

## Recommendations



## Recommended Equipment for Obtaining Forensic Samples from Complainants and Suspects<sup>1</sup>

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.

### General guidance

- The individual handling modules and taking samples must wear gloves. For some samples, there is an expectation gloves will be retained and exhibited; for others, gloves may need to be exhibited e.g. if they are thought to have potential evidence on them.
- Swabs with wooden shafts must not be introduced into any orifice.

### 1. Gown

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 the size of examinee.

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

### 2. Sheet for examinee to stand on when undressing

- 'Sterile' white paper sheet, 90cm<sup>2</sup>
- Tamper-evident bag

### 3. Couch Cover

The specifications for a couch cover are:

- 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 rather than wooden shafts if placed in orifices.

- Standard swabs\*
- Small head swabs\*
- 5mL sterile water
- Pre-printed labels
- Tamper-evident bags

### 5. Blood

- 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  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hsis7.pdf>

*\*There should be sufficient swabs in each kit to enable an unopened control swab to be exhibited, from each batch used, unless a control swab held by manufacturer or kit provider. It is the responsibility of the FP/FNE to establish what is required.*

<sup>1</sup>See also FFLM guidance "[Operational procedures and equipment for medical rooms in police stations and victim examination suites](#)"

## 6. Urine

(2x urine collection kits to be available per examinee, e.g. in cases of DFSA and RTA samples)

- 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
- Tamper-evident bag x 2

## 7. Mouth Samples Kit

- Standard swab(s) (plastic shaft)
- Sterile water – single container of 10 mL x 1
- wide-mouthed, plastic pot to collect mouth washings x1
- Gloves for examinee to hold pot x1 pair
- tamper-evident bags as required

## 8. Fingernail Collection Kit

- Taper-tipped **mini** swabs x 5
- 5mL sterile water x 1
- Nail clippers that retain the clippings x 2
- Sterile white paper sheet 50cm<sup>2</sup> x2
- Tamper-evident bags as required

## 9. Hair Collection Kit

- Comb with medium spacing between teeth (i.e. not a nit comb) x 1
- Disposable forceps x 1
- Sterile white paper sheet 50cm<sup>2</sup> x2
- 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

- Single-use tubes or sachets of validated lubricant, e.g. KY Lubricating Jelly®, Gelcat™ or Pedicat®

## 12. Vaginal Specula and Proctoscopes

- various sizes of both to be available in the examination suites
- single use
- clear plastic
- disposable
- tamper-evident bag (exhibit instrument in tamper-evident bag, or swab instrument, and exhibit swab)

## 13. Disposable Plastic Aprons

- to protect the clothing of the FP/FNE

## 14. Firearm Discharge Residue Sampling

- Refer to local guidelines.

## 15. Condom Collection Kit

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

## 16. Sanitary Wear Module

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