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Evidence Labelling Chain of Custody and Expert Reports

Practical 06 / Skills laboratory simulation

Aim

Document sealed mock exhibits, maintain chain of custody and explain the limits of expert interpretation.

Principle

Traceability requires unambiguous identifiers and recorded transfers. A resemblance or group match is not an individual identification. Specialist laboratories establish designated conclusions.

Materials and Requirements

- Inert replicas and empty sealed teaching containers
- Mock identifiers, forwarding form and delivery log
- Supplied blood group and DNA report examples

Procedure

1. Use a labelled photo or inert exhibit to record category, identifier and externally observed features. Keep firearm or sharp exhibits in authorised specialist custody.
2. Assign a case code and item number to each authorised model item or photograph. Record received condition, orientation and visible identifiers without reproducing operational details of a weapon.
3. Complete a mock label with unique ID, source, collector, date and condition. Follow the case-specific laboratory form and packaging demonstration.

Continue with step 4 on the next page.

Procedure Continued

Evidence Labelling Chain of Custody and Expert Reports

4. In the packaging simulation check that exhibit ID and label agree, then document packaging and seal condition using the supplied workflow. Keep an observed discrepancy visible in the record.
5. Log each transfer and verify any seal discrepancy. Review the supplied DNA or ABO/RhD record without attempting individual identification from a blood group.
6. Enter date, time, item number, sender, receiver and purpose on each mock handover. Check that times are sequential and each seal or custody issue has a recorded response.
7. Summarise the supplied lab result and indicate its material source and testing scope. Compare class-level information with results requiring additional authorised interpretation.
8. Give a short simulated expert statement describing findings, evidence and limitations without assuming how an injury occurred.
9. Present one concise statement using observed facts and explicitly qualified opinions. Explain how a documented uncertainty or custody gap affects confidence without speculating about events.

Precautions

- Use inert material and do not operate or dismantle exhibits.
- Record facts without reconstructing harm or inferring details unsupported by the record.

Observations and Interpretation

Evidence Labelling Chain of Custody and Expert Reports

Observations and Record

Item	What to record	What it tells you
Exhibit	Identifier, observed features and seal status	Supports traceability
Transfer	From, to, date and purpose	Documents custody
Opinion	Observed facts, method and unresolved questions	Limits conclusions to the evidence

Worked Example

A mock sealed package arrives with a label that does not match the forwarding form. Hold the training transfer and refer the discrepancy through the evidence protocol.

Result and Interpretation

Complete two documented mock transfers and give an objective training opinion about the supplied evidence.

Viva Questions and Answers

What is chain of custody?

The documented history of handling and transfer of identified evidence.

Does a matching ABO result identify a person?

Many people share a group. Individual identification needs much stronger evidence.

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