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### Overview

This standard has a broad application and deals with the legal requirements in maintaining the chain of custody of specimens and samples. This will normally be for forensic specimens/samples and include: substance misuse including drugs and alcohol; sexual abuse; alcohol levels.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

# SFHCHS184

## Maintain chain of custody (specimens and samples)

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### Performance criteria

*You must be able to:*

- P1 communicate required information to others clearly, accurately and in a timely fashion
- P2 ensure chain of custody documentation is completed, signed, timed and dated at each stage of the specimen/sample process
- P3 ensure the unique identifier is attached to the specimen/sample and its documentation and is retained throughout sample/specimen life
- P4 ensure specimen/sample is obtained with a chain of custody observation
- P5 identify chain of custody specimens/samples with special process, storage and retention requirements and react appropriately
- P6 store the chain of custody specimen/sample in appropriate container, location, condition, and time period
- P7 recognise and respond appropriately when chain of custody specimen/sample or the processed stage integrity is compromised

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### Knowledge and understanding

*You need to know and understand:*

- K1 relevant statutory, regulatory and legislative requirements and guidance
- K2 the relevant standard operating procedures, policies and their importance
- K3 your limitations to practice and an understanding of the importance of working within these in a clinical context
- K4 how to communicate with individuals to explain procedures and reassure, including those with special needs
- K5 the rationale for chain of custody and its importance for the chain of evidence used in legal proceedings
- K6 recognition of types of specimens/samples that require the chain of custody process
- K7 the importance of an appropriate and authorised person taking responsibility for the specimen/sample at the point of receipt
- K8 the importance of the unique identifier
- K9 the importance of maintaining chain of custody documentation throughout the different stages of a specimens/samples life cycle i.e from receipt to final report and specimen/sample storage
- K10 the correct location for the storage of chain of custody specimens/samples and the processing pathways
- K11 relevant standard operating procedures, statutory, regulatory and legislative requirements and guidance, and their importance
- K12 action to be taken when the chain of custody integrity is compromised
- K13 a working understanding of the validity of the results when the chain of custody cannot be ascertained
- K14 action to be taken when equipment and/or environments compromise the chain of custody sample/specimen
- K15 the importance of working effectively to make efficient use of resources and meet prioritisation needs, especially with regard to urgent specimens/samples

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### Additional Information

#### External Links

This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

Dimension: HWB8 Biomedical investigation and intervention

## SFHCHS184

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<b>Developed by</b>	Skills for Health
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<b>Version number</b>	1
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<b>Date approved</b>	June 2010
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<b>Indicative review date</b>	June 2012
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<b>Validity</b>	Current
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<b>Status</b>	Original
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<b>Originating organisation</b>	Skills for Health
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<b>Original URN</b>	CHS184
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<b>Relevant occupations</b>	Health, Public Services and Care; Medicine and Dentistry; Healthcare and Related Personal Services
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<b>Suite</b>	Clinical Health Skills
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<b>Key words</b>	Chain of Custody, Samples, Specimens
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