

# LABORATORY SERVICES BUREAU

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## 1. TRACE EVIDENCE COLLECTION

- A. The working surface should be clean and a fresh section of paper applied to the surface to collect any material dislodged during the examination. Only one item should be examined at a time with the surface thoroughly cleaned and fresh paper applied for the examination of any subsequent items. Personal protective equipment should be utilized as necessary for safety as well as to prevent contamination of the evidence.
- B. Special consideration to prevent cross contamination needs to be taken when examining clothing from which questioned and known trace evidence will be collected. The examination of the questioned and known clothing items shall not be performed at the same time and preferably not on the same surface. The questioned and known items should be examined for trace evidence collection in different rooms, such as the examination rooms. If it is necessary to perform the examination of both questioned and known items in the same area, a thorough cleaning of all surfaces and tools is required, and if possible, the questioned clothing items are examined prior to the known clothing items.
- C. The collection of trace evidence begins with a general examination of the item either visually or with the aid of a stereozoom microscope. The location of any significant trace/foreign evidence should be documented textually, photographically, or by illustration as appropriate.
- D. Trace evidence can then be removed from the item with the aid of a tweezers or probe as required and placed in a labeled container appropriate to the evidence.
- E. After the microscopic examination and removal of individual trace evidence is complete, it may be necessary to perform a bulk collection of foreign material from the item. Possible ways to collect foreign material include, but are not limited to, brushing or shaking the item and collecting the material that is dislodged, vacuuming the item with a filter attachment, or applying an adhesive tape-lift to the surface. The debris that is obtained can then be searched with the aid of a stereozoom microscope for significant trace evidence.
- F. Containers and removed material should remain with the submitted item. In the event that the retention in the laboratory of the removed material for further analysis or preservation is necessary, the sample should be sub-itemed in LIMS and documented appropriately.