9 Contact DNA Collection

9.1 Scope

This procedure may be used, when necessary, for the collection of contact DNA evidence prior to forensic biology analysis. This laboratory does not currently "screen" for the presence of contact DNA through a method such as microscopic examination for the presence of epithelial cells. Contact DNA is generally very limited in nature and consumption during screening may further reduce the potential success during DNA analysis. For this reason, when an item is suspected of containing contact DNA, efforts to collect possible contact DNA will be made. These samples may then be submitted for DNA analysis.

9.2 Equipment, Materials, and Reagents

- Sterile cotton swabs
- Sterile diH_2O
- Swab drying box (optional)

9.3 Procedure

1. Set the evidence onto a non-porous surface.
2. Moisten swab(s) with sterile diH_2O.
3. Swab the suspected area(s) on the evidence with the tip(s) of the cotton swab(s). Efforts to concentrate the possible contact DNA on the tip of the swab should be made. This will hopefully serve to increase chances of DNA success not only by concentrating the possible DNA but also in the absence of visible staining, later portioning will more likely capture DNA if the correct area of the swab is selected for portioning. As the area to be swabbed increases in size, so too may the number of swabs needed to adequately collect the evidence.
4. Avoid any suspected semen or blood stains. These sources of biological material generally contain more DNA and will potentially "mask" any lower level contact DNA. These stains may be processed separately.
5. Allow swab(s) to completely dry in a swab drying box for 30 minutes. Alternatively, the swab(s) may be air dried overnight in a secure location.

Sometimes, such as in the case of fingernail scrapings and clippings, suspected bloodstains cannot always be avoided. In such instances, the analyst will look for any visible red/brown staining and document accordingly prior to swabbing the item. It may be appropriate to forgo blood or semen detection in order to maximize potential contact DNA for DNA anlaysis.