



# Brazoria County Sheriff's Office Crime Laboratory

## Customer Service Agreement

January 17, 2025

*The Brazoria County Sheriff's Office Crime Laboratory (BCCL) provides, within its ability, forensic services to law enforcement agencies within Brazoria County. The laboratory is committed to providing efficient and accurate forensic services to the community it serves.*

*This notice serves as a general notification to customers regarding the submission and analysis of evidence. By submitting a request for laboratory examination to the BCCL, the customer accepts these terms and conditions.*

### **Services Provided:**

The BCCL provides both seized drugs analysis of items suspected of consisting, wholly or partly, of controlled substances, dangerous drugs, or other such materials, and blood alcohol analysis as well as reporting of such findings.

The laboratory offers evidence storage of both seized drugs and biological specimens, such as blood and urine. While the laboratory only offers the analysis of blood alcohol at this time and is not currently analyzing biological specimens for the presence of drugs, we are accepting evidence for storage. If the evidence is to be analyzed beyond our capacity, it is then sent to an external provider for analysis. This is expected to continue as we rebuild our Toxicology section and reapply for accreditation in blood drug analysis.

The laboratory also provides evidence disposal with the proper documentation.

### **Review of Requests for Laboratory Examination:**

The customer initiates a request by providing an accurately completed submission form in combination with properly packaged and sealed evidence. The customer agrees to notify the laboratory of any changes of information concerning requested services.

Each request for laboratory examination is reviewed by laboratory personnel. The laboratory will use this review process to ensure that the customer's needs are understood and that the laboratory can meet those needs. Once the laboratory receives a request, the request is considered a contract between the customer and the laboratory. The laboratory will contact the customer for additional information or clarification, if necessary.

### **Contract:**

The laboratory will analyze evidence to their discretion as far as method, analyst, instrumentation, extent, etc. The laboratory may select the item(s) most appropriate for analysis and/or elect to not analyze all items submitted based on the needs and circumstances of the case. The laboratory prioritizes casework in a manner that best serves the overall criminal justice community.

The laboratory strives to provide the highest quality and most valuable forensic analysis possible. For that reason, if analysts conducting testing identify alternate and/or additional testing that may prove beneficial to the customer, the laboratory may notify the customer. In the event that evidence may be consumed during analysis, the customer will be notified prior to analysis being attempted. In the event that evidence is consumed once analysis is completed, it will be



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documented on the laboratory report.

The BCCL shall not provide services to any customers who attempt to place undue pressures or biases upon BCCL employees. BCCL has the right to refuse service or entry of the laboratory to anyone who does not follow BCCL procedures while in the laboratory. Consistent refusal to meet the above requirements by any customer may result in cessation of service or another action deemed appropriate by the Laboratory Director.

The laboratory is available for clarification regarding laboratory procedures, analytical techniques, and analysis results. The laboratory requests feedback in the form of completing surveys and contacting the laboratory for any reason, including if any request is not adequately met.

#### **Externally Provided Services:**

The laboratory retains the right to use externally provided services. Using externally provided services only occurs in limited circumstances, such as if the laboratory cannot provide the requested or necessary testing. Results generated by external providers will be clearly identified in the laboratory report.

#### **Selection of Methods:**

The laboratory utilizes analytical methods that are generally accepted in the forensic science community and that have been validated by laboratory personnel and documented. The laboratory will determine the most appropriate method(s) for analysis based on the information and any input provided by the customer. Certain instances may necessitate additions to, deviations, or exclusions from documented methods, all of which will be properly documented and the customer notified. The customer agrees to accept any change(s) to the method if they arise concerning items.

#### **Disposition of Evidence:**

Upon completion of all analyses, laboratory personnel will return evidence items to one of the Brazoria County Sheriff's Office Crime Laboratory Evidence Vaults or other secure storage locations.

The customer will notify the laboratory of the disposition of cases, including information regarding required storage duration, permission for disposal, and requests for evidence to be returned to the agency. It is also agreed that the customer will retrieve any evidence that needs to be stored longer than three years upon request of the laboratory.

#### **Laboratory Examination Report:**

Results of examinations and/or analyses are reported to the customer in a laboratory report upon completion of analysis. The report will be completed in a simplified manner, reporting the information that is best used to convey the laboratory results to the reader. The signature indicates the end of the report and is the identification of the individual authorizing the report. Any information which is not reported to the customer shall be retained in the case file, including but not limited to, when necessary, the condition of the item submitted, analytical methods used, dates



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of testing, instrumental data, and any deviations from policy and procedures. In some circumstances, the analytical methods used and/or disposition of evidence may be listed in the laboratory report. The laboratory will provide supporting case data upon request.

### **Release of Information:**

The Brazoria County Sheriff's Office Crime Laboratory will keep all information confidential. In the event of a Texas Forensic Science Commission disclosure, corrective action, or Freedom of Information Act, all subject information may be available unless notified by a judicial authority that it needs to be redacted. Information is provided for standard court purposes such as discovery.

Please contact the laboratory with any questions or concerns.