

**Palm Beach County
Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)**

**PART 2: Hospital Protocol Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Collection When SANE
Not Available**

- I. PURPOSE:
To provide guidelines for the forensic rape exam and collection of evidence for patients reporting sexual assault when a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) is not available.
- II. SCOPE:
Emergency Department.
- III. RESPONSIBILITY:
It is the responsibility of the ED Director to provide this protocol to his/her personnel as deemed necessary.
- IV. POLICY:
1. When a SANE from the Palm Beach County Victim Services and Rape Crisis Center is not available, the Emergency Room Physician and Registered Nurse will perform the exam.
 2. A SART Victim Advocate from the Rape Crisis Center will respond whether a victim is reporting or not. If the victim is reporting, a SART law enforcement officer will also respond.
 3. The Advocate will provide the S.A.F.E. kit and if needed, the toxicology kit. They will also provide crisis intervention and accompaniment for the victim during the exam throughout the procedure.
 4. If the case is being reported to police, evidence will be turned over to the investigating officer.
 5. If the case is not being reported to police, evidence will be turned over to the law enforcement agency within the hospital's jurisdiction.
- V. BASIC EVIDENCE COLLECTION:
1. VICTIM CONSENT FORM
 2. CLOTHING EVIDENCE
 3. SEXUAL BATTERY EVIDENCE COLLECTION KIT
 4. BITE MARKS/OTHER INJURIES
 5. TOXICOLOGY SCREENING

The Victim Advocate will provide the kits and be available if additional information is needed.

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS

1. VICTIM CONSENT FORM

A Victim Consent Form explains the examination procedures, gives consent to perform the evidence gathering exam, and should be dated and signed by the victim and witnessed by a medical professional, as defined in Florida Statute. The victim will be informed of the right to refuse all or part of the forensic evidence examination at any time. In the event that the victim is an adult who lacks the capacity to give consent, the victim's legal representative should sign the consent forms.

2. CLOTHING EVIDENCE

Clothing is retained for the presence of hairs, fibers, and body fluids and is one of the most important sources of evidence in a sexual battery case. Disrobing should be done over a sheet of clean, white table paper. If hair or debris is noticed, be sure to collect or fold the paper in such a way that this evidence is not lost. If patient cannot undress, clothing may be cut off. Be sure not to cut through existing rips, tears, or stains. Handle each item as little as possible and only when wearing gloves. Underwear must be packaged separately in the envelope provided. Other clothing items may be packaged together in a paper bag. Any clothing with wet stains, such as blood or semen, folded inward and then placed into separate paper bags. It is the responsibility of law enforcement to dry the item(s) as soon as possible before taking to the crime lab. Labels should be affixed to the outside of the paper bag to alert law enforcement that wet evidence is enclosed. Each item, including the paper over which the victim disrobed, is then labeled with the victim's name and date and sealed.

3. SEXUAL BATTERY EVIDENCE COLLECTION KIT

The Sexual Battery Evidence Collection Kit contains instructions in the envelope. This kit includes fingernail scrapings, oral swabs, pubic hair combings, genital swabs, rectal swabs and an envelope for debris/other collection. See ATTACHMENT 1.

4. BITE MARKS/OTHER INJURIES

Specimens from bite marks are collected using 2 moistened swabs (2 or 3 drops of sterile water). Using the moistened swabs, swab the surface of the bite mark while rotating the swabs to cover the entire swab surface. Place swabs in swab packaging and then place in "Debris/other Collection" envelope and label. Bite marks should be photographed by Crime Scene Unit or depicted in a drawing on the forensic exam form.

5. TOXICOLOGY SCREENING

The Victim Advocate will provide the hospital with a special toxicology kit, prepared by PBSO, if screening is requested by the victim or by the detective for suspected drug-facilitated sexual assault. Both urine and blood must be taken.

VII. DISCHARGE INFORMATION FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT CARE FOLLOW-UP:

The hospital will provide discharge instructions as needed. The SART Victim Advocate will provide victim with the hotline number for PBC Rape Crisis Center, (561) 833-7273 or toll free 866-891-7273. Follow-up services will also be offered including crisis counseling, coordination of medical care follow-up, therapy and legal advocacy.

ATTACHMENT 1

PALM BEACH COUNTY SHERIFFS OFFICE SEXUAL BATTERY EVIDENCE COLLECTION KIT INSTRUCTIONS.

NOTE:

A purple top tube for blood has not be provided for this kit. The oral swab will be used as a known standard. If an oral assault has occurred, the oral swab will be used to collect possible semen. A purple top tube may then be drawn from the individual and submitted separately.

STEP 1: FINGERNAIL SCRAPINGS COLLECTION

Unfold the sheet of paper and place on a flat surface. Hold the victim's left hand over the paper. Using the finger nail scraper provided, scrape under each nail, allowing any debris to fall onto the paper. Place stick in paper and refold, Return the folded paper sheet to the Left Hand Fingernail Scrapings Collection envelope, seal and fill out all information requested on the envelope. Repeat procedure for the right hand.

STEP 2: ORAL SWABS

Carefully swab the mouth using two swabs simultaneously. Place the swabs in the Oral envelope, seal and fill out all information requested.

STEP 3: PUBIC HAIR COMBINGS

Place towel under the victim's buttocks, and using the comb provided, comb the pubic hair in downward strokes to allow any debris or loosed hairs to fall onto the paper towel. Remove the towel from under the victim. Place the comb in the center of the towel and refold so as to retain the comb and any evidence collected. Return the towel to the Pubic Hair Combings envelope, seal and fill out all information requested.

STEP 4: GENITAL SWABS

Vaginal swabs: Carefully swab the vaginal cavity using all six swabs. Place the swabs in the Genital envelope, seal and fill out all information requested

Penile swabs: Carefully swab the penile area using two swabs simultaneously. Discard unused swabs. Place the used swabs in the Genital envelope, seal and fill out all information requested.

STEP 5: RECTAL SWABS

Carefully swab the rectum using two swabs simultaneously. Place the swab in the Rectal envelope, seal and fill out all information requested

STEP 6: DEBRIS/OTHER COLLECTION

Use this envelope to collect additional debris or sample if necessary. Seal and fill out all information requested.

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place all swabs in box provided before placing in the corresponding envelope
2. If appropriate, collect and place clothing in paper bags provided and submit separately.
3. Initial and affix red police evidence seals on outer envelope.
4. Fill out all information requested on kit label under "Medical Personnel", the affix biohazard seal where indicated.

Any questions, contact the PBSO Crime Laboratory @ 561-688-4222

00663