must wear double gloves throughout the whole procedure. Change outer gloves when sampling different body areas.
- The examiner should wear disposable barrier clothing to minimise the risk of contamination. This barrier clothing should cover exposed skin and the examiner's own clothing thereby minimising the transfer of DNA/other evidence.
- Cleaning of the area/equipment (as appropriate) to be used for the examination, e.g. couch, table, etc. should be carried out using a suitable cleaning agent such as 10% sodium hypochlorite (bleach, Presept™) solution, 1% Solution Rely+On™ Virkon® , Chemgene, Microsol (10%), and Distel (1%) (Trigene Advance).
- A disposable, single use, couch cover should be used. For those who conduct examinations with patients in lithotomy position there should be covers for the leg/feet supports.
- Single use consumables should be used and where this is not possible equipment should be decontaminated between each examination, e.g. colposcope.
- The examiner should complete the *FME form* (or equivalent) regarding the samples and exhibit with any samples taken
- Swabs with wooden shafts **must not** be introduced into any orifice.
- Each modular kit should have specific instructions
- Ideally there should be a pre-printed sheet of relevant swab labels
- There should be access to the latest *FFLM Recommendations for Sampling* document
- Use of kit modules should reduce overall cost and reduce risk of contamination. **The outer packaging of each kit should be a tamper evident bag**
- The following kits should be available:
 - Early Evidence Kit
 - Contamination reduction kit
 - Equipment cover kit
 - Couch cover kit
 - Patient clothing collection kit
 - Alcohol/drug blood collection kit
 - Alcohol/drug urine kit
 - Mouth collection kit

- Swab collection kit
- Hair collection kit (separate kits required for head and pubic hair collection)
- Fingernail collection kit
- Hair for toxicology kit
- Nails for toxicology kit

Once opened, the remaining unused contents of any module/kit should be discarded.

1. Contamination reduction kit

The specifications for an examinee's gown are:

- unisex
- not transparent
- loose or short sleeves, i.e. not elasticated
- non-shedding
- soft, with tie to close at neck and around middle
- various sizes suitable for size of examinee.

If this needs to be exhibited, it should be placed in a tamper-evident, **breathable** (usually paper) **bag**.

Sheet for examinee to stand on when undressing

- 'Sterile' white paper sheet at least 90cm by 90cm
- Tamper-evident bag

2. Equipment cover kit

Covers to cover colposcope and related equipment (laptop, computer, monitor screen and trolley)

3. Couch cover

The specifications for a couch cover are:

- adjustable so appropriate size for couch
- white
- tamper-evident, breathable bag
- single use.



4. Swab kits

At present, the Forensic Science Subcommittee is not able to recommend a particular composition of swab, however, swabs should have rounded heads and plastic shafts.

- Standard swabs
- 5ml sterile water
- Pre-printed labels
- Tamper evident bags

Different kits may be prepared with pre-labelled swabs:

- Generic x10
- Genital swabs: vulval x2, low vaginal x2, high vaginal x2, endocervical x2, perianal x2, anal canal x2, rectal x2
- Right hand x2
- Left hand x2
- Penile swabs: shaft x2; coronal sulcus, internal foreskin and glans x2

5. Blood

NB For RTA cases a RTA blood kit must be used.

- Single use, disposable tourniquets should be used
- Evacuated blood collection system or alternative safe collection system to allow collection of a total of 10mL of blood into **glass** vials with appropriate amount of sodium fluoride and potassium oxalate preservative.
- Safety needle/butterfly in various gauges, e.g. 21G, 23G; for use with evacuated blood collection system
- Needle holder for use with evacuated blood collection system
- Alcohol-free skin cleansing tissue
- One/two ball(s) of cotton wool
- Small plaster
- Suitable tamper-evident protective outer packaging/rigid container with padding to prevent bottle movement within container
- Pre-printed labels
- Tamper-evident bag x 1
- See: *Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013*

6. Urine

NB For RTA cases a RTA urine kit must be used.

(2 x urine collection vials to be available per examinee, e.g. in cases of drug facilitated crime)

- Wide brim collection vessel x 1
- **Glass** bottle to collect 20ml urine from the collection vessel with appropriate amount of sodium fluoride preservative x 1

- Suitable tamper-evident protective outer packaging/rigid container with padding to prevent bottle movement within container
- Pre-printed labels
- Where available, toilet tissue to be retained after wiping and frozen
- Exhibit toilet tissue separately to urine sample
- Tamper-evident bag x 2

7. Mouth collection kit

- Standard swab(s) (plastic shaft) x3 (perioral swab x2 and mouth swab x1)
- Sterile water – single container of 10 ml and single container of 5ml
- Wide-mouthed, sealable plastic pot to collect mouth washings x 1
- Gloves for examinee to hold pot x1 pair
- Tamper-evident bags as required

8. Fingernail Collection Kit

NB Specialised kits required to collect nails for toxicology.
See: *Recommendations for collecting nail clippings for toxicology*

- Taper-tipped mini swabs x 4
- 5ml sterile water x 1
- Nail clippers that retain the clippings x 2
- Sterile white paper sheet 50cm by 50cm
- Tamper-evident bags as required

9. Hair collection kit

NB Specialised kits required to collect hair for toxicology.
See: *Recommendations for collecting hair samples for toxicology*

- Comb with medium spacing between teeth (i.e. not a nit comb) x 1
- Disposable forceps x 1
- Sterile white paper sheet 50cm by 50cm x 3
- Scissors x 1
- Tamper-evident bags as required
- Low-adhesive tape/clear adhesive tape

10. Gloves

- Non-sterile powder free, non-latex, single-use gloves, e.g. nitrile – of various sizes
- Complying with appropriate quality standards to address medical grade (e.g. EN374) and PPE (e.g. EN455) requirements



11. Lubricant

Several commercial lubricants are available including Aquagel, KY Jelly, Gelcat, Pedicat.
Specify the lubricant used on the FME form.

12. Vaginal specula and proctoscopes

- Various sizes of both to be available in the examination suites
- Single use
- Clear plastic
- Disposable
- Tamper-evident bag (swab instrument and exhibit swab)

13. Disposable plastic aprons

- To protect the clothing of the HCP

14. Firearm discharge residue sampling

- Refer to local guidelines
- Specific FDR Kits are available

15. Condom collection kit

- Opaque containers
- Plastic clip
- Forceps
- Pre-printed label
- Tamper-evident bag

16. Sanitary wear/nappy module/products of conception

- Opaque containers
- Pre-printed label to indicate tampon/panty-liner/sanitary towel/nappy
- Tamper-evident bag

17. Early evidence kit

- Contents to include equipment for a urine sample (urine and tissue) and a mouth collection kit as above.

References

1. *Forensic Science Regulator Guidance. DNA Anti-Contamination – Forensic Medical Examination in Sexual Assault Referral Centres and Custodial facilities* 2016
FFLM Guidance
Operational procedures and equipment for medical rooms in police stations and victim examination suites 2016