

OPI: SCI/FSLD

RECEIVING AND PROCESSING NON SENSITIVE  
SAMPLES BY SCIENCE LABORATORIES

I. PURPOSE

This directive prescribes receiving room handling requirements for nonsensitive samples at FSIS Field Service Laboratories (FSL).

II. (RESERVED)

III. REASON FOR ISSUANCE

To provide consistent sample receipt and processing procedures for FSL.

IV. (RESERVED)

V. (RESERVED)

VI. SAMPLE RECEIVING PROCEDURES

A. Samples received on Saturday, Sunday or holidays will be placed in cold storage for processing on the next working day.

B. When received at the laboratory, cartons containing samples are situated in a mail receiving room so that the arriving inventory is separated from the departing cartons by a fixed barrier such as a laboratory bench or low partition.

C. All sample cartons are opened in the mailroom only by fully trained personnel or assistants whose work is reviewed for accuracy by a supervisor.

D. If any official sample submission form or special seal indicates consumer complaint, compliance, Office of Inspector General, or other sample requiring chain of custody verification or special handling, it should be segregated in the opened shipper. The receiving room supervisor should notify the appropriate person In-Charge (IC), e.g., Chemist-In-Charge, Microbiologist-In-Charge, etc., of receipt of these samples. The IC (or representative) will review the forms and samples which were segregated in the mailroom and assure that samples are processed in accordance with the appropriate procedures for that particular sample type.

E. For chemistry section samples, identification and processing are accomplished in the mailroom using the interdisciplinary procedures outlined in Section VII.

F. Microbiology and pathology section samples are not processed in the mailroom. The sample containment (bag, bottle, or can) is not opened. It may be placed in a tub for batch handling or left in the carton. They then are relocated to and further processed in their respective sections using the interdisciplinary processing procedures outlined in Section VII.

## VII. INTERDISCIPLINARY SAMPLE PROCESSING PROCEDURES

A. Upon opening insulated cartons, observe condition of shipper and refrigerant bottles. Record the number of sample units and receipt condition on the sample submission form using one of the following codes:

1. F Frozen - sample hard - bottles frozen.
2. S Semi-frozen - sample contains ice crystals - bottle frozen or icy.
3. C Cold - sample soft - bottles contain ice.
4. A Ambient - sample soft - no ice in bottles or no bottle.

NOTE: Sample condition recorded on sample submission form should be initialed by an observer if the sample is unusual or could potentially be a discard. The form will later be reviewed and signed by the appropriate supervisor.

B. When coded, packaged product samples are received, record the package type on the form.

C. Verify the package code on the sample with the code on the form; if absent, enter the code on the form.

D. When the sample or sample submission form is missing, recheck the container. Notify the supervisor of the problem at once if either cannot be found.

E. If sample identification is not present, the supervisor will authorize discarding of samples lacking proper identification.

F. Cross check the form number against the tearstrip number.

G. To assure sample identity, place the sample (sealed in its original plastic bag with the tear strip attached) into a larger plastic bag. Protect the form accompanying the sample with a small plastic bag; place the protected form into the same large plastic bag containing the sample; secure with a rubber band. This double wrapping will protect the form from damage and preclude loss of identity of the sample while it is being processed in the mailroom.

H. If not sure of analysis request, place the plastic bag containing the sample and form in the tub labeled for this type of sample and notify supervisor.

I. Prior to returning sampling materials to inspectors, all cartons must be clean, dry and free of extraneous materials. Insert an adequate number of new sample bags prior to closing the container. After securely strapping the carton, reverse the label and place in the outgoing gurney for United States Postal Service or United Parcel Service pickup.

VIII. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Mailroom Personnel. Receiving room staff will replenish supplies in the work area and maintain a clean environment. They will also assure that soiled supplies are not returned to inspectors.

B. Supervisors.

1. The assigned supervisor will continuously monitor receiving room operations and assure immediate correction of policy and procedure deviations.

2. Assigned supervisors will answer questions regarding samples and provide additional follow-up if required.

3. The supervisor will acquire supplies for receiving room staff if needed during sample opening.

4. The Laboratory Director will respond to requests by operating personnel for interpretation of mailroom procedures. All such requests will be forwarded through supervisory channels.

5. The Laboratory Director will inform all employees of changes in this directive and provide each staff member with a copy of an updated directive.

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Attachment (See hard copy of the directive.)