



Australian Government

MSL975024 Locate, record and collect forensic samples

Release: 1

MSL975024 Locate, record and collect forensic samples

Modification History

Release 1. Supersedes and is equivalent to MSL975024A Locate record and collect forensic samples

Application

This unit of competency covers the ability to locate, record and collect evidence or samples that will be used for forensic examination or testing. Competency includes the ability to locate, collect, package, transport and store forensic samples.

This unit of competency is applicable to technical officers working in all industry sectors and government agencies, such as food, forensic, medical and environmental laboratories. The term forensic is used to describe the collection of samples that may have legal implications, such as those collected to verify insurance claims or prove paternity for payment of maintenance.

All operations must comply with relevant standards, appropriate procedures and/or workplace requirements. Although a supervisor may not always be present, the technical officer will follow standard operating procedures (SOPs) that clearly describe the scope of permitted practice, including varying workplace/test procedures and communicating results to people outside the laboratory.

While no specific licensing or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication, laboratory operations are governed by relevant legislation, regulations and/or external accreditation requirements. Local requirements should be checked.

Pre-requisite Unit

Nil

Competency Field

Testing

Unit Sector

Elements and Performance Criteria

Elements describe the essential outcomes.

Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element.

1 **Prepare for evidence/sample**

1.1 Locate evidence/sample using observation and appropriate detection methods

	collection	1.2	Identify appropriate sample collection methods
		1.3	Prioritise the evaluation of items of evidence to ensure maintenance of sample integrity
2	Record locations and details of evidence/samples	2.1	Identify appropriate methods to record the evidence/samples in accordance with quality systems and within resource constraints
		2.2	Record position of located evidence using a variety of appropriate techniques
		2.3	Produce documented records of evidential material according to judicial and/or workplace guidelines
3	Collect evidence/samples	3.1	Collect sufficient number and quantity of evidence/samples (where possible) to allow complete examination or analysis and to represent the mass of the physical evidence
		3.2	Collect controls and reference samples where possible and appropriate
		3.3	Collect latent evidence using physical or chemical methods
4	Package evidence/samples	4.1	Package, transport and store evidence/samples to ensure continuity and maintain integrity of forensic samples
		4.2	Collect and document details of evidential material in case notes and/or in the evidence register to maintain chain of custody
5	Maintain a safe work environment	5.1	Identify risks, hazards, safety equipment and procedures associated with evidence/sample collection
		5.2	Use personal protective equipment (PPE) and safety procedures specified
		5.3	Minimise the generation of waste and environmental impacts

- 5.4 Ensure the safe disposal of waste
- 5.5 Clean, care for and store equipment and consumables in accordance with workplace procedures

Foundation Skills

This section describes those language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills that are essential to performance.

Foundation skills essential to performance are explicit in the performance criteria of this unit of competency.

Range of Conditions

This field allows for different work environments and conditions that may affect performance. Essential operating conditions that may be present (depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts) are included.

Standards, codes, procedures and/or workplace requirements

Standards, codes, procedures and/or workplace requirements include the latest version of one or more of:

- Australian and international standards covering the requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories; laboratory safety; quality and environmental management; sampling of materials; and labelling, storage, handling and transport of hazardous materials
- national work health and safety (WHS) standards and codes of practice, national environmental protection measures, and national measurement regulations and guidelines
- specific codes, guidelines and procedures, such as National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accreditation requirements, principles of good laboratory practice (GLP), Australian Dangerous Goods Code, Australia Post Guides, and International Air Transport Association (IATA) regulations
- workplace documents, such as judicial protocols, SOPs, quality manuals, equipment and procedures manuals, material safety data sheets (MSDS) and safety procedures, workplace recording and reporting procedures, maps and site plans

Location of evidence/samples

Evidence and sample locations include, but are not limited to, one or more of:

- industrial accidents, fire and explosion, and disasters
- criminal investigations

- searches and evidence collection
- contaminated sites
- vehicle collisions and motor vehicles

Sample collection methods

Sample collection methods include, but are not limited to, one or more of:

- hand picking (including use of forceps and gloves)
- tape lifting
- sweeping and vacuuming
- swabbing
- liquid and solid sampling procedures

Methods for recording location of evidence

Methods for recording the position of located evidence include, but are not limited to, one or more of:

- photographs
- video
- diagrams and sketches, hand written notes/documentation
- computer data
- global positioning system (GPS)

Evidence and samples

Evidence and samples include, but are not limited to, one or more of:

- any and all objects:
 - gross or microscopic
 - living or inanimate
 - solid, liquid or gas
 - relationships between all such objects
- development/enhancement/examination (e.g. use of poly light)
- trace evidence examinations
- biological samples, such as organs, hair, blood, semen and saliva
- blood splatter patterns
- clothing
- documents
- drugs
- explosives
- fibres
- fingerprint development/enhancement/examination
- fire debris
- firearm and ammunition examinations
- impressions

- paint
- petroleum products
- powder residues
- serial numbers
- shoeprint and tyre marks
- soils and minerals
- toolmark examination

Packaging samples

Packaging samples takes into account, but is not limited to, one or more of:

- physical nature of the evidence/sample
- packaging medium
- tamper evident seals
- exhibit labels
- drying of wet exhibits
- storage temperature

Maintaining integrity of samples

Maintaining the integrity of samples includes, but is not limited to, one or more of:

- use of appropriate sample containers (glass, plastic and opaque)
- use of appropriate preservatives
- wrapping container in foil to exclude light
- temperature control, which may involve prevention of direct contact between the sample and coolant
- use of appropriate equipment boxes (insulated, shockproof and waterproof)
- restraint of containers to prevent movement
- checking sample viability during transport while avoiding unnecessary handling

Safety equipment and procedures

Safety procedures include, but are not limited to, one or more of:

- use of equipment to address dangers at sites (e.g. propping up unstable walls or climbing gear to go down cliffs)
- ensuring access to service shut-off points
- recognising and observing hazard warnings and safety signs
- using biohazard containers
- labelling of samples and hazardous materials
- handling and storage of hazardous materials and equipment in accordance with labelling, MSDS and manufacturer instructions
- identifying and reporting operating problems or equipment

malfunctions

- cleaning equipment and work areas regularly using workplace procedures
- using PPE, such as gloves, safety glasses, coveralls and safety boots
- following established manual handling procedures
- reporting abnormal emissions, discharges and airborne contaminants, such as noise, light, solids, liquids, water/wastewater, gases, smoke, vapour, fumes, odour and particulates, to appropriate personnel

WHS and environmental management requirements

WHS and environmental management requirements include:

- complying with WHS and environmental management requirements at all times, which may be imposed through state/territory or federal legislation. These requirements must not be compromised at any time
- applying standard precautions relating to the potentially hazardous nature of samples
- accessing and applying current industry understanding of infection control issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and State and Territory Departments of Health, where relevant

Unit Mapping Information

Release 1. Supersedes and is equivalent to MSL975024A Locate record and collect forensic samples

Links

Companion Volume implementation guides are found in VETNet -

<https://vetnet.gov.au/Pages/TrainingDocs.aspx?q=5c63a03b-4a6b-4ae5-9560-1e3c5f462baa>

Assessment Requirements for MSL975024 Locate, record and collect forensic samples

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Performance Evidence

Evidence of competence in this unit must satisfy all of the requirements of the elements and performance criteria, and include demonstration of:

- safely locating, recording, collecting, packaging, transporting and storing forensic samples and evidence on at least three (3) different occasions
- using close observation skills to locate samples and evidence
- using chemical, optical and physical evidence and sample detection methods
- accurately interpreting and applying evidence and sample collection methods
- keeping accurate records
- communicating any problems to a supervisor or industry professional using current and appropriate terminology
- maintaining security, integrity and traceability of samples, evidence, sub-samples and documentation
- completing chain of custody forms according to judicial and workplace requirements
- storing and transporting samples according to judicial and workplace protocols
- following workplace safety precautions and hazard control measures.

Knowledge Evidence

Must provide evidence that demonstrates knowledge of:

- terminology and principles of locating, recording, collecting, storing and transporting samples and evidence
- legislative, regulatory, policy, procedural and quality system requirements for the location, collection, preservation, security, continuity and disposal of samples and evidence (exhibits)
- potential limitations of own specialist knowledge and when to seek advice from other services
- services available to assist in the documenting, collection, preservation and continuity of forensic evidence and samples
- relevant hazards, and work health and safety (WHS) requirements.

Assessment Conditions

- Judgment of competence must be based on holistic assessment of the evidence. Assessment methods must confirm consistency of performance over time, rather than a single assessment event.
- This unit of competency is to be assessed in the workplace or a simulated workplace environment. A simulated workplace environment must reflect realistic operational workplace conditions that cover all aspects of workplace performance, including the environment, task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job role environment skills.
- Foundation skills are integral to competent performance of the unit and should not be assessed separately.
- Assessment processes and techniques must be appropriate to the language, literacy and numeracy requirements of the work being performed and the needs of the candidate.
- Knowledge evidence may be collected concurrently with performance evidence or through an independent process, such as workbooks, written assessments or interviews (provided a record is kept in each case).
- Holistic assessment methods include:
 - review of job sheets or journal of activities completed by the candidate
 - review of workplace documentation completed by the candidate
 - feedback from peers, supervisors and industry professionals about the candidate's ability to reliably locate, record and collect forensic samples
 - observation of candidate collecting a range of samples and evidence
 - oral or written questioning of required knowledge, such as judicial protocols, traceability, sample identification and collection methods.
- Access is required to instruments, equipment, materials, workplace documentation, procedures and specifications associated with this unit, including, but not limited to:
 - workplace procedures and standard methods
 - sample containers
 - containers for transporting samples.
- Assessors must satisfy the assessor competency requirements that are in place at the time of the assessment as set by the VET regulator.
- The assessor must demonstrate both technical competence and currency.
- Technical competence can be demonstrated through:
 - relevant VET or other qualification/Statement of Attainment AND/OR
 - relevant workplace experience
- Currency can be demonstrated through:
 - performing the competency being assessed as part of current employment OR
 - having consulted with a laboratory about performing the competency being assessed within the last twelve months.

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