

Emergency Preparedness Plan for Reduced Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit Stock

Purpose: The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance in case of a *reduction in the availability of sexual assault evidence kits (SAEK) related to supply chain issues*. Recent events, including the COVID-19 health crisis, have impacted SAEK vendor ability to maintain production levels to fill current and future orders for SAEKs. The following are suggested guidelines for creating non-vendor SAEKs during circumstances when vendor production is low. Forensic/SANE programs should implement this plan when SAEKs are on back-order where there is large disruption in the supply chain.

The Texas Office of the Attorney General has approved the following guidelines and non-standard kit specifications. This Emergency Preparedness Plan does not supersede other guidance provided by the Texas Evidence Collection Protocol for health care professionals in Texas providing forensic medical assessments of persons who present with concern for, or history of, sexual victimization, or for assessment of those who are suspected of committing sexual offenses.

Suggested Guidelines:

When notified by the vendor of a backlog or production impact, the following are recommendations for creating temporary SAEKs.

- Contact Texas DPS via email at: kittracking@dps.texas.gov to request Track-Kit barcodes/survivor cards. Barcodes/survivor cards will be shipped via FedEx to the SANE coordinator. Allow at least 48 hours for the barcodes/survivor cards to be received by the SANE program and/or hospital.
- The SAEK forms and body diagrams can be downloaded and printed from <https://forensic-nursing.tamu.edu/texas-evidence-collection-protocol.html>
- Kits may be made with unused envelopes and supplies from vendor-supplied kits (this applies to programs that save the unused envelopes and swabs). If unused envelopes from vendor supplied kits are used, please insure that any pre-printed labels on the envelopes correspond to what is actually collected and placed within the envelope. If the pre-printed label does not match the collection, strike through the pre-printed label and label the envelope to correspond with the contents. To reduce the risk of dust and other contaminants, unused kit envelopes should be stored in a bag or in a plastic storage container. Unused envelopes should not be left out in the open.

SANEs and other providers may make a non-standard kit using the following supplies:

- 9x12 manila envelope – one per case to hold all evidence envelopes and the SAEK paperwork; A small shipping box may be used instead for transport to further protect the specimens. Use of a shipping box is strongly recommended for transporting all specimens.
- Additional 9x12 envelope or small shipping box to hold any clothing items collected.

- 4-1/8 x 9-1/2 inches white or manila envelopes– multiple envelopes per case will be needed and should be used to individually place specimens. It is recommended to have a minimum of eight (8) envelopes available per each kit that is made.
- If blood cards are used for known DNA sample, consider purchasing a small amount separately to have on hand.
- Sterile Swabs that come in swab sleeves (may be obtained from hospital central supply or ordered from a medical supply company).
- Swab drying boxes or place the swabs back in the original sterile packaging/sleeve after collecting. Swab drying boxes may be purchased in bulk from evidence supply vendors. When used, each should be clearly labeled as to the patient and collection site.
- Evidence tape to seal all envelopes and boxes containing evidence.
- Newly purchased plastic combs.
- Tissue-type paper/disposable task wipes to clean work area before and after the examination may be obtained from hospital center supply or ordered from a medical supply company.
- Small wax-lined bags are available for purchase through online vendors.

Once specimens are collected, the following are recommendations:

- Follow Texas Evidence Collection Protocol for guidance related to packaging of specimens.
- Place all specimen envelopes in the transport container (large manila envelope or shipping box). Use of a shipping box is strongly recommended for transporting all specimens.
- Place paper bags containing clothing items in a separate transport container. Do not place clothing (ie: bras or panties) in the manila envelopes as the envelopes may tear.
- Affix a patient label on all envelopes and transport boxes.
- Place a tracking barcode on outer envelope or transport box.
- Place chain of custody labels on the transport box and any additional bags or containers.

Below is an example of a chain of custody label that may be printed by the SANE and/or hospital personnel on label paper. You may create your own chain of custody label. However, the label must contain all of the information below. Follow all current program policies and procedures related to chain of custody. See Texas Evidence Collection Protocol for additional information and guidance.