



# Labelling forensic samples

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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.

**It is the responsibility of the person who obtains the sample to ensure it is appropriately labelled.** A crisis worker, police officer or CSI may assist with the labelling process but the healthcare professional must check the label. Samples should be labelled at the start of the examination to avoid contamination. If using pre-printed labels these should be placed round the existing paper label on the body of the tube ensuring that the tube opening is not obscured. 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. 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 and whether moist and dry. This is most easily done by describing the first of the two samples as Sample A and the second as Sample B.

**If in exceptional circumstance multiple suspects are arrested in the same case and are to be assessed by the same HCP (and there is no risk of cross contamination) sequential numbering of specimens (samples for toxicology) should be considered (the HCP may need to take advice from the police officer or CSI).**

IDENTIFYING REF	<i>DJR6</i>
FORCE/ORGANISATION	<i>TVP</i>
DIVISION/DEPT	
DESCRIPTION OF ITEM	<i>Vulval Swabs</i>
FROM PLACE/PERSON	<i>Ann Brown</i>
TAKEN BY	<i>Dr Rogers</i>
SEALED BY	<i>E Sims</i>
DATE/TIME	<i>5/12/21 03.25-45</i>
SIGNED	<i>DJRogers</i>
SIGNED	<i>ESims</i>
INCIDENT/CRIME NO	
LAB/REF	
Property Handling Details:	

## Tamper-evident bags

These **MUST** be labelled with the following information:

- item/exhibit number using the healthcare professional's initials, e.g. *DJR6*
- description of the sample including quantity e.g. *vulval swabs x2 (moist and dry)*
- 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  
Other samples should have the time frame e.g. 15:00-15:25 hours
- date on which the sample was taken

### Name of donor:

*Ann Brown*

### Sample description:

*Vulval Swab A*

### Item number:

*DJR6*

### Date:

*05/12/2021*

### Time Taken: *03.25-45*

## Swabs, sheaths and bottles

These **MUST** 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. *DJR6*
- BLOOD AND URINE **MUST** HAVE the time at which the sample was taken from the examinee
- Other samples should have the time frame e.g. 15:00-15:25 hours
- date on which the sample was taken