



Paint Evidence Submission Guidelines

General Submission Guidelines

The Colorado Bureau of Investigation Forensic Services (CBIFS) recognizes that each case is distinctive. Our submission guidelines will address typical situations encountered by your agency but cannot speak to all of the unique circumstances that are often exclusive to a particular case. With this understanding, the CBIFS provides the following information to assist you in the submission of your evidence.

HIT AND RUN CASES / BURGLARY

- Any areas of transfer (paint chips, smears etc.) down to the substrate (metal on a car, wood on a pole, etc.) to insure all layers of paint or plastic are collected. To remove paint, use a sharp metal blade (such as a sharp knife, single edge razor blade or scalpel). Use a clean blade for each area sampled to avoid contamination. Cut straight down through the paint layers to the substrate and then run the blade across the substrate using plenty of pressure – this will help all layers of the paint are collected.
- If there is more than one area of transfer, collect paint from each item separately, with the location of the collection labeled.
- Any paint, plastic, automotive parts, or other objects found which may help identify any vehicle involved should be submitted. Any questioned paint, plastic, or automotive part found should be collected, packaged, labeled, and sent to the lab for analysis.
- Clothing from any pedestrian struck by a vehicle should be submitted. Dry the clothing before packaging and wrap in clean butcher paper to avoid loss of evidence.
- Any tools which may have been used to gain entry to a building, vehicle, safe, or other object should be submitted. These tools may have paint or other substances adhering to them from the object that was pried open. Also include paint areas that the tool may have contacted at the crime scene. Paint from the tool may have transferred onto these areas.
- Collect evidence so that any tool mark impressions are preserved for possible testing.
- Submit the whole tool that is suspected of being used in the burglary, wrap end in clean paper

Known standards should be submitted for comparison purposes from all painted surfaces.

- A known standard is paint or plastic collected from the damaged area that has not been contaminated by the transfer from the other object.
- The known standard should be collected down to the substrate and should be at least ¼” x ¼”.
- If more than one damaged area is present, standards should be taken from each of these areas, packaged separately, and labeled as to their origins.

- Collect standards that are near the damaged area but not contaminated by paint transfers.

UNKNOWN SUSPECT HIT AND RUN CASES

When a hit and run occurs and there is no known suspect, paint analysis can be a useful tool.

- The Colorado Bureau of Investigation Forensic Services Laboratory has access to a database called the Paint Data Query (PDQ), which can be used to help identify the make and model of an unknown vehicle from the analysis of each of the paint layers.
- Automotive parts left at the scene may be useful in identifying the make and model of the unknown vehicle from their part numbers.
- Please note in the submission that the case is a no suspect hit and run and that PDQ analysis is desired.

PACKAGING EVIDENCE

- Small items (such as paint chips and building materials) should be wrapped in a paper fold and placed into an envelope, small box, or vial; seal all openings to avoid loss and/or contamination of evidence. Submit the envelope, small box, or vial in a sealed evidence package.
- Large items (such as vehicle parts) may be submitted in a sealed, size appropriate plastic or paper bag.
- Large items that may cut or poke through a bag (such as a tire iron) should be submitted in a sealed, size appropriate cardboard box.
- All packaging should be marked with the specific source of the sample (for example: R/F fender 2012 blue Ford Taurus, license #ABC123, and VIN).

Summary

These paint guidelines are recommendations of what should be included in the initial evidence submission to the CBIFS, but do not reflect what should or should not be collected at the crime scene. In support of your agency and upon request, the CBIFS will provide training on the proper collection and submission of paint. Please see our General Submission Guidelines for an overview of the submission process.

Please feel free to contact us at any time regarding your paint submissions. It is our goal to ensure your understanding, educate you on situations that may be unfamiliar to your agency and to work collaboratively to ensure the citizens of Colorado are served at the highest possible level.