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## Physical Evidence Bulletin Urine Forensic Alcohol

**Purpose** The Physical Evidence Bulletin (PEB) is a guideline intended for law enforcement agencies to follow when submitting evidence to BFS Laboratories. PEBs are not intended to be used in lieu of training in the collection of evidence.

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**Analysis** The Bureau of Forensic Services (BFS) provides analytical support to law enforcement agencies through the identification and quantitation of the amount of ethanol in biological samples. Samples that contain less than 0.09% alcohol may be sent to the BFS Toxicology laboratory for drug testing.

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**Introduction** The degree of alcohol influence is based upon the amount of alcohol in the bloodstream. There is a direct correlation of alcohol concentration in urine with alcohol concentration in the blood when the urine sample is properly collected. Therefore, urine can be used to determine blood alcohol level. This bulletin describes the steps required for collecting a urine sample appropriate for the determination of an alcohol level.

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**Preliminary Considerations** Urine samples obtained from people involved in traffic accidents or traffic violations shall be collected, handled and preserved as required by Sections 1219 and 1219.2 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations:

- A urine sample from a living individual shall be collected no sooner than twenty minutes after first voiding the bladder.
  - This means collecting a urine “sample” at least 20 minutes after the subject has emptied their bladder.
  - It is recommended to collect the first urine “void” for toxicology analysis.
  - Correctly label “void” and “sample” (see procedure section below).
- The specimen shall be deposited into a clean, dry container which also contains a preservative.
  - BFS Laboratories provide containers containing 750 mg of preservative, sodium fluoride, upon request.
- The MINIMUM quantity of urine required to perform duplicate determinations by the laboratory and still provide a enough for referee analysis is 3 mL (approximately one teaspoon).
- A member of the police agency, preferably the arresting officer, should supervise the collection of the sample to verify the source of the sample, and to attest that tap water was not added to the sample container.

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**SAMPLE  
COLLECTION  
PROCEDURE**

The following summarizes the procedure for the collection and preservation of urine samples for alcohol analysis:

1. Observe the subject empty their bladder. If you desire toxicological analysis for drugs, collect this specimen and label it as "void" and include the time.
2. Wait for at least 20 minutes, then observe the collection of the specimen. Label the specimen as "sample" and include the time.
3. Tightly secure the cap on the sample container. Invert the specimen(s) several times to mix.
4. Place the specimen(s) into a labeled evidence envelope. Use a separate envelope for each specimen if a "void" and "sample" are both being submitted.
5. Once the envelope is sealed, it must not be opened except for analysis in the laboratory.
6. Each person having possession of the sealed envelope shall sign their name in the space provided for recording the "chain of possession".

*Note: Sample containers shall be secured tightly, labeled with a BFS-40 (sample below) and sealed in a urine envelope (BFS-21). If a DOJ label is not available, the sample must be labeled with appropriate identifying information.*

- The envelope should be filled out as completely as possible and should include:
  - Full name of subject.
  - Subject driver's license number.
  - Submitting agency and agency case number.
  - Geographical location where sample was collected, i.e., name and/or address of hospital, jail or other facility.
  - Name of person collecting the sample.
  - Collection date and time of the sample.
  - Signature of witnessing officer.
  - Felony or misdemeanor designation
  - A form for establishing the chain of possessions for all people handling the evidence.
- Other information such as agency or laboratory numbers, offense charges, or any special instructions may be added.



CALIFORNIA DEPT. OF JUSTICE

SUBJECT'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

INITIALS OF PERSON \_\_\_\_\_

DRAWING OF BLOOD/OR WITNESS TO URINE

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESSING OFFICER \_\_\_\_\_  
BFS-40



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**For further  
information  
and additional  
resources**

Please contact your regional BFS laboratory with any further questions that you may have.

**For a list of regional laboratories please go to:**

<https://oag.ca.gov/bfs/services>

**To locate the most current Physical Evidence Bulletins please go to:**

<https://oag.ca.gov/bfs/peb>

If drugs are suspected please refer to Physical Evidence Bulletin #8 (Toxicology) for specific requirements of submission of samples to the Toxicology laboratory.