Designation: E 1459 – 92 (Reapproved 1998)

Standard Guide for Physical Evidence Labeling and Related Documentation¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E 1459; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

- 1.1 This guide describes methods to be used for labeling physical evidence collected during field investigations; received in a forensic laboratory; or isolated, generated, or prepared from items submitted for laboratory examination.
- 1.2 Many types of physical evidence may be hazardous. It is assumed that personnel assigned to the collection, packaging, storing, or analysis of physical evidence will take precautions as appropriate to the evidence.
- 1.3 This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.

2. Summary of Practice

2.1 Any individual item of evidence is marked with a numeric or alphanumeric designation that is unique and allows the origin of the item to be unequivocally established.

3. Significance and Use

- 3.1 By following the procedures specified in this guide, any item of physical evidence will have a traceable audit trail by which the origin, past history, treatment, and analysis of the item can be determined.
- 3.2 By following these procedures, the chain of custody of any item of physical evidence will be maintained and documented.

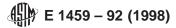
4. Marking Evidence Upon Original Collection

- 4.1 General Requirements:
- 4.1.1 Each item of evidence will be assigned a unique alphanumeric designator by the investigator who collects the evidence, or by someone designated to assign item numbers.
- 4.1.2 Whenever possible, sequential numbers will be used for evidence associated with a particular incident, event, or scene.
- ¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E30 on Forensic Sciences and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E30.11 on Interdisciplinary Forensic Science Standards.
 - Current edition approved Feb. 15, 1992. Published April 1992.

- 4.1.3 The location and condition of each item should be documented prior to collection.
- 4.1.4 Each item should be properly protected in an appropriate manner and marked or tagged with the following information:
 - 4.1.4.1 Item number.
 - 4.1.4.2 Case or incident number,
 - 4.1.4.3 Identification of person who collected item,
 - 4.1.4.4 Date item collected, and
 - 4.1.4.5 Brief description.
- 4.1.5 If possible, the evidence should be sealed in a tamper-evident container.
- 4.2 The following procedures are intended as an example of a procedure that will satisfy the requirements of 4.1. They may be adapted to the requirements of a specific incident or agency as required.
- 4.2.1 At each scene, assign one individual to package, label, and inventory evidence.
- 4.2.2 Give each scene a separate identification number. This may be the same as the incident or report number, or may be a combination of an incident or report number and a scene-specific number.
- 4.2.3 Give each item collected at a specific scene a unique sequential number.
- 4.2.4 Separately package and mark each item with the information called for in 4.1.4.

5. Marking Items Produced During Examination in the Forensic Laboratory

- 5.1 General Requirements:
- 5.1.1 Any item isolated, generated, or prepared during laboratory examination should be appropriately protected and marked with a unique designator that can be traced to the original evidence number.
- 5.1.2 Laboratory records should reflect when the item was isolated, by whom, how the item was isolated, sample designation and description, packaging and storage conditions, and any analytical data.
- 5.2 The following is an example of a procedure that meets the requirements in 5.1-5.1.2.
- 5.2.1 The isolated item should be appropriately packaged and the container marked with the following information:
 - 5.2.1.1 Laboratory case number,



5.2.1.2 Original item number,

5.2.1.3 Item number,

5.2.1.4 Brief description of the item,

5.2.1.5 Date item prepared, and

5.2.1.6 Initials of examiner.

5.2.2 A typical numbering scheme is illustrated below:

Item 1-Coat

Item 1-1—Debris removed from front of coat

Item 1-1-1—Slide containing fiber(s) from debris

Item 1-1-2—Bindle containing hair from debris

6. Records

6.1 Contemporaneously made records should include the following information:

Item 1-2-Debris from back of coat

- 6.1.1 Date of receipt of evidence, and
- 6.1.2 Method of packaging, marking and storage, specifically referring to packaging, marking, or storage that might affect the integrity of the evidence.

ASTM International takes no position respecting the validity of any patent rights asserted in connection with any item mentioned in this standard. Users of this standard are expressly advised that determination of the validity of any such patent rights, and the risk of infringement of such rights, are entirely their own responsibility.

This standard is subject to revision at any time by the responsible technical committee and must be reviewed every five years and if not revised, either reapproved or withdrawn. Your comments are invited either for revision of this standard or for additional standards and should be addressed to ASTM International Headquarters. Your comments will receive careful consideration at a meeting of the responsible technical committee, which you may attend. If you feel that your comments have not received a fair hearing you should make your views known to the ASTM Committee on Standards, at the address shown below.

This standard is copyrighted by ASTM International, 100 Barr Harbor Drive, PO Box C700, West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959, United States. Individual reprints (single or multiple copies) of this standard may be obtained by contacting ASTM at the above address or at 610-832-9585 (phone), 610-832-9555 (fax), or service@astm.org (e-mail); or through the ASTM website (www.astm.org).