

## CHS184 Maintain chain of custody (specimens and samples)

### 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. Version No 1

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You will need to know and understand:

1. relevant statutory, regulatory and legislative requirements and guidance
2. the relevant standard operating procedures, policies and their importance
3. your limitations to practice and an understanding of the importance of working within these in a clinical context
4. how to communicate with individuals to explain procedures and reassure, including those with special needs
5. the rationale for chain of custody and its importance for the chain of evidence used in legal proceedings
6. recognition of types of specimens/samples that require the chain of custody process
7. the importance of an appropriate and authorised person taking responsibility for the specimen/sample at the point of receipt
8. the importance of the unique identifier
9. 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
10. the correct location for the storage of chain of custody specimens/samples and the processing pathways
11. relevant standard operating procedures, statutory, regulatory and legislative requirements and guidance, and their importance
12. action to be taken when the chain of custody integrity is compromised
13. a working understanding of the validity of the results when the chain of custody cannot be ascertained
14. action to be taken when equipment and/or environments compromise the chain of custody sample/specimen
15. the importance of working effectively to make efficient use of resources and meet

prioritisation needs, especially with regard to urgent specimens/samples

## PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

You must be able to do the following:

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

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This National Occupational Standard was developed by Skills for Health. This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004): Dimension: HWB8 Biomedical investigation and intervention. This standard has replaced HCS\_C10