

CQR: Reporting the Results

Laboratory case reports

5.10.1.1

Written laboratory reports will be prepared for all cases that involve

- analytical work that is performed on physical evidence
- crime scene investigations by criminalists

EXCEPTION: written laboratory reports do not have to be prepared in cases where the request for analysis is cancelled.

Writing style guide

A writing style guide was developed for the laboratory by a technical writing consultant. Copies of the guide are located on the laboratory network drive (S:/Public/Laboratory Writing Style Guide) and in the library.

Report preparation policy

POLICY: Written laboratory reports will be prepared in a timely manner. The initial draft complete version of all laboratory reports should be entered into the case management system within 30 calendar days of the completion of the requested analysis or crime scene call-out.

EXCEPTION: Circumstances beyond the control of the analyst may prevent the fulfillment of this time requirement. In this case, the analyst should discuss the reasons for the delay with the unit supervisor and record it in the communication log.

NOTE: Extended delivery times for supplemental evidence on an active request for analysis should not result in a delayed report. Instead, a report should be written for the work completed and a new request for analysis should be assigned when the evidence is received at the laboratory.

NOTE: Report preparation times should not be delayed by combining completed work from multiple requests into one report. Each request for analysis or crime scene investigation assigned in the case management system should receive a separate report.

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Function of the report

5.10.8

The function of the laboratory report is to communicate the analytical results and conclusions of the analyst. The report is intended to convey the essence of what the analyst would say if asked for an expert opinion in court.

It is highly desirable that the report be able to “stand alone” since decisions may be made by law enforcement personnel, attorneys and the courts based on the report with no contact with the criminalist.

Customer access to completed case reports

Completed case reports are available to the requesting law enforcement agency representative via *iResults*, a secure Internet-based reporting system. Users can only access case reports that are associated to their agency of employment.

Reporting results from subcontractors

5.10.6

The laboratory will not include the results of tests performed by subcontractors in the laboratory report. A copy of the subcontractor’s report will be included as part of the case record.

Types of reports

5.10.8

The laboratory issues three types of reports:

- standardized report
 - field report
 - expository report
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Standardized reports

Some types of laboratory examinations lend themselves to a standardized report format. These include the following:

5.10.8

- blood alcohol
- toxicology
- drug chemistry
- evidence preservation

NOTE: Expository reports may be required for some of these cases to adequately convey the results and conclusions of the analysis. The analyst or reviewer may decide when the expository format is appropriate.

Field reports-crime scene investigations

Reports of crime scene investigations are written in a chronological, narrative format and should include the following information:

5.10.8

5.10.2.b

5.10.2.e

5.10.2.f

5.10.2.g

- date, time, and source of the call-out
 - support team member(s)
 - location of the scene
 - arrival and departure times
 - officer or detective contacted
 - observations
 - tests conducted
 - evidence collected and disposition
 - conclusions reached, if appropriate
-

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Expository reports

Some types of laboratory examinations require an expository format for a more detailed presentation of the results and conclusions. These include the following:

- criminalistics
 - comparative evidence
 - trace evidence
 - biology
 - serology
 - DNA
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Expository report categories

5.10.8

Expository reports should contain the following headings:

- SUMMARY
- EVIDENCE EXAMINED or EVIDENCE RECEIVED
- EXAMINATION AND RESULTS
- CONCLUSIONS

A DISPOSITION section may be added if appropriate.

EXAMINATION, RESULTS, AND CONCLUSIONS may be combined into one heading at the analyst's discretion.

Summary

The SUMMARY is a brief and concise statement summarizing the significant conclusions reached.

The summary does not need to be written in the first person.

A summary statement may be omitted in brief expository reports.

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Evidence list formats

Evidence lists may, at the analyst's discretion, be formatted as

- EVIDENCE EXAMINED - items of evidence which were examined and for which results and conclusions appear in the report
 - EVIDENCE RECEIVED - all items of evidence received, whether analyzed or not. In this format the analyst must designate the items which were not examined.
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Evidence lists- contents

5.10.2.f

Evidence lists should contain at least the following information:

- laboratory submission number
- item number (when possible, the item number assigned by the submitting agency will also be used in the laboratory)
- physical description of the item

Other information may be included when appropriate, for example,

- a note describing any significant discrepancies between the officers written description of the evidence and the evidence received
 - cross references
 - a brief description of the source
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Examination and results

5.4.2

5.10.2.e

EXAMINATION AND RESULTS refers to information regarding the examination of the evidence and analytical results obtained. This may include the following:

- description of the types of examinations and analyses conducted
- procedures used
- methodologies used
- pertinent observations
- analytical data

Reports of an analyst's findings should be written in the first person, active voice as much as possible. Refer to the *Laboratory Writing Style Guide* for the appropriate usage of third person or inactive voice.

When appropriate, tables, charts, diagrams, photographs, and other forms of records may be used to present information.

Only facts and issues that are contained in and supported by the case notes are included.

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Conclusions

CONCLUSIONS are the conclusions, opinions, and interpretations that were reached by the analyst based upon the examination of the evidence.

5.10.5

The conclusions, opinions, and interpretations should be complete, concise, and written so that they may be understood by the potential readers, including law enforcement personnel, attorneys, and the courts.

5.10.3.1

5.10.3.5

Conclusions, opinions, and interpretations must address the purpose for which the analytical work was undertaken.

5.10.3.6

When associations are made, the significance of the association must be communicated clearly and properly qualified.

5.10.3.7

When eliminations are made, the significance of the elimination must be communicated clearly and properly qualified.

When results are not definitive or inconclusive, the reason must be recorded in the examination records or case report.

Reporting and testifying to the work of others

The author of a test report must have conducted or participated in the testing, or technically reviewed the examination records or testing.

5.10.3.4

Analysts who issue findings, including writing reports and providing testimony, based on the examination records generated by another person or persons, must review all relevant pages of examination records in the case record. The review must be recorded in the examination records (see also *AQR: Technical Review Of Case Records, Technical review for court testimony*, in the *Quality Manual*).

Verbal results

A technical review or second review (DNA) will be conducted before any conclusion can be given prior to release verbally or in writing.

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Disposition

A DISPOSITION section records the transfer or storage of evidence by an analyst when the examination is complete.

In the routine disposition process, analysts transfer the evidence to the laboratory's Evidence Section for return to the submitting agency, or transfer it to another analyst within the laboratory for further analysis.

A disposition section should be used when the analyst places or stores the evidence in a manner which differs from routine process, for example,

- an analyst retains the evidence in storage within the laboratory
- the evidence is sent to a referee laboratory

NOTE: This information should also be recorded in the case notes.

Additional report information

The following additional information appears on the reports:

[5.10.2.a](#)

[5.10.2.b](#)

[5.10.2.c](#)

[5.10.2.d](#)

[5.10.2.i](#)

[5.10.2.j](#)

[5.10.3.1.d](#)

[5.10.5](#)

- title
 - name and address of the laboratory
 - name and address of the customer
 - laboratory case number on each page
 - page numbers
 - test results and, where applicable, units of measurement
 - name, title, and signature of the analyst preparing the report, and date
 - signature of the technical reviewer and date
 - signature of the administrative reviewer and date
 - reports containing opinions and interpretations are clearly marked as such
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Amended reports

5.10.9

If a released report requires an amendment, the amended report must be identified as an “Amended Report” in the report heading. The amended report will be issued under a new request in JusticeTrax® LIMS-plus®. The following process must be followed.

Stage	Description
1	Copy the original report PDF from the J-Drive and place it on your desktop.
2	Go into properties and make sure the “read-only” box is unchecked for this PDF file.
3	Open Adobe Acrobat X Pro.
4	Open the original report PDF located on your desktop.
5	Go to the Tools pane and select the “Pages” dropdown
6	Select “Add Watermark.” Note: Watermark should be diagonal.
7	Type the following to redirect the reader to the amended report, for example: Report Amended - “See Lab Number 15-123456-0002.”
8	The watermark should be in Times New Roman; Font Size 40; Center Alignment; 30% Opacity, and a 45 degree rotation.
9	Save the PDF file with the original file name.
10	Copy the report from your desktop and paste it in the Final Reports folder on the J-Drive and replace the original report.
11	Go into properties and check the “read-only” box.
12	The report containing the revisions is issued under a new request in JusticeTrax® LIMS-plus®
13	A revised report is written containing the heading “Amended Report.”
14	In the body of the report, add the following: “This report supersedes [case and request number], which was released on [date]. See changes in bold.”

Release of case information

Refer to the *ORG: Protection of Case Information* in the *Quality Manual* for the procedure for the release of case information.