

Recommendations

Labelling Forensic Samples

The medico-legal guidelines and recommendations published by the FFLM are for general information only. Appropriate specific advice should be sought from your medical defence organisation or professional association. The FFLM has one or more senior persons from each of the three medical defence organisations on its Board, but for the avoidance of doubt, endorsement of the medico-legal guidelines or recommendations published by the FFLM has not been sought from any of the medical defence organisations.



It is the responsibility of the person who obtains the sample to ensure it is appropriately labelled. A crisis worker, police officer or SOCO may assist with the labelling process but the healthcare professional must check the label. The swabs and bags vary from constabulary to constabulary and may not have all the headings/boxes in the examples of the bags/labels shown below.

Tamper-evident bags

These should be labelled with the following information:

- item/exhibit number using the healthcare professional's initials, e.g. DJR/6;
- description of the samples e.g. vulval swabs; number of swabs
- name of person from whom the sample is taken (examinee). In a sexual offence examination of a non-police referral, use the unique reference number in place of examinee's name;
- the name and signature of the person who first handled the sample;
- the name and signature of the person who sealed the tamper-evident bag and time of sealing;
- BLOOD AND URINE **MUST** HAVE the time at which sample was taken from the examinee;
- date on which the sample was taken.

IDENTIFYING REF	DJR/6	
FORCE/ORGANISATION	TVP	
DIVISION/DEPT		
DESCRIPTION OF ITEM	VULVAL SWABS	
FROM PLACE/PERSON	ANN BROWN	
TAKEN BY	Dr Rogers	SEALED BY E Sims
DATE AND TIME	5/2/09	DATE AND TIME 5/2/09 0345
SIGNED	[Signature]	SIGNED [Signature]
INCIDENT/CRIME N°		
LAB REF		
Property Handling Details:		

Swabs, sheaths and bottles

These should be labelled with the following information:

- name of person from whom the sample is taken (examinee). In a sexual offence examination of a non-police referral, use the unique reference number in place of examinee's name.
- description of the sample e.g. vulval swab A;
- item/exhibit number using the healthcare professional's initials, e.g. DJR/6;
- BLOOD AND URINE **MUST** HAVE the time at which the sample was taken from the examinee;
- date on which the sample was taken.

Name of donor:	ANN BROWN	
Sample description:	VULVAL SWAB A	
Item number:	DJR/6	
Date:	5/2/09	Time taken:

The identification/exhibit number and/or timings **must** reflect the order of sampling.

Where two swabs have been taken from the same site it is **imperative** that there is a clear indication on the swab label regarding the order in which the swabs were obtained. This is most easily done by describing the first of the two samples as *Sample A* and the second as *Sample B*.