Washington State Patrol
Crime Laboratory Division

Laboratory Information Management System Operations Manual

January 2016

1.0   Introduction

JusticeTrax (JT) LIMS-Plus is the Crime Laboratory Division (CLD) Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS), a software application for tracking cases and evidence, generating analytical reports, and producing statistical reports and data. For specific instructions on how to use the LIMS-Plus software, please refer to the Help Contents file found within the application.

2.0   LIMS Support

2.01   LIMS Manager

The LIMS Manager performs bureau level strategic planning and project implementation, represents the information technology needs of the bureau and backs up the LIMS Administrators in their responsibilities. The name of the current LIMS Manager is posted on the Forensic Laboratory Services Bureau (FLSB) Portal. Please see Section 9.0 for information on the FLSB Portal.

2.02   LIMS Administrator

The LIMS Administrator supports the JT application, maintains and protects the data, provides hardware and software support related to the CLD and is the primary contact for the crime laboratories for LIMS assistance. The names of the current LIMS Administrators are posted on the FLSB Portal.

3.0   Laboratory Management

Laboratory management is comprised of the individuals within FLSB having operational and or technical responsibility of the crime laboratories. Laboratory management includes the Crime Laboratory Division Manager, the Laboratory Managers, and Laboratory Supervisors.

4.0   Local Point(s) of Contact

Designated laboratory staff act as the primary laboratory contact for LIMS Support. Each laboratory has at least one Local Point of Contact and can have as many as three. Points of Contact are selected by the Laboratory Manager. Staff with this designation are expected to know and understand their responsibilities as Points of Contact. The list of current Points of Contact is posted on the FLSB Portal.

4.01   Primary Responsibilities
Primary responsibilities of Local Points of Contact include:
- Provide training to new personnel in the use of LIMS-Plus.
- Communicate problems, ideas or solutions relating to information technology and LIMS-Plus to LIMS Support.
- Participate in LIMS committee meetings to:
  - Establish guidelines.
  - Recommend policy improvements.
  - Discuss LIMS issues.
  - Identify possible solutions.
  - Work on new directions for LIMS-Plus.
- Take LIMS-Plus and IT-related direction from LIMS Support.
- Assist LIMS Support with IT-related asset inventory control.

Local Points of Contact may also perform limited IT-related functions such as:
- Help laboratory staff add a new printer to their Windows profile, using the "Add a Printer" wizard.
- Reset a bar code label printer.
- Work with LIMS Support or other agency IT technicians to resolve a LIMS or IT problem.

Some Local Points of Contact may also have permissions to "Add a new Agency". See the list of current Points of Contact posted on the FLSB Portal to see who has these permissions.

4.02 Special Rights In LIMS-Plus
Local Points of Contact may be granted temporary permissions when working with LIMS Support.

5.0 Requesting LIMS-Plus Assistance

LIMS-Plus assistance is requested from LIMS Support via the Information Technology Division's (ITD) work order system. This can be done by sending an email to 'ITD Customer Services Group' (addressing the email to 'ITD Customer Services Group' results in the automatic generation of a work order) or by accessing the work order system from the agency's Intranet site (http://iwspsp/default.aspx). LIMS Support may be contacted directly as well, especially for urgent situations. Routine requests submitted via the work order system may include, but are not limited to:
- Chain of Custody edits.
- Case or evidence deletions.
- Add new Laboratory Staff.
- Modify a Laboratory Staff Name (e.g. name change due to marriage).

6.0 Requesting LIMS-Plus Modifications

If modifications are needed in the LIMS-Plus application, the modification is submitted through the requester's chain of command to LIMS Support for consultation and assessment. If approved by the LIMS Manager and Laboratory Management, and the change is under the control of LIMS Support to make (for example, a new service must be added to the application), the approved change will be made. Some modifications may need to be submitted to JT for accommodation. Others still, depending on the scope and complexity of the requested change, may be actual projects which would then be submitted through the agency's Project Initiation Process. Please see the WSP Regulation Manual (Section 10.18.010) for more information on the Project Initiation Process.

7.0 Modifications to the LIMS Operations Manual

To submit modifications to this Operations Manual, the FLSB Document Review and Approval process is followed.

8.0 LIMS-Plus Training

Local Points of Contact or Laboratory Management-appointed designees provide training to new personnel in the use of JusticeTrax LIMS-Plus. LIMS Support may also provide training to new Local Points of Contact or others, upon request. To request to have LIMS Support provide LIMS-Plus training, the request is submitted through the requestor's chain of command to LIMS Support (via the ITD work order system) for assignment and scheduling. The training is based upon a review of the contents of the CLD LIMS Operations Manual and/or the LIMS-Plus Help Contents file.

9.0   FLSB Portal

The Forensic Laboratory Services Bureau SharePoint site, otherwise known as the FLSB Portal, is an agency hosted, internal website where commonly referenced materials which support standard operating procedures are stored. The FLSB Portal address for LIMS supporting materials is http://teamsites/sites/flsb1/IT/LIMS%20Tools/Forms/AllItems.aspx.

10.0   LIMS-Plus Security

10.01 User Names and Accounts

LIMS-Plus User Accounts are created for all laboratory staff members needing LIMS access. LIMS-Plus User Names are typically based on the Active Directory Services log-ons generated by ITD and are assigned by LIMS Support. When new account(s) are needed, submit a work order and include the information below. This information is needed to setup the appropriate account(s).

There is a new employee in the _____ Crime Laboratory.

Effective Date: _____   Employee Name: _____
Employee Number: _____
Employee Title: _____
District Detachment: _____ Mail Stop: _____
Phone Number (direct dial and micro): _____
Laboratory Functional Area: _____
If in Chemistry, please provide the employee's educational credentials:

_____

Instructions:
ITD: Please set up for network access, internet, e-mail, and CLD LIMS.
FLSB Secretary: Please add to Division phone list.
ESD: Please add to the WSP Phonebook.

Please call the Laboratory Manager with any questions.

Once the LIMS account is created, LIMS Support will contact the involved party(ies), provide them with the information necessary to begin using the new account and will generate any necessary laboratory staff bar code labels.

If modifications to existing accounts are needed, submit a work order. Within the work order, indicate the needed change.

10.02 Passwords/PINs

Temporary passwords and Personal Identification Numbers (PINs) are assigned for new users or for someone whom has requested a password or PIN reset. The temporary password and or PIN are then changed by the user once he/she logs on.

Please see the WSP Regulation Manual (Section 15.02.020, Employee Access to Electronic Information) for the agency's password policy. This password policy is in effect for the LIMS Application; however due to application limitations, LIMS cannot enforce certain segments of this policy, specifically the "(upper and lower case)" criteria of 15.02.020 B.1. Please see the LIMS Help Content file for guidelines and constraints on LIMS-Plus passwords.

PINs must be a four-number combination.

10.03 Logging Off

Users will take steps to ensure that no one else can enter or change data in the application using their log-on and security levels, per WSP Regulation Manual Section 15.02.020 (Employee Access to Electronic Information).

LIMS-Plus will automatically log off application users if the application is left inactive for a specified time. Laboratory Managers are responsible for determining their laboratories specific periods of inactivity.

10.04 Roles and Permissions

Roles can be made as needed, per Laboratory Managers discretion, and are created in LIMS-Plus by LIMS Support. Roles are created to reflect the rights needed by groups of users.

Permission levels are determined by Laboratory Managers and the LIMS Manager and are set by LIMS Support. Security permissions dictate what kind of rights users have in LIMS-Plus and are managed through Roles. Permissions accumulate based on the number of roles applied to an individual user.

Roles and permissions are maintained in the LIMS-Plus application. To review the roles and permissions, please contact LIMS Support.

11.0 Entering a New Case in LIMS-Plus

Seven sections (or tabs) comprise the case structure in LIMS-Plus:
> Case Info
> Agency
> Offenses
> Individuals
> Evidence
> Requests
> Local Data

These tabs and how they are used by laboratory staff are explained in the following sections of the manual.

When entering a new case in LIMS-Plus, the following basic steps are performed:
- Enter the agency name and agency case number.
- Enter the offense using its UCR (Uniform Crime Reporting) code and date of offense.
- Enter the suspect(s) and/or victim(s) information.
- Enter each sealed entity of evidence with its appropriate chain of custody.
- Enter the storage location for each sealed entity of evidence.
- Create the appropriate "Request(s) for Service" and link to the request(s) (by "relating") the offense, suspects/victims, and evidence received.
- Assign the laboratory case number.
- Print evidence bar code labels and affix to each sealed entity of evidence.
- Print the "Request for Service" bar code labels and affix to the corresponding Request for Laboratory Examination (RFLE) form(s). An Assignment Notification Report, which also contains a "Request for Service" bar code, may also be printed.

The steps outlined above do not necessarily need to occur in the order listed, nor are they a full representation of all steps that could occur for any given case. Additionally, these steps assume a properly submitted case. If a case is not received in the fashion prescribed in the Forensic Services Guide, see the applicable section(s) in this manual on how the variations are handled within LIMS, as well as the appropriate section(s) of the CLD Operations Manual.

For more information on the features available within the case structure, as well as additional information on how to enter a case, please refer to the contents of this Operations Manual along with the Help Contents file.

12.0 Assigning Laboratory Case Numbers

Where an RFLE for a brand new case initially enters the Crime Laboratory Division is where the laboratory case number is assigned.

If there is an existing laboratory case number, in most situations, that number is used instead of assigning a new laboratory case number. This means **agency case numbers must be searched prior to assigning the laboratory case number.**

Below are steps to follow to determine the appropriate laboratory case number to use:

1) Search for the agency case number using the "Agency Search" feature with "Contain" enabled for the most comprehensive results.
    a. See the FLSB Portal for more information on how to perform an effective search in LIMS.

2) If a single valid matching agency case number is found, use the laboratory case number of that match instead of creating a new laboratory case number.
    a. Valid is defined as *the agency case number AND agency name match.*

3) If numerous valid matches are identified involving multiple laboratory case numbers, first use the evidence received as a guide in determining the laboratory case number.
    a. For example, if you are in Marysville and you have received Documents evidence and found matching laboratory cases in Spokane and Tacoma, use the Spokane laboratory case number since Documents Examinations are performed only in that laboratory. This is only one example. There are numerous other examples.

4) If using the received evidence as a guide is not helpful in determining which laboratory case number to use, it is the responsibility of the receiving laboratory to determine which laboratory case number to use.
    a. This determination should include having discussions with other possibly impacted laboratories.
    b. If the determination is to use the receiving laboratory's laboratory case number, ensure that all of the existing matches are related in LIMS and insert a note into the Synopsis field of the Case Info Tab to explain the decision made.

NOTE: See Section 21.0 Transferring Requests between Labs if the RFLE in question involves a request transferred from another laboratory, as this may influence how the RFLE is handled.

13.0 Deleting a Laboratory Case
At times, it may be necessary to delete a case from LIMS. Two examples that would require a case deletion include:
- During entry of a brand new case, a user inadvertently assigned a bad laboratory case number (for example, the assigned laboratory case number does not fit the laboratory case number format)
- An expungement is mandated by the courts.

To address a case with a bad laboratory case number, the following is done:

In the case to be deleted, the user enters a note in the Synopsis field of the Case Info Tab to indicate that the case should not be used and that a deletion has been requested. The note includes the date of the user's request and their initials.

The user re-enters the brand new case, assigns the correct laboratory case number to it and then submits a work order to request the case deletion. When the case is deleted, the person performing the deletion (e.g. LIMS Support, etc.) will notify the user via email that the deletion has occurred.

Expungements are handled similarly:
In the case to be deleted, the user enters a note in the Synopsis field of the Case Info Tab to indicate that the case is to be expunged. The note includes the date of the user's request and their initials. The user then submits a work order to request the case deletion and the request for deletion is preserved with the expungement order. When the case is deleted, the person performing the deletion (e.g. LIMS Support, etc.) will notify the user via email that the deletion has occurred.

There may be other situations which may require a case deletion. If so, contact LIMS Support via the work order system for further assistance.

14.0 "CASE INFO" Tab

The "Synopsis" field is used to record transfer information, as well as other notes regarding case comments, amendments, chain of custody edits, case deletions, etc.

"Related Laboratory Cases" is used to relate other laboratory cases to the open case in order to maintain a coherent relationship between multiple laboratory cases.

Laboratory staff also print the chain of custody report (CaseCoC.rpt) for the case from this location.

15.0 "AGENCY" Tab

The "Agency" Tab is used to track agencies and agency case numbers (ACNs) involved in the case. For each agency entered for a case, there is normally an associated ACN. One laboratory case may have multiple agencies with multiple ACNs entered or even the same agency with multiple ACNs entered; however, one agency and its associated ACN must be identified as the primary agency for a case.

Normally, the primary agency is the agency that appears under the "Examination Requested By" section of the RFLE and the primary ACN is the number found in the "Primary Agency Case Number" section of the RFLE. Exceptions to this are permissible. Additionally, if a case being received will be added under an existing laboratory case, the agency and associated ACN identified as primary may be changed as appropriate. It is left to the discretion of laboratory personnel involved in the case to determine which agency and its associated ACN should be primary for the case.

> NOTE:
> The agency marked as primary, along with its associated ACN, appears on the LIMS-generated analytical report in the 'agency name' and 'agency case number' heading.

If the agency provides additional ACNs elsewhere on the RFLE and or provides evidence marked with ACNs not included on the RFLE, then those ACNs should be entered under the laboratory case as well.

If the RFLE is missing information necessary to complete the entry of the "Agency" Tab information, or the information provided is not clear, it is the responsibility of the PEC and the laboratory manager or his/her designee to collect the missing information and or decide how best to enter the information into LIMS.

Example:
> Agency 'Fake PD' submits one RFLE representing a brand new case with ACN '1234567' entered in the "Primary Agency Case Number" section. Two evidence items are submitted; one with the ACN '1234567'on it and the other with ACN '0002222' on it. The requested service is to compare the evidence. In LIMS, one laboratory case number is issued and both ACNs are entered for 'Fake PD' under the "Agency" tab. ACN '1234567' is marked as the primary.

For questions regarding laboratory case number assignment, see Section 10.0 of this manual.

The CLD agency case number format is to exclude all hyphens from the ACN to streamline data entry, increase the accuracy of ACN searches and help eliminate unnecessary variations often found in ACNs.

16.0 "OFFENSE" Tab

Whenever this information is available on the RFLE, the "Offense" and "Date" shall be entered into LIMS and related to the appropriate Request(s) for Service. The "City", "State", "County" and "Country" fields fill by default and are based on the primary agency. Additional info may be recorded as needed.

The offense 'Officer Involved Shooting' may be added to a case when appropriate. Information entered and relationships to requests should follow the guidelines listed in the previous paragraph. 'Officer Involved Shooting' should not be entered as the sole offense for a case.

The offense 'Cold Case' may be added to a case when appropriate. Information entered and relationships to requests should follow the guidelines listed in the first paragraph of this section. 'Cold Case' should not be entered as the sole offense for a case.

17.0 "INDIVIDUALS" Tab

The minimum required fields in the "Individuals" Tab are "Last Name" and "Type". If additional information relating to individuals involved in the case (e.g. Suspect or Victim) is available on the RFLE, this information shall be recorded as well, with the exception of Social Security Number (SSN). Individuals are then related to the appropriate Request(s) for Service.

Individuals' names shall be entered using all upper case format (e.g. SMITH, JANE) to provide a standard presentation of this information from within LIMS.
NOTE: LIMS reporting tools can format Individuals' names based on the needs of a given report. So, for example, though the name may have been entered using all upper case, if a particular report requires that names be presented in title capitalization that can be done.

To assist with analytical reports generated by LIMS-Plus the "SSN" field may be used to manually control the order which individuals are listed on the report. This is accomplished by placing numbers in this field corresponding to the order which they should appear on the report, with the highest number appearing first. If 10 or more individuals are being assigned numbers this way, single digit numbers should be preceded by a 0 (ex. "09"). Individuals with this field blank will be placed according to the default order.

18.0 "EVIDENCE" Tab

18.01 Entering Evidence

Each sealed container/package (referred to as an "entity") of evidence shall be logged into LIMS-Plus as a submission and receive an evidence bar code. The evidence description must include the item number, (when it is available/known), the physical description and the sealed condition.

Evidence descriptions may be edited in LIMS; if the description is edited, a new barcode label must be printed so the new description matches the evidence label.

18.02 Relating Evidence Submission(s) to Request(s) for Service

All evidence submissions submitted with a RFLE are related to the associated request(s) for service described on that RFLE. Modifications to this process will be at the Laboratory Manager's discretion.

18.03 Unsealed Evidence

The "Evid. Condition" field is used to record when evidence is not received in a properly sealed condition as is outlined in the Forensic Services Guide. There are three choices to select:
- •Received damaged
- •Received improperly sealed
- •Received unsealed

"Received damaged" is used when evidence packaging (not the shipping container) has been torn or mangled to the extent in which the contents within are available for tampering or removal, or the contents are now actually outside of the original evidence packaging, and in general, the condition of the evidence packaging will require lab staff to repackage the contents.

"Received improperly sealed" is used for occasions similar to when the evidence packaging (not the shipping container) may have the evidence tape applied, but the initials are missing or do not cross from the tape to the package, or other such similar errors.

"Received unsealed" is used when the evidence packaging (not the shipping container) has had no attempt to seal made upon it when it should be in a sealed condition. If the evidence item is a door, a naked gun, a bicycle, a sink, a refrigerator, or other such 'hard to seal' items, then follow the instructions in the Forensic Services Guide. Do not use "Received unsealed", as these items are expected to be delivered in such condition.

It is also required that a note be entered into either the "Notes" or "Synopsis" fields (whether on the Evidence tab or Case Info tab) indicating the steps taken by staff to establish an appropriate seal.

18.04 Evidence Kits

Evidence Kits can be created and used to eliminate redundancy in data entry. See the Help Contents file for more information.

18.05 Evidence Barcode Labels

Evidence bar code labels (submission or item) will not be used on anything other than evidence or evidence containers.

18.06 Itemizing Evidence

Itemizing evidence typically occurs in two situations.

- Itemization <u>can</u> be done to provide an additional level of detail for the report writing process. This type of itemization is voluntary, does not reflect the creation of new, separate sealed entities, and is left to the discretion of the Laboratory Manager.

- Itemization <u>must</u> be done if evidence is created or removed from an existing piece of evidence and is placed into a separate, sealed entity. There are two ways to enter newly created evidence into LIMS-Plus:
  - o Parent/Child.
  - o Parent/New Parent.

NOTE: In order to maintain the chain of custody, itemizing evidence shall be done while evidence is in the laboratory staff member's possession.

For more information on how to itemize submissions, please refer to the Help Contents file.

18.06.01 Parent/Child
The Parent/Child process should be used when a parent submission has part of its content physically removed from the sealed evidence container and that content becomes a separate, sealed entity unto itself. For example, when fibers are removed from a blanket, placed on a microscope slide and then sealed into a slide container, the parent submission (blanket) is itemized to reflect the creation of the new evidence (sealed slide container with fibers). The separate sealed entity is then referenced as the child or itemized submission. It should also be noted that a child submission can be further itemized. The new item is then referred to as a grandchild or sub-item submission.

The new child submission must contain a description of the contents. Custody information is inherited from the parent submission.

Child submission numbers can be:
- System-generated.
- Manually entered based on the agency or scientist-assigned item numbers.
- System-generated plus manually entered based on agency or scientist-assigned item numbers.

See Section18.07 Evidence Numbering below for more information.

18.06.02 Parents/New Parent
Usually each parent submission is itemized for each additional sealed entity that is created or removed from it. However, if multiple parent submissions have evidence created or removed from them that will then be packaged together into a single sealed evidence container, instead of itemizing multiple parent submissions, a brand new parent submission can be created.

To create a New Parent:

On the Evidence tab, choose <Add Evidence>.

For the Submitting Agency and Agency Rep fields, enter the agency and representative name found on the RFLE in the 'Examination Requested By' section.

In the Description field, enter the item number and concisely describe the new parent (the evidence label can display only up to the first 50 characters of the Description field).

In the Notes field, thoroughly describe the source of the contents, who collected the contents, and when the contents were collected (e.g. DLC-1 contains the extracts from SEA001, SEA004 and SEA005. This item was created on 09/27/2010 by Diana Cotyledon). The use of the Notes field may be omitted if description, itemization, and chain of custody provide this information.

See Section **18.07 Evidence Numbering** below for information on evidence numbering schemas.

Initial custody information is recorded at the time the scientist transfers the evidence to another lab staff member and begins in the scientist's possession.

Print the evidence barcode and affix it to the new parent container.

Relate the new parent to the appropriate request. This new parent may now also be itemized.

Write the new parent on the RFLE. If the new parent will be returned to an agency which requires CLD to use a non-WSP chain of custody form in place of the RFLE, complete that form for the new parent in addition to adding the new parent to the RFLE. See a PEC for assistance with this process.

See Section **18.07 Evidence Numbering** below for more information.

18.07 Evidence Numbering

Each laboratory may use an evidence numbering schema based on the four options below. The schema used in each laboratory is determined by the individual Laboratory Manager. Each schema is based on system-generated parent submission numbers that are comprised of the laboratory abbreviation plus a numerical count. For example, the system-generated parent submission number for Seattle is SEA001, SEA002, SEA003, etc.

Evidence numbering of the parent submission (i.e. SEA001, TAC001) reflects the schema of the lab that initially receives the evidence and enters it into LIMS.

Laboratories may see a mix of submission numbers under one laboratory case (LAT001, SEA001) if that case involves transfers from or to another laboratory and additional evidence is subsequently received and recorded.

Itemized items (children, grandchildren) default to the evidence schema used by their parent but can be changed as needed and as described below.

18.07.01 Available Evidence Numbering Schema

1. **System–generated submission numbers for both parent and child.**
   This schema is based on a system-generated parent submission number that is comprised of the laboratory abbreviation plus a numerical count as well as system-generated child submission number that is comprised of a numerical count of each child within the parent submission.

2. **System-generated parent submission number and manually entered item number for the child.**
   This schema is based on a system-generated parent submission number that is comprised of the laboratory abbreviation with a numerical count plus a manually entered item number for the child. The manually entered number can be the agency assigned item number or a scientist-assigned item number. If it is a scientist-assigned number, it will be comprised of the scientist's initials and a number (initials then number).

3. **System-generated parent submission number and system–generated prefix plus manually entered item number for the child.**

   This schema is based on a system-generated parent submission number that is comprised of the laboratory abbreviation with a numerical count plus a system-generated prefix plus a manually entered item number for the child. Meaning, the child number will have a numerical count prefix, plus a manually entered number which can be the agency assigned item number or a scientist-assigned item number. If it is a scientist-assigned number, it will be comprised of the scientist's initials and a number (initials then number).

4. **System-generated or System-generated plus manually entered scientist-assigned parent submission number.**

This schema is based on a system-generated parent submission number that is comprised of the laboratory abbreviation with a numerical count. The scientist-assigned number will be comprised of the scientist's initials and a number (initials then number).

18.08 Deleting Evidence

In the LIMS-Plus database structure, one field can be connected to another even if the link is not obvious. Evidence is one of these fields. It has links to requests, results, chains of custody, and other evidence items. Deleting an evidence item can have serious repercussions. For example, if you delete a parent, the child, both chains of custody and any related results will also be deleted. For this reason, deleting evidence items is only performed by LIMS Support or the CLD Manager's designee. Evidence submissions are typically deleted in the following situations:

- The submission was initially entered in error
- An expungement is mandated by the courts

Requests for deletions are sent to LIMS Support via the work order system via email. The employee requesting the deletion will include their immediate supervisor in the communication chain. If the deletion is due to an expungement, the request for deletion is preserved with the expungement order. The requestor will enter a note in the Synopsis field of the Case Info Tab to indicate that a deletion was requested, along with the date of their request and their initials. The person performing the deletion (e.g. LIMS Support, etc.) will insert a note in the Synopsis field to indicate that the deletion occurred, along with the date of the deletion, the work order number and their initials.

18.09 Chain of Custody Edits

Chain of custody edits for a given evidence submission will be performed by LIMS Support or the CLD Manager designee only. Requests for edits must be submitted via email through the work order system. The requestor will include their immediate supervisor in the communication chain and will enter a note in the Synopsis field of the Case Info Tab to indicate that an edit was requested, along with the date of their request and their initials. The person performing the edit (e.g. LIMS Support, etc.) will insert a note in the Synopsis field to indicate that the edit was made, along with the date of the edit, the work order number and their initials and will then notify the requestor via email that the work has been completed. The requestor is then responsible for placing a copy of the email into the corresponding case file for preservation.

19.0 Evidence Transfers

19.01 Chain of Custody

As evidence is received, transferred, and analyzed in a laboratory, its travels are captured as chain of custody evidence transactions.

Chain of custody for the Crime Laboratory Division begins when the laboratory receives the evidence and does not end until the evidence is released from the laboratory's care. The RFLE and the LIMS-Plus chain of custody records must accurately reflect the movements of the evidence as it moves through the analytical work flow.

19.02 Temporary Vault Storage

Under the Laboratory Manager's discretion, vault storage locations can be created and used within LIMS to temporarily house evidence before processing and entry into LIMS.

If evidence cannot be processed and transferred to its storage location in the vault the same day the evidence was received, the use of a temporary storage location will be used. A temporary storage location will typically be a rolling cart or a box or a shelf in the vault designated as such. Evidence received that cannot be processed in the same day it was received will be placed into these temporary locations and placed into the vault until the lab staff member has the opportunity to complete the evidence receipt process. The chain of custody records in LIMS will reflect this occurrence.

19.03 Secure Transactions
Secure transactions are mandatory whenever a laboratory staff member is involved in the evidence transaction. Exceptions to this rule are rare and must be approved by local laboratory management and documented in the Notes field of the chain of custody. A transaction is considered "Secure" when a lab staff bar code is scanned and the lab staff member enters his/her PIN. "Via" is also not a required field for secured transactions.

19.04 Secure Transport Carriers

Evidence is routinely received and/or released by the laboratory via secure transport carriers. A secure transport carrier is a company such as United Parcel Service, Federal Express or the United States Postal Service. The staff member that signs for the package being delivered by the secure transport carrier is responsible for inventorying the evidence, signing the RFLE and will be included in the LIMS chain of custody using a secure transaction.

19.05 Agency Representatives Named for the Agency
Within LIMS, each agency shall have an agency representative reflecting the name of the agency. For example, the Marysville Police Department will have an agency representative called "Marysville Police Department". This agency representative is used when releasing evidence via secure transport carriers and is also used if the evidence is received via secure transport carrier and there is no signature in the "Submitted by:" section of the RFLE.

19.06 Evidence Tracking
Movement of evidence, commonly referred to as evidence transactions or evidence transfers, is tracked in LIMS using either the Initial Transfer section of a New Submission page or the Evidence Transfer function.

Regardless of which interface is used, completing the "From", "To" and "Then To" custody information can be done together in one transaction (completing "From", "To" and "Then To") or done in two separate transactions (first completing "From" and "To" and then later "From" and "To" again).

19.07 Initial Transfer Section
The Initial Transfer section of a New Submission page is typically used to record the initial lines of custody when an evidence item is first entered into LIMS. The initial transfer captures who submitted the evidence to the laboratory ("From"), which laboratory staff member received the evidence ("To") as well as where that laboratory staff member then moved the evidence out of their possession to another location or person ("Then To"). Recording the initial transfer may also be performed from the Evidence Transfer function.

19.08 Evidence Transfer Function
Subsequent transfers of the evidence are recorded using the Evidence Transfer function. The Evidence Transfer function allows the transfer of multiple items at the same time, whether or not they are currently located in the same place or with the same person. When transferring evidence back to varying agencies, personnel, or locations, the user must click Apply to update the current transactions before changing the "Then To" location.

If a user leaves the "From" field blank when creating a transfer, LIMS-Plus will automatically pull this information when processing the transfer. When possible, the "From" field should be filled in. If a user

leaves the "From" field blank, care and attention to detail should be used, otherwise unintentional discrepancies in the chain of custody could result.

19.09 Using "VIA' and "Note"
It is mandatory to use "VIA" in evidence transactions to indicate the method of submission and release whenever a secure transport carrier is involved in the transaction. Otherwise, the use of "VIA" is optional.

It is mandatory to use "NOTE" in evidence transactions to capture secure transport carrier shipping or tracking numbers whenever a secure transport carrier is involved in the transaction. Otherwise, the use of "NOTE" is optional. For example, "NOTE" may also be used to capture other transaction related comments, as appropriate.

20.0 Routine Evidence Transactions

Below are five regularly recurring evidence transactions.

20.01 Receiving Evidence from an Outside Agency
(First Time Evidence has been submitted to the Division)

A. If completing the custody information in one transaction, complete the "From", "To", and "Then To" information along with the "VIA" and "Note" boxes for the "From" portion.
- The "From" field reflects the agency representative's name contained in the "Submitted By:" portion of the RFLE.
- The "To" field reflects the laboratory staff member who received the evidence. This is secured by the laboratory staff member entering his/her PIN.
- When a secure transport carrier is involved in the transaction, "VIA" must be used to indicate the method of evidence submission and "NOTE" must be used to collect shipping or tracking numbers. Otherwise, the use of "VIA" and "NOTE" is optional.
- All date fields reflect the actual dates of the transactions.
- The time recorded for the "From" and "To" transaction is the time that the evidence arrived at the laboratory's evidence counter. For example, if an agency representative arrived at the laboratory's evidence counter at 1:33 p.m. with 50 cases, the time for all 50 cases is 1:33 p.m.
- The time recorded for the "Then To" transaction is dependent on what is occurring with the evidence:
  - If moving the evidence into the vault, the time is when the transaction is entered into LIMS.
  - If providing the evidence directly to another person, the time reflects the occurrence of the actual event. In keeping with the batch approach, the time recorded is the time when the effort to move the evidence began. For example, if the evidence is moving to a scientist, and that scientist arrived at the evidence counter at 1:15 p.m. to get 50 cases, the time for all 50 cases is 1:15 p.m.

B. If completing the custody information in two separate transactions, first complete the "From" and "To" information along with the "VIA" and "NOTE" boxes for the "From" portion. Use the steps described in Section 20.01A the section above.

Second, complete the subsequent "From/To" transaction to transfer the evidence from the laboratory staff member to another location or person:
- The "From" field reflects the laboratory staff member who has possession of the evidence. This is secured by the laboratory staff member entering his/her PIN.
- The "To" field reflects the location or person the evidence is going to. If the evidence is going to another laboratory staff member, that person must enter his/her PIN.

- The date field reflects the actual date(s) of the transaction(s).
- The time recorded is dependent on what is occurring with the evidence:
  - If moving the evidence into the vault, the time is when the transaction is entered into LIMS;
  - If providing the evidence to another person, the time reflects the occurrence of the actual event. In keeping with the batch approach, the time recorded is the time when the effort to move the evidence began. For example, if the evidence is moving to a scientist, and that scientist arrived at the evidence counter at 1:15 p.m. to get 50 cases, the time for all 50 cases is 1:15 p.m.

20.02 Receiving Evidence Back From an Agency for Additional Analyses

A. If an agency is bringing evidence back to the division which has previously been entered into the system:
- Do not create a new evidence submission; continue to add to the existing chain of custody in LIMS by using the Evidence Transfer function and the existing barcode label.
- The "From" line must be filled in for this particular situation; it cannot be left blank.
- The "From" field reflects the agency representative's name contained in the "Submitted By:" portion of the RFLE.
  - This means that the last recorded line of custody in LIMS (showing release back to the agency) and the line of custody about to be added (showing entry back into the system) may be different.
- Complete the remaining steps as outlined in Section 20.01 above.
- When the evidence label is scanned, a message stating 'the evidence has been previously returned to the agency, do you want to continue?' will be generated. Click on 'Yes' to proceed.
- If desired, add a note to the "Evidence Note" field to indicate the evidence is coming back into the laboratory for additional work.

20.03 Releasing Evidence to an Outside Agency

A. If completing the custody information in one transaction, complete the "From", "To" and "Then To" information along with the "VIA" and "Notes" boxes for the "THEN TO" portion.
- The "From" field reflects the last location of the evidence. If the evidence is coming from another laboratory staff member, that person must enter his/her PIN.
- The "To" field reflects the laboratory staff member who is taking the evidence. This is secured by the laboratory staff member entering his/her PIN.
- The "Then To" field reflects the agency representative's name that the evidence is being released to.
- When a secure transport carrier is involved in the transaction "VIA" must be used to indicate the method of evidence release and "NOTE" must be used to collect shipping or tracking numbers. Otherwise, the use of "VIA" and "NOTE" is optional.
- The date field reflects the actual date(s) of the transactions(s).
- The time recorded for the "From" and "To" transactions is the time the laboratory staff member begins collecting the evidence for release, regardless of the planned release method. For example, if 50 cases are collected for packaging for subsequent secure transport shipping, and the effort started at 1:22 p.m., then 1:22 p.m. is used for all 50 cases.
- Keeping with this "batch" approach, the time recorded for the "Then To" transaction is the time that the evidence is either released to the agency representative or the time the evidence is ready to be released to the secure transport carrier. Marking this time on the RFLE is required.
- Ensure the "evidence being returned" field is enabled (has a check mark in the box).

B.   If releasing the evidence in two separate transactions, <u>first</u> complete the "From" and "To" information as described in Section 20.03A directly above.

Second, complete the subsequent "FROM/TO" transaction to transfer the evidence from the laboratory staff member to its final disposition:

- The "From" field reflects the laboratory staff member who has possession of the evidence. This is secured by the laboratory staff member entering his/her PIN.
- The "To" field reflects the agency representative's name that the evidence is being released to.
- When a secure transport carrier is involved in the transaction, "VIA" must be used to indicate the method of evidence release and "NOTE" must be used to collect shipping or tracking numbers. Otherwise, the use of "VIA" and "NOTE" is optional.
- The date field reflects the actual date(s) of the transaction(s).
- Keeping with the 'batch' approach, the time recorded for the "To" transaction is the time that the evidence is released to the agency representative or the time the evidence is ready to be released to the secure transport carrier. Marking this time on the RFLE is required.
- Ensure the "evidence being returned" field is enabled (has a check mark in the box).

20.04 Receiving Evidence from another Laboratory

A.   If completing the custody information in one transaction, complete the "From", "To", and "Then To" information along with the "VIA" and "Notes" boxes for the "From" portion.

- The "From" field reflects the last location of the evidence (this may be left blank to allow LIMS to retrieve the information or the appropriate storage location barcode label may be scanned). If the evidence is coming from another laboratory staff member, that person must enter his/her PIN.
- The "To" field reflects the laboratory staff member who is taking the evidence. This is secured by the laboratory staff member entering his/her PIN.
- When a secure transport carrier is involved in the "FROM" transaction, "VIA" must be used to indicate the method of evidence release and "NOTE" must be used to collect shipping or tracking numbers.   Otherwise, the use of "VIA" and "NOTE" is optional.
- The "Then To" field reflects the next location the evidence is moving to. If to another laboratory staff member, that staff member also enters his/her PIN.
- All date fields reflect the actual dates of the transactions.
- The time recorded for the "From" and "To" transaction is the time that the evidence arrived at the laboratory's evidence counter. For example, secure transport carrier delivery arrived at the laboratory's evidence counter at 1:33 p.m. with 50 cases, the time for all 50 cases is 1:33 p.m.
- The time recorded for the "Then To" transaction is dependent on what is occurring with the evidence:
  - If moving the evidence into the vault, the time is when the transaction is entered into LIMS;
  - If providing the evidence to another person, the time reflects the occurrence of the actual event. In keeping with the batch approach, the time recorded is the time when the effort to move the evidence began. For example, if the evidence is moving to a scientist, and that scientist arrived at the evidence counter at 1:15 p.m. to get 50 cases, the time for all 50 cases is 1:15 p.m.

B.   If completing the custody information in two separate transactions, <u>first</u> complete the "From" and "To" information along with the "VIA" and "NOTE" boxes for the "From" portion. Use the steps described in Section 20.04A above.

Second, complete the subsequent "From/To" transaction to transfer the evidence from the laboratory staff member to another location or person:

- The "From" field reflects the laboratory staff member who has possession of the evidence. This is secured by the laboratory staff member entering his/her PIN.
- The "To" field reflects the location or person the evidence is going to. If the evidence is going to another laboratory staff member, that person must enter his/her PIN.
- The date field reflects the actual date(s) of the transaction(s).
- The time recorded is dependent on what is occurring with the evidence:
- If moving the evidence into the vault, the time is when the transaction is entered into LIMS;
  - If providing the evidence to another person, the time reflects the occurrence of the actual event. In keeping with the batch approach, if the time recorded is the time when the effort to move the evidence began. For example, if the evidence is moving to a scientist, and that scientist arrived at the evidence counter at 1:15 p.m. to get 50 cases, the time for all 50 cases is 1:15 p.m.

20.05 Releasing Evidence to another Laboratory

A. If completing the custody information in one transaction, complete the "From", "To" and "Then To" information along with the "VIA" and "Notes" boxes for the "THEN TO" portion.

- The "From" field reflects the last location of the evidence (this field may be left blank to allow LIMS to retrieve the information). If the evidence is coming from another laboratory staff member, that person must enter his/her PIN.
- The "To" field reflects the laboratory staff member who is taking the evidence. This is secured by the laboratory staff member entering his/her PIN.
- The "Then To" field reflects the appropriate "TRANS-XXX" storage location for the lab the evidence is being sent to or reflects the name of the laboratory staff member the evidence is being released to. If to a laboratory staff member, that staff member also enters his/her PIN.
- When a secure transport carrier is involved in the "Then To" transaction, "VIA" must be used to indicate the method of evidence release and "NOTE" must be used to collect shipping or tracking numbers
- All date fields reflect the actual dates of the transactions.
- The time recorded for the "From" and "To" transactions is the time the laboratory staff member begins collecting the evidence for release, regardless of planned release method. For example, if 50 cases are collected for packaging for subsequent secure transport shipping, and the effort started at 1:22 p.m., then 1:22 p.m. is used for all 50 cases.
- Keeping with this 'batch' approach, the time recorded for the "Then To" transaction is the time that the evidence is released to the laboratory staff member or the time the evidence is ready to be released to the secure transport carrier.

B. If releasing the evidence in two separate transactions, first complete the "From" and "To" information following the steps described in Section 20.05A above.

Second, complete the subsequent "FROM/TO" transaction to transfer the evidence from the laboratory staff member to its next location:

- The "From" field reflects the laboratory staff member who has possession of the evidence. This is secured by entering a PIN.
- The "To" field reflects the appropriate "TRANS-XXX" location for the lab the evidence is being sent to or reflects the name of the laboratory staff member the evidence is being released to. If to a laboratory staff member, that staff member also enters his/her PIN.
- When a secure transport carrier is involved in the transaction, "VIA" must be used to indicate the method of evidence release and "NOTE" must be used to collect shipping or tracking numbers.   Otherwise, the use of "VIA" and "NOTE" is optional.
- All date fields reflect the actual dates of the transactions.

- Keeping with the 'batch' approach, the time recorded for the "To" transaction is the time that the evidence is released to the laboratory staff member or the time the evidence is ready to be released to the secure transport carrier. Marking this time on the RFLE is required.

21.0 Transferring Requests between Labs

If a request is transferred to another laboratory, when appropriate, the lab receiving the request works the request under the laboratory case number already entered into LIMS by the first lab. A new laboratory case number is not created by the lab receiving the transferred case. For exceptions to these procedures, see the Exception Handling section below. Also, see the 'Assigning Laboratory Case Numbers' section for more information on assigning lab numbers.

See the CLD Operations Manual for information on how RFLEs are handled and prepared.

21.1 Transferring Requests to another Lab
The lab transferring cases to another lab prepares the RFLEs as outlined in the CLD Operations Manual. The associated evidence is transferred using the process described in the "Routine Evidence Transactions" section of this manual. A note may be entered into the Case Info 'Synopsis' field to indicate a request transfer is going to occur. Email notification to the laboratory that will be receiving the transferred cases is recommended when circumstances of the transfer are out of the ordinary or require special attention.

21.2 Receiving Transferred Requests:
The lab receiving transferred requests **either**:
   1) Edits an existing request if the existing request is to now be worked in that lab (i.e. Kennewick receives existing 'backlog' controlled substance requests from Spokane)
      a. Change the 'assigned' lab for the existing Request for Service to reflect the lab that will now perform the analysis.
      b. Re-select the **SAME** department and service.
      c. The existing request date is left unchanged.
      d. These requests should have "Unassigned" status. **DO NOT EDIT THE REQUEST IF IT IS ASSIGNED TO A SCIENTIST!** If a request is assigned to someone, it typically signifies that a new request should be entered for the work that will be done in the receiving lab. Editing an assigned request increases the risk of deleting that scientist's results so please check with the assigned scientist before making any changes to the request.
      e. Print an Assignment Notification Report, if used.

      OR

   2) Enters a new request if a request does not already exist (i.e. paperwork and evidence sent from Latent Prints to Seattle for Seattle to do DNA analysis).
      a. Select the appropriate department and service as indicated on the RFLE.
      b. The Agency Rep is found on the RFLE. It is not the lab sending the evidence.
      c. The request date is the day the lab received the transferred case.
      d. Relate the evidence, offense(s), and individual(s) as appropriate.
      e. Print the new request barcode and place on the RFLE.
      f. Print an Assignment Notification Report, if used.

The lab receiving transferred evidence adds to the evidence's existing chain of custody using the process described in the "Routine Evidence Transactions" section of this manual.

21.3 Exception Handling for Transferring Requests and Evidence

21.3.1 Transferring Evidence Already Moved Between Laboratories

If a transfer request involves evidence which has previously moved between labs (for example, the evidence has two or more lab evidence barcodes on it and is described is under two or more laboratory cases), the evidence should be transferred by selecting the agency named for the laboratory the evidence is being sent to or received from. This is instead of using the "TRANS-XXX" storage locations or laboratory staff member(s). To see the complete chain of custody record for the evidence item, a user must look under all associated case numbers. All other evidence transfer steps remain the same and are described in the "Routine Evidence Transactions" section of this manual.

21.3.2 Transferring Evidence When Each Lab Involved in the Transfer Already Has an Existing Laboratory Case Number Assigned (<u>Complex Scenario</u>)

If two or more labs have their own laboratory case numbers on the same agency case and then later must transfer evidence to each other, follow the process below. (In the below example, Seattle and Tacoma have laboratory cases for the same agency case and now Seattle needs to transfer evidence to Tacoma).

1) Seattle completes their transfer RFLE paperwork as usual.
2) The evidence is transferred into the Seattle TRANS-TAC storage location.
3) Tacoma receives the paperwork and evidence.
4) The evidence is received into the Tacoma lab using the Seattle TRANS-TAC location and is put into the Tacoma vault.
5) An appropriate request for service is created **UNDER THE TACOMA LABORATORY CASE NUMBER** and a request barcode printed.
6) **THE RECEIVED EVIDENCE IS THEN RELATED TO THAT TACOMA LABORATORY CASE NUMBER REQUEST**.
   a. This is done from the Request tab, under the "Related Evidence" window.
   b. In the laboratory case number field, type in the full Seattle laboratory case number.
   c. As soon as you move the cursor out of the field by tabbing, the evidence for the Seattle case will be listed in the upper 'evidence to relate' section.
   d. Look for the evidence you have received and relate that evidence to the Request for Service by moving the evidence into the lower "related" evidence window.
7) <u>The evidence submission is not re-entered under the Tacoma laboratory case number.</u> It continues to reside under the Seattle laboratory case number.
   a. Be aware that when evidence is related in this manner, it will not be listed under the Evidence tab of the Tacoma case.
   b. To see where this evidence is, you must pull up the Seattle case and look in its Evidence tab.
   c. Evidence related in this manner must be itemized from the Evidence tab.
8) Mark the Tacoma lab number on the evidence, but continue to use the existing evidence label to add to the chain of custody for that evidence.
9) Make sure that the two laboratory cases are related in LIMS (in the Case Info window).
10) Record a note in the Synopsis field, if desired.
11) A "Requests Report" can also be generated and put with the case file to facilitate tracking the evidence associated with this request. See the Help Contents file for instructions on how to generate this report.

22.0 "REQUEST" Tab

22.01 Request for Service
The Request for Service field is used to document analytical examinations requested on an RFLE.

Request(s) for service are entered by the lab capable of performing the requested analyses. The lab that performs the analysis retains the paper case file.

22.02 Request Bar Code Label
The Request bar codes represent the individual Requests for Service which have been entered for a case. The Request bar code labels are printed for each entered Request for Service and applied to their corresponding RFLE. If needed, additional labels may be printed and attached to the corresponding case file. These labels are not used on evidence.

22.03 Request Date
The Request date is typically the date the RFLE was originally received into the laboratory system or the date that a laboratory received a partial transfer from another laboratory. Partial and total transfers are discussed in the CLD Operations Manual.

22.04 Completed Case
A Request for Service is considered complete or closed when it has been "Admin Reviewed" in LIMS-plus.

22.05 Relating Requests to Evidence Submissions
After adding the Request(s) for Service described on the RFLE, all evidence submissions that were submitted with the RFLE will be related to those request(s). Modifications to this process will be at the Laboratory Manager's discretion.

22.06 Relating Requests to Offenses
After adding the Request(s) for Service described on the RFLE, all Offenses that are recorded on the RFLE will be related to those request(s). Modifications to this process will be at the Laboratory Manager's discretion.

22.07 Relating Requests to Individuals
After adding the Request(s) for Service described on the RFLE, all Individuals that are recorded on the RFLE will be related to those request(s). Modifications to this process will be at the Laboratory Manager's discretion.

22.08 Assigning Requests for Service
Once cases have been entered into LIMS-Plus, Requests for Service may be assigned by the supervisor, scientists, or PECs at the Lab Manager's discretion. An Assignment Notification Report may be printed as needed.

22.09 Canceling
Typically, Requests for Service are canceled if the analysis is no longer needed or the request was entered in error. If a request is canceled, a note in the Synopsis field of the Case Info Tab will be recorded to indicate the reason for the cancellation, when it was canceled and by whom (e.g. Req. 0001 Canceled per DPA Smith 1/1/01 JMN). The CODIS laboratory is excluded from this requirement due to their use of a custom data entry form which automatically cancels requests if the sample is found to be a duplicate (sample previously submitted).

Requests for Service are only canceled by a member of the assigned laboratory's staff. It is up to the individual Laboratory Manager to determine who is responsible for canceling requests within his/her laboratory(ies). Individuals that cancel Requests for Service are responsible for updating the case record and for notifying the Assigned Scientist and/or the supervisor of the Assigned Scientist of the cancellation.

Cancellation information obtained by another laboratory is forwarded to the assigned laboratory for action.

Requests for Service transferred to another laboratory to be worked under the already assigned laboratory case number are not canceled; instead, the request(s) are re-assigned to the laboratory that will be doing the analyses.

Time spent by the Assigned Scientist or the supervisor shall be recorded as appropriate using request-level activities. Refer to the Request-Level Activities section for more information.

Requests that are canceled are counted in statistical reports as "received" requests. Canceled requests are not counted in any "pending" or "closed" reports. Activities applied to canceled requests are included in all "activity" reports.

22.10 Deleting Requests for Service
Requests for Service are not deleted unless special circumstances arise, such as an expungement order received from the courts. For these special circumstances, deletions are performed by LIMS Support or Laboratory Manager designee only. The request for deletion must be submitted through the work order system and also preserved with the expungement order. The employee requesting the deletion must include their immediate supervisor in the communication chain and will enter a note in the Synopsis field of the Case Info Tab to indicate that a deletion was requested, the reason for it, along with the date of their request and their initials. The person performing the deletion (e.g. LIMS Support, etc.) will insert a note in the Synopsis field of the Case Info Tab to indicate that the deletion occurred, along with the date of the deletion, the work order number and their initials.

Requests for Service entered in error are handled as outlined in Section 22.09 Canceling.

22.11 Editing Requests for Service
Requests for Service can be changed as needed. This can be performed by a PEC or any other individuals with appropriate rights (e.g. forensic scientist, supervisor, etc.). If a request is assigned to someone, that person should be contacted prior to the service being edited. Refer to the Help Contents file for instructions on how to edit a Request for Service.

22.12 Reason
The Request "Reason" field should be used to indicate when a case is a Rush. This allows the collection of statistical information and provides the ability to analyze the impacts of rush cases on scientists' work load and performance measures. Other Request reasons include: "In Custody" and "Ongoing Investigation".

22.13 Assignment Notification Reports
Supervisors or employees may print out Assignment Notification Reports as needed. Assignment Notification Reports can be used in conjunction with Request bar code labels. Use of these reports is left to the discretion of the individual Laboratory Manager.

22.14 Requests Report
The "Requests Report" is available to aid in determining what evidence is related to the selected request, the current location of that evidence along with the current status of the request and other related information.   See the Help Contents file for instructions on how to generate this report.

23.0 Special Situations for Requests for Service

23.01 Crime Scene Tracking
The following procedures are used when entering cases, requests, and other information related to crime scenes into LIMS:

"Crime Scene Investigation" Request for Service is used by primary responders only. Exceptions to this must be approved by the Crime Scene Coordinator and documented in the Case Info Tab Synopsis field.

Only one laboratory case number is assigned to each scene. It is the primary responder's responsibility to determine what laboratory case number is used. It is also the primary responder's responsibility to create the new case in LIMS if one does not exist already. For most situations, one Crime Scene Investigation request is entered for the scene and is assigned to the primary responder. There may be situations where an additional Crime Scene Investigation request (or requests) may be needed, for example, to issue an additional crime scene investigation report. If it is determined that an additional request (or requests) is needed, the primary responder will create the request and assign it to the appropriate person.

The primary responder will email the new case number to all who were on the scene (in the email notification that is routinely sent out). It will then be the responsibility of all secondaries and trainees involved in that scene to go in to LIMS and enter their time under the proper request.

Example:
Amelia, Nelly, and Frankie are at a scene in Cowlitz County. Amelia, as the primary responder, will enter the new case into LIMS and assign request 0001 to herself. Amelia will enter her activities for request 0001 once she is completely done with the scene report Nelly and Frankie, as the secondary responders, can enter their activities under request 0001 at any time after it is created.

Steps to add an activity to someone else's request:
1. Open the case in LIMS, go to the Request tab and right click on the request activities are to be added to.
2. From the resulting menu list, select 'Activities'. Click on "Add" (green plus).
3. Leave the lab name alone (it will default to the user's assigned laboratory)
4. Select the Department (for example, Crime Scene)
5. Select the Service (for example, Crime Scene Investigation)
6. Select the Activity (for example, Crime Scene Training Received); enter the number of hours and any notes that may need to be recorded. Click on OK to close the window.

The "Crime Scene Training Received" activity is used by trainees to track their participation in crime scene responses.

The "Crime Scene Investigation" activity is used by responders (whether secondary or primary) to track their participation and involvement in crime scene responses.

The "Report Writing" activity is used to track the time the responder spends writing the crime scene report once back in the laboratory environment.

The "Latent Prints" activity is used to track the time the responder spends on scene searching for and or collecting latent impressions. This activity is intended ONLY to be used for those call-outs where the search for latent impressions is the only service requested.

NOTE: For the purpose of case tracking, the Toxicology Laboratory Division Crime Scene Response Team members are assigned to the Seattle Crime Laboratory in LIMS.

23.02 Crime Scene Evidence
Photographic evidence collected at a crime scene and brought back to the laboratory by the crime scene responder shall be recorded into LIMS as soon as possible following the steps outlined in the "Routine Evidence Transactions" section of this manual. The initial custody information for this type of evidence shall be taken from the RFLE created for the scene response. The crime scene responder is responsible for collecting the appropriate RFLE signatures.

23.03 STR Screeners

STR case screeners use the following activities under the service of STR to record their activities and to indicate whether or not they found samples suitable for analysis:

"Bodily Fluid Screening/Trace Collection – STR Sample Found"
"Bodily Fluid Screening/Trace Collection – No Sample Found"

If the case screener finds a suitable sample and the case is turned over to an experienced forensic scientist (FS), another Request for Service for STR is created to assign to the experience FS. Experienced scientists use whatever activities under the service of STR that best reflect their work activities.

23.04 NIBIN Tracking

NIBIN cases originate from two sources: 1) from regular casework; and 2) cases specifically submitted to the laboratory for NIBIN entry.

23.04.01   Regular Casework:

When a case is submitted to the laboratory for regular firearms analysis and qualifies for NIBIN (National Integrated Ballistics Information Network) entry, the NIBIN related efforts are tracked using the "NIBIN Entry" activity under the "Firearms" service.

23.04.02   NIBIN Cases

When a case is submitted specifically to the lab for NIBIN entry, the "NIBIN" service is used. To track efforts related to this service, the "NIBIN Entry" activity under the NIBIN service is used.

23.05 Proficiency Tracking

When proficiencies are received by the laboratory, they are entered the same as a regular case except that instead of using the service related to the request for analysis, the service called "Proficiency" is used. The "Proficiency" service selected in LIMS-Plus is dependent on the associated functional area of the proficiency. For example, if it is a firearms related proficiency, the "Proficiency" service found under the Firearms/Toolmarks Department is used.

23.06 High Throughput STR (HT STR) Service

The 'HT STR' service is used when DNA High Throughput analyses will be conducted and the scientist is going to use the custom analytical report template which has been designed specifically for use with the 'HT STR' AutoText files. 'HT STR' has three request-level activities available for use:

- CODIS-Eligible Profile Developed
- CODIS Hit
- Case Prosecuted

For information on related 'HT STR' Autotext files, please see Section 29.01.01.

24.0 Request-Level Activities

The JusticeTrax LIMS-Plus program is a management tool which allows the tracking of time spent on case work, court testimony, crime scene response and miscellaneous administrative tasks. Activities are tracked in LIMS-Plus by the LIMS logon and can be added to any Request for Service, regardless of who the request is assigned to, as long as the individual logged onto LIMS-Plus has the appropriate permissions to add new activities.

24.01 Time Spent on Casework

Time spent conducting casework shall be documented in LIMS-Plus using a pre-determined list of activities. These activities are available for each service in LIMS-Plus and are tailored to the specific service.

24.02 Quantity of Items Analyzed

When a lab staff member is entering his/her time spent on a Request via the "Add New Activity" screen, the field labeled "Qty" shall be used to indicate the total number of evidence items examined/analyzed.

Laboratory staff will use the Project Foresight definition of an item for the "Qty" field in LIMS-Plus. Project Foresight defines an item by how an item is described by the agency on the Request for Laboratory Examination (RFLE). Therefore, this will be the scientists' guide to what a single item is, regardless of how the item is packaged or what it consists of. For example, if the RFLE says "Item 1: Six plastic bags of white powder", that is considered one item, and if four of the six bags are analyzed by a scientist, it still counts as one item in the "Qty" field. If the RFLE says "Item 1: One sealed bag of white powder" and "Item 2: Two sealed bags of white powder" and all three bags are analyzed, that counts as two items in the "Qty" field.

If a brand new evidence item is created by a scientist during the course of his/her examination, and that brand new evidence item is packaged into a separate sealed package outside of the parent evidence and is documented on the RFLE as a new item per current standard procedure, that new evidence item is also counted as a single item in the "Qty" field in LIMS-Plus.

A single item can be used in multiple examinations and so can be counted multiple times (once for each service provided).

24.03 No Exam

If no examination is conducted for a particular Request for Service, this is documented in LIMS using the "No Exam" request-level activity and the request is canceled. Laboratory Staff also use this activity to capture their time spent determining whether requests can be canceled or not.

24.04 Time Spent on Court Testimony and Monitoring

The activities that will be used for tracking testimony and monitoring are Court Testimony and Court Monitoring and are defined as follows:

- Court Testimony shall be used to record time spent on such activities as testimony given (whether on the stand, in a deposition or hearing), creating court displays & handouts, reviewing case documentation, talking with attorney or agency personnel regarding case aspects, waiting to provide testimony, and/or time spent traveling to and from the place the testimony occurred etc. This shall be recorded by the Assigned Scientist, anytime testimony occurs.

- Court Monitoring shall be used when a supervisor or peer monitors testimony of a forensic scientist in a court, deposition or hearing. This shall be recorded by the Supervisor or Peer, anytime monitoring occurs.
  - o For the purposes of recording monitoring activities in LIMS-Plus, "Court Monitoring" is defined as anytime a supervisor or peer monitors a fellow forensic scientist for the purpose of meeting accreditation criteria or CLD requirements. Watching a fellow scientist testify for the purpose of training does not constitute monitoring.

24.05 Laboratory Technician Activities

Activities are tracked in LIMS-Plus by the LIMS logon. Therefore activities performed by NIBIN, Latent Prints, and other laboratory technicians can be added to existing Requests for Service. There is no need to enter a new Request for Service just for the technician unless the situation warrants it (i.e. the technician is doing casework).

24.06 Marihuana Verification Tracking

Marihuana verification efforts are tracked using the "Marihuana Verification" activity under the Controlled Substance Request.

24.07 Peer Review

The "Peer Review" activity can be used to capture the time spent performing technical review of case files; see the CLD Quality Manual for a definition of the technical review.

24.08 Administrative Review

The "Administrative Review" activity *can be* used to capture the time spent performing administrative reviews of case files. See the Crime Laboratory Division Quality Manual for a definition of the administrative review.

24.09 Supervisory Review

The "Supervisory Review" activity can be used to capture the time spent performing a supervisory review of a case file.

24.10 Latent Prints Activities

In addition to the activities described above, several activities are available for all Latent Prints request types to help gauge the relative complexity of cases. Scientists shall use the activities described in subsections 24.10.01-03, when appropriate, to provide additional information on work performed related to a specific request. Each activity should appear, at most, once per analyst, unless otherwise specified.

24.10.01 Impressions Developed

This activity should be used to track the number of impressions developed during work on this request. The number should be entered into the Qty field. The time field shall be left at 0.00, as overall time is tracked in other activities.

24.10.02 Impressions Submitted

This activity should be used to track the number of impressions submitted for analysis during work on this request. The number should be entered into the Qty field. The time field shall be left at 0.00, as overall time is tracked in other activities.

24.10.03 Impressions Identified and Its Associated Subactivities

This activity should be used to track the number of impressions identified during work on this request. There may be more than one instance of this activity per analyst, each having a different subactivity. There are five available subactivities, each describing a class of people. An appropriate subactivity shall be selected for each instance of the Impressions Identified activity. The number should be entered into the Qty field. The time field shall be left at 0.00, as overall time is tracked in other activities. This activity should not be used without an accompanying Impressions Developed and/or Impressions Submitted activity, and the total Qty for all Impressions Identified activities should never exceed the total Qty for Impressions Developed plus Impressions Submitted.

25.0 "LOCAL DATA" Tab

The Local Data tab contains customizable fields for laboratory use.

26.0 Milestones

Milestones indicate the status of the Request for Service to help track progress of the request through the analytical stages. Requests for Service are considered "pending" requests until the "Admin Review" milestone is marked.

26.01 Unassigned
Request for Service has not been assigned to a forensic scientist.

26.02 Assigned
This milestone is automatically set at the time a Request for Service is assigned to a forensic scientist for analysis. The assignment is done either by the Laboratory Manager, supervisor, forensic scientist or Laboratory Manager designee.

26.03 Findings Entered
This milestone is marked automatically when the assigned scientist has entered the necessary information in the "Edit Findings" section. For Controlled Substance requests, the "Edit Findings" section is used to record analytical results in the corresponding analytical modules. This is required in order to collect drug related data for statistical purposes. For all other request types, the "Edit Findings" section is used to indicate that the analysis has been completed and may contain information such as "report complete", "done", or other such verbiage, or it may contain the contents of an actual analytical report. "Findings Entered" must be marked in order to proceed to the next milestone.

26.04 Draft Complete
This milestone is marked after the Findings Entered milestone and is used to indicate that a Request for Service is ready for peer review. A Crime Laboratory Report may or may not be printed at this time. Only the assigned scientist has the appropriate permissions to mark a Request for Service "Draft Complete".

26.05 Technical Review
This milestone is marked after the Draft Complete milestone and is used to indicate that a Request for Service has been successfully peer reviewed. The person conducting the peer review is responsible for marking this milestone. Exceptions to this are handled on a section by section basis (i.e. crime scenes, question documents) involving the Laboratory Manager, his/her designee and the LIMS Manager. NOTE: The CODIS Laboratory is exempted from this requirement at this time due to the Batch Updater in use. The Batch Updater marks the Technical Review and Administrative Review milestones simultaneously. The CODIS staff member running the Updater enters the Peer Reviewer's name into the Edit Findings results field.

26.06 Administrative Review
This milestone is used to indicate that a Request for Service is complete and that the original report can be distributed to the customer. It can only be set to Admin Review after the Tech Review milestone is marked. It can be marked by the supervisor, the peer reviewer or the Laboratory Manager or designee, depending on the policy of the laboratory. Per the Quality Manual, this milestone shall not be marked by the assigned scientist. If an analytical report is released on a request, that Request for Service must have Admin Reviewed status. This milestone is not to be used if no examination is conducted on a particular Request for Service.

26.07 Report Releasable
This milestone is automatically set to "report releasable" when the Request for Service is marked "Admin Reviewed." It is used to indicate that the crime laboratory report is ready for release.

26.08 Distributed

This milestone is marked upon distribution of the original crime lab report to the customer. It can only be marked after Admin Review has been marked. The Distributed milestone is marked by the individual distributing the report. Evidence can be released to the customer regardless of whether the Distributed milestone has been marked.

27.0 Agency Representatives

27.01 Adding a New Representative

Adding a new representative to an agency's list may be done by any laboratory staff member with the appropriate security permission. Careful review of the existing list is recommended before adding a new name to an agency. Required fields of entry are:

- Last Name.
- Full First Name, if available. Otherwise, the first initial may be used or the field may be left empty.
- Badge Number, if available.
- Initials of the person entering the rep name, as well as the date the rep was entered. This should be placed in the first available line of the Description field.

Proper capitalization and punctuation is required. Contact with the user agency may be required to gather complete information.

Agency representatives are defined by employment and/or by their assignment in a multi-agency task force. Agency representatives are normally added only to the agency that provides their employment; however, if an agency representative is also assigned to a multi-agency task force, that agency representative is also added to that task force.

27.02 Editing a Representative

Agency representatives may be edited as needed by any laboratory staff with the appropriate security permission. Edits may include, but are not limited to, updating titles or changing the rep's status from 'active' to 'inactive' (for example, when it is known the rep is no longer associated with an agency).

Note: Changing an agency representative's status from 'active' to 'inactive' removes that representative from any drop down lists used during case entry, however, the rep can still be searched for using the Agency Search function.

Editing the names does not impact or change existing chains of custody.

28.0 Agencies

28.01 Adding a New Agency

In order to maintain standard entry of new agencies into LIMS-Plus across the division, only LIMS Support and/or specifically designated Local Point of Contacts can enter a new agency. See the list of Local Points of Contact on the FLSB Portal to see who has this permission.

Careful review of the existing list is mandatory before adding a new agency. When adding a new agency, please input as much information that is known for the agency. Below are the minimum fields which should be completed:

- Agency Name
- Type
- County (if applicable)
- Country

- Address (including City, State and Zip Code)
- Phone
- Initials of the person entering the agency along with the date the agency was entered is placed in the first available line of the "Description" field of the "Edit Agency Information" window.

If other information is known for the agency (e.g. Contact Name, Fax Number, Agency Email, etc.), that information should be entered as well.

28.02 Editing an Existing Agency

Agencies may be edited as needed. For example, to update the address of the agency, or to inactivate an agency which is no longer needed by CLD.

Note 1: Changing an agency's status from 'active' to 'inactive' removes it from any drop down lists accessible to end users (for example, those lists used during case entry or agency search functions within LIMS).

Note 2: When an agency's status is set to 'inactive', all associated agency representatives are also automatically set to 'inactive'. Therefore, if an agency's status is changed from 'inactive' back to 'active', the agency's list of representatives will need to be reviewed and the representatives' status changed to 'active' as appropriate.

Note 3: Prior to inactivating an agency, it should be verified that there are no unassigned requests associated with the agency. Once an agency is inactive, a request which is unassigned cannot be updated. To modify an unassigned request in this situation, the agency will need to have its status set back to 'active' to allow any changes.

Edits may be performed by LIMS Support and/or specifically designated Local Points of Contact. See the list of Local Points of Contact on the FLSB Portal to see who has this permission.

The initials of the person editing the agency and the date the edit was made are entered in the first available "Description" field of the "Edit Agency Information" window.

29.0 Storage Locations

LIMS-Plus storage locations can be created, edited and/or deleted as needed by LIMS Support. Modifying a location's description does not affect existing or prior chains of custody. Storage locations must be empty before they can be deleted.

29.01 Proficiencies

Each lab will have LIMS-Plus storage locations which are not in the evidence vault that are clearly identified for storing completed proficiency samples. The completed locations will be marked as final disposition locations when appropriate. Proficiency storage locations are excluded from the Evidence Location report that is used for vault audits.

29.02 Evidence

Each lab will have LIMS-Plus storage locations clearly identified for storing evidence while in the custody of the crime laboratory. Storage locations can be designated by box, shelf, cabinet, or general area. Each location description must be unique enough to distinguish it from other locations and thorough enough so that when vault audits are performed there are few or no questions regarding the location or its intended use.

29.03 Final Disposition

When needed, LIMS-Plus storage locations can be used to indicate 'final disposition'. Examples of locations used as final disposition include "Retained in Lab", "Items Consumed in Analysis", and "Destroyed". Final disposition storage locations are excluded from the Evidence Location report that is used for vault audits.

Evidence Storage Locations Used As Part of the Transfer Process

The below storage locations are used to transfer evidence between laboratories under the case transfer process.

TRANS-KEN
TRANS-LAT
TRANS-MAR
TRANS-SEA
TRANS-SPO
TRANS-TAC
TRANS-VAN

These locations are meant to hold evidence only while the evidence is in transit from one lab to another via a secure transport carrier such as UPS or FEDEX. These locations are designated as 'temporary holding' locations and are excluded from all official audit reports (official audit reports are those reports that have signature pages at the end). These locations should be checked periodically to ensure evidence does not reside in these locations long term.

All staff in one lab have access to their particular storage location in the other labs. This access is needed to take custody of the evidence that has been transferred to them via this location. Access to this location is achieved within the evidence transfer function by either leaving the 'FROM' line blank or by scanning the appropriate TRANS-XXX barcode label.

30.0 Analytical Modules

30.01 Controlled Substance Analytical Module

For the Controlled Substance Analytical Module, results are added to individual evidence items rather than to the Request for Service. Itemizing evidence submissions to increase the level of detail available on the report is allowed.

30.01.01 Examinations

The Examination section of the analytical module can be used to indicate the types of examinations conducted (e.g. color test, microcrystal test, etc.) and to also indicate the number of times each examination is conducted. It is not necessary to select analytical examinations for inclusion in the list of selected examinations.

30.01.02 NFLIS Tracking

The Examination section is used to indicate when a result is to be counted as part of the NFLIS results set (NFLIS Form). The "Observations" for this result shall be recorded as well (e.g. black tar, chunky material, etc.). This data set is sent to the Drug Enforcement Administration monthly.

30.01.03 Drug Results

Scientists add drug results to individual evidence items. Single or multiple results can be added to one evidence item. Results Notes are used to generate the final analytical report from within LIMS-Plus. The Results Notes can be added to one evidence item or can be added individually to each evidence item related to the request.

30.02 General Analytical Module (Latent Prints)

When using the General Analytical Module, results are added to the Request for Service. Itemizing evidence submissions to increase the level of detail available on the report is allowed.

31.0 Analytical Reports

Normally, the LIMS-Plus Controlled Substances Analytical Module is used to generate and print Controlled Substances analytical reports. Other analytical modules within LIMS-Plus may be used to generate and print other types of analytical reports. At the analyst's discretion, Microsoft Word may also be used to create and print analytical reports.

To distinguish between crime laboratory reports for requests and submissions on the same case number but submitted at different times, the Laboratory Request Number will be included in the heading of all crime laboratory analytical reports. All place-holding zeros found in the laboratory case number will be used on the reports as well.

Individuals' names (e.g. Suspect, Victim) are formatted to control presentation of this information.

32.0 AutoText Files

The AutoText feature allows the individual user to store frequently used text that he or she can then quickly insert into LIMS-plus text fields to reduce data entry. An AutoText entry consists of a name and the corresponding text (e.g. "ABC" can represent the text "A box containing …"). AutoText entries can be used in any LIMS-plus text field including results entry and data extension forms. Unless defined elsewhere in this manual, AutoText files are specific to the individual end user and are created, modified, and managed by the individual end user. See the Help Contents file for information on how to use AutoText.

32.01 'Global' AutoText Files

Global AutoText files are centrally managed and distributed to individual users by LIMS Support. Global Autotext files are published by LIMS Support so that they can be made available to the LIMS users designated to have them.

Users are not to deviate from the corresponding text provided by the Global Autotext files. If modifications are needed, they can be submitted through the chain of command (to the supervisor level) and, once approved, can then be submitted via the ITD work order system.

Naming convention and construction guidelines for Global AutoText files are available on the FLSB Portal, under the IT section. A master list of published Global Autotext files is also available upon request from LIMS Support.

32.01.01 High Throughput STR (HT STR) AutoText Files

AutoText files that begin with HT- and LAB- are Global Autotext files and have been created in support of the DNA section's High Throughput STR analytical processes. The naming convention and construction guidelines for these Global AutoText files are available on the FLSB Portal, under the IT section.

ISSUING AUTHORITY: CRIME LAB DIVISION MANAGER		
SECTION & COMMENTS	**DATE APPROVED**	**AUTHOR/REVIEWER**
Original – major revisions, considered new, original manual	Sept 2008	Neilson/McIntyre
09-001 (Rev. 2) – corrected punctuation error; mislabel in TOC; allow Latents to use MS Word instead of LIMS for reports; clarifying ITD Customer Service and password policy.	January 13, 2009	Noedel/Neilson
09-002 (Rev. 3)	May 20, 2009	Noedel/Neilson
• Placeholder (Jan. 30) – simplify crime scene tracking – (Chapter 25.01-25.02); • Adding a New Representative (Chapter 29.01) • Combine Agency names with multiple locations (Chapter 12) • Multiple changes to improve clarity/readability of various sections of the LIMS Manual and to address changes brought on by the new case transfer process (multiple Chapters) • Chapter system renumbered		
Revision 4 April 26, 2010 • Addition to Section 13 – Officer Involved Shooting entry to LIMS May 3, 2010 • Section 8.02 – Password revision July 6, 2010 • Section 14.0 – Individuals Tab July 16, 2010 • Section 13 – "Cold Case" added to Offense Tab • New/Clean Manual (Rev. 4)	July 2010	Schaller/Noedel/ Neilson
Revision 5 **August 9, 2010** • Section 17 – Secure Transport Carrier Times • Section 20 – HT-STR Services • New Section 29 – AutoText Files **October 27, 2010** • Section 15.06.02 – Creating New Parents • Sections 19, 21, and 23 – Canceling Requests, No Exam, Admin Review **November 15, 2010** • 21.10 – Latent Prints Activities	December 2010	Noedel/Neilson

December 22, 2010 • Section 18.2 – Receiving Transferred Requests • Section 15.06.02 – Creating New Parents		
Revision 6 **February 1, 2011** • 20.01 – Crime Scene Tracking **May 13, 2011** • 20.06 – High Throughput STR (HTSTR) Service • 12.0 – Multiple Agency Case Numbers	May 13, 2011	Noedel, et.al/ Neilson
Revision 7 **June 24, 2011** • 24.01 – Adding a New Representative **May 29, 2012 (effective June 26, 2012)** • 2.0 – new section called LIMS Support (updated term through manual) • 3.0 – New section defined laboratory management • 4.0 - Changed Local LIMS Administrators to Local Point(s) of Contact • 4.02 - Updated Special Rights in LIMS-Plus • 5.0 – updated Requesting LIMS-Plus assistance • 6.0 – new section Requesting LIMS modifications • 7.0 – new section Modifications to the LIMS manual • Deleted 'Hierarchy of Authority' (information redundant, found in other areas of the manual) • 9.0 – new section FLSB Portal • 10.0 – updated LIMS-Plus security • 11.0 – updated Entering a New Case • 12.0 – updated Assigning Lab Case Numbers to clarify how to determine lab case number • 13.0 – new section Deleting a Lab Case • 15.0 – dropped word 'all' in Agency Tab • 17.0 – Individuals – made entering names using all upper case mandatory and clarified note regarding formatting of these names on LIMS reports.18.08 – updated Deleting Evidence • 18.09 – updated Chain of Custody Edits • 19.04 – fixed typo (RLFE vs RFLE) • 19.05-added info that agency rep named for agency is also used when evidence is received via secure transport carrier and there's no signature in the Submitted by section. • 21.1 – added 'email notice to lab receiving transferred cases is recommended' • 22.01 – updated Request for Service • 22.02 – updated Request Bar Code Label to clarify that for each entered request, a label is printed and goes on	June 24, 2011 May 29, 2012 June 26, 2012	Noedel/Johnston

the corresponding RFLE. Also, made option to attach to case file too. • 22.09 – updated canceling to include date of cancellation and by whom • 22.10 – updated deleting requests for service to include reason for deletion, date and initials of requestor and those who performed the work. • 27.01 – specified location of where date and initials should be placed • 27.02 – added information about managing agency reps • 28.01-02 – added details about managing agency info • Renumbered sections as needed **June 26, 2012** • 19.09 – VIA and NOTE mandatory with secure carrier • Section clarifications in 20.0 • New Revision 7		
2012 Annual Manual Review	December 6, 2012	Noedel
Revision 8 December , 2012 • Section 10.02 – Change 'generic' to 'temporary' password for clarification • Section 12.0 – Documents located in Spokane	December 11, 2012	Noedel
Revision 9 October 29, 2013 • Section 22.09 – Cancelling Requests	October 29, 2013	Strongman/Noedel