



# Recommended equipment for obtaining forensic samples from complainants and suspects

Jan 2023 Review date Jan 2024 - check [www.fflm.ac.uk](http://www.fflm.ac.uk) for latest update

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

## General Guidance<sup>1</sup>

- 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).
- Cleaning agents used to clean the forensic rooms will need to be validated, ensuring that DNA is sufficiently removed. There will need to be a period of environmental monitoring within the facility to verify that the cleaning agent and cleaning process is fit for purpose.
- 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* (complainant or suspect as appropriate) (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.
- 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 kit should be ISO18385 Forensic DNA Grade (FDG) when being used to retrieve DNA.
- Equipment to reduce DNA contamination will be required if forensic samples are taken off-site (that is not in a purpose built forensic medical examination room in custody or a sexual assault referral centre) in, e.g. hospitals, care homes, etc.

- The following kits should be available (as appropriate) (*National Kit list on FFLM website*):
  - Mouth collection kit
  - Standard swab kit
  - Vaginal swab kit
  - Anal swab kit
  - Penile swab kit
  - Hand swab kit
  - Hair collection kit
  - Drug hair testing kit
  - Fingernail swab kit
  - Fingernail clipping kit
  - Couch cover kit
  - Clothing kit
  - Condom Collection kit
  - Sanitary wear Collection kit
  - Alcohol & Drug blood collection kit
  - Alcohol/drug urine collection kit
  - Paediatric (infant) swab collection kit
  - Paediatric (child) swab collection kit
  - Early Evidence Kit

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

## 1. Examinee clothing

The specifications for an examinee's gown are:

- FDG
- 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 **bag**.

### Sheet for examinee to stand on when undressing

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

HCP Clothing kit should include a face mask, mobcap and gown/lab coat.



## 2. Examiner clothing

- Lab coat
- Face mask
- Mobcap
- Tamper evident bag

## 3. Equipment cover kit

Single use colposcope cover.

## 4. Couch cover

The specifications for a couch cover are:

- adjustable so appropriate size for couch (FDG)
- white
- single use.

## 5. Modesty Blanket

- FDG

## 6. 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 (Forensic DNA Grade FDG)
- 5ml sterile water (FDG)
- Pre-printed labels
- Tamper evident bags

Different kits may be prepared with pre-labelled swabs (FDG):

- Standard x6 or x12
- Vaginal (FDG): mons pubis x 2, vulval x2, low vaginal x2, high vaginal x2, endocervical x2, perianal x2
- Anal (FDG): perianal x2, anal canal x2, rectal x2
- Right hand (FDG): x2
- Left hand (FDG): x2
- Penile (FDG): shaft x2; coronal sulcus, internal foreskin and glans x2

## 7. Blood

**NB For RTA cases a RTA blood kit must be used For all other cases for toxicology the following applies:**

- 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 x1
- See: *Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013*

## 8. 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 x1
- **Glass** bottle to collect 20ml urine from the collection vessel with appropriate amount of sodium fluoride preservative x1
- Suitable tamper-evident protective outer packaging/rigid container with padding to prevent bottle movement within container
- Pre-printed labels
- Where available, toilet tissue (FDG) to be retained after wiping and frozen
- Exhibit toilet tissue separately to urine sample
- Tamper-evident bag x2

## 9. Mouth collection kit

- Standard swab(s) (FDG) (plastic shaft) x4 (perioral x2 and mouth x2)
- Sterile water (FDG) – single container of 10ml and single container of 5ml
- Wide-mouthed, sealable plastic pot (FDG) to collect mouth washings x1
- Gloves for examinee to hold pot x1 pair
- Tamper-evident bags as required

## 10. Fingernail Swabbing and Clippings Kits

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

- Taper-tipped mini swabs (FDG) x4
- 5ml water (FDG) x1
- Nail clippers (FDG) that retain the clippings x2
- White paper sheet 50cm by 50cm (FDG)
- Tamper-evident bags as required



## 11. Hair collection kit

**NB Specialised kits required to collect hair for toxicology.**

See: *Recommendations for collecting hair samples for toxicology*

- Comb (FDG) with medium spacing between teeth (i.e. not a nit comb) x1
- Afro Comb (FDG)
- Disposable forceps (FDG) x1
- White paper sheet 50cm by 50cm (FDG) x3
- Scissors (FDG) x 1
- Tamper-evident bags as required
- Low-adhesive clear tape available from Crime Scene Investigators (CSIs)

## 12. 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. EN455) and PPE (e.g. EN374) requirements.

## 13. Lubricant

Several commercial lubricants are available including Aquagel, KY Jelly, Gelcat, Pedicat. (FDG).

Ensure that a single use lubricant sachet is used and specify the lubricant used on the FME form.

## 14. Vaginal specula and proctoscopes

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

## 15. Disposable plastic aprons

- To protect the clothing of the HCP

## 16. Firearm discharge residue (FDR) sampling

- Refer to local guidelines
- Specific FDR Kits are available

## 17. Condom collection kit

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

## 18. Sanitary wear/nappy module/ products of conception

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

## 19. Early evidence kit

- Contents to include equipment for two urine samples (urine and tissue) and a mouth collection kit as above, Standard swabbing kit (6) and a Fingernail Swabbing kit as above.

## 20. Paediatric swab collection kit

- Gown
- Butterfly infusion set
- Couch cover
- Colposcope cover
- Paediatric urine pouch
- Swabs x10 (FDG)
- Tamper evident bags x5

## References

### Forensic Science Regulator Guidance

*The Control and Avoidance of Contamination in Forensic Medical Examinations FSR-G-207*

Issue 2 2020

*Guidance for the Assessment, Collection and Recording of Forensic Science Related Evidence in Sexual Assault Examinations FSR-G-212 Issue 1*

2020

*Codes of Practice and Conduct Sexual Assault Examination: Requirements for the Assessment, Collection and Recording of Forensic Science Related Evidence FSR-C-116 Issue 1*

2020

### FFLM Guidance

*Operational procedures and equipment for clinical and forensic examination rooms in police stations*

*Operational procedures and equipment for forensic examination rooms in Sexual Assault Referral Centres*