

Procedure for Conducting Audits and Management Reviews

1.0 Purpose – This procedure establishes the method by which Quality System audits and management reviews are performed within the State Crime Laboratory (Laboratory).

2.0 Scope – This procedure applies to all Laboratory personnel who conduct audits and management reviews.

3.0 Definitions

- **Audit** – A planned and documented investigative evaluation to compare various aspects of the Laboratory's performance against established requirements, standards, policies, and procedures.
- **Corrective Action Record (CAR)** – Documentation, by which non-conformities are identified, tracked, investigated, and corrected.
- **Finding** – An audit result stating non-compliance with accreditation criteria, Laboratory, and SBI policies or procedures.
- **Internal audit** - An evaluation by Laboratory personnel to determine compliance with requirements of the QA manual and other Quality System documentation.
- **Non-conformity** – A non-fulfillment of a requirement of the Quality Management System.
- **Objective evidence** – Information substantiated through examination, measurement, test, interview or other means.
- **Observation** – Objective evidence that may indicate a potential non-conformity.
- **On-the-spot corrective action** - Immediate step taken to correct or resolve the non-conformity.
- **Management Review** – An assessment by management of the Quality System to determine effectiveness, suitability, and future direction.

4.0 Procedure

4.1 Overview - The Laboratory shall conduct systematic internal audits 1) to monitor and determine compliance with the requirements of the Quality System and Standards and 2) to evaluate the technical activities and work product of employees.

4.2 Internal Audits

4.2.1 The Quality Control Officer (QCO) is responsible for coordinating all internal audits. The QCO shall ensure that internal audits are performed by trained and qualified personnel independent of the Section being audited.

4.2.2 Internal audits of each Section shall be conducted annually during the last quarter of the year.

4.2.3 Each Section shall be notified in advance of audit dates to minimize disruption of operations and to ensure the presence of necessary personnel.

4.2.4 Auditors shall use a modified version of the accrediting body checklist. These checklists are intended as a minimal list of audit items. Auditors shall not be restricted to items on the checklist and shall pursue any issue affecting quality.

4.2.5 As part of the audit, the audit team shall conduct a 100 % evidence inspection for each analyst who has 100 cases or fewer in their custody. If the analyst has more than 100 cases in his/her custody, 100 cases will be selected at random by the auditor for inspection.

- 4.2.6** The Lead Auditor shall collect feedback from the audit team regarding the quality standards evaluated.
- 4.2.7** If a non-conformity is observed and can be corrected immediately, on-the-spot corrective action may be taken. If the non-conformity cannot be corrected immediately, the Forensic Scientist Manager shall conduct corrective and/or preventive action(s), if warranted, as provided in the Procedure for Corrective Action and/or Procedure for Preventive Action.
- 4.2.8** Upon completion of the audit, the Lead Auditor shall brief the Forensic Scientist Manager who shall have an opportunity to respond.
- 4.2.9** The Lead Auditor shall prepare a final written report of the audit findings, observations, and recommendations. The report shall state the objective evidence observed and shall express any finding in the words of the relevant standard, policy, procedure, or other Quality System document. The original report shall be given to the Lab Director and a copy shall be given to the Forensic Scientist Manager and the Deputy Assistant Director/Quality Manager (QM) within two weeks of completion of the audit.
- 4.2.10** The Forensic Scientist Manager's response to the audit report shall address each finding and shall be incorporated into the Section's annual management review, as noted below.

4.3 External Audits

- 4.3.1** External audits are under the control of, and performed by, an auditing body external to the Laboratory.
- 4.3.2** Upon notice by the accrediting body, the Deputy Assistant Director/QM shall notify the Lab Director of all external audits.
- 4.3.3** Corrective or preventive actions, if warranted, shall be conducted as provided in the Procedure for Corrective Action and Procedure for Preventive Action.

4.4 Management Review

- 4.4.1** Management reviews shall be performed annually in conjunction with the internal audit program. An annual review of each Section quality system shall be performed by the Forensic Scientist Manager.
- 4.4.2** The management review shall be documented via memo to the Lab Director, with a copy to the Deputy Assistant Director/QM, within two weeks of receipt of the Section's final internal audit report.
- 4.4.3** The management review shall examine the Quality System of each Section and determine if it meets the standards set by the Laboratory and ISO. The review shall also serve as a guide for future determinations regarding the effectiveness and direction of the Quality System due to changes in the organization, facilities, staffing, equipment, activities, or workload.
- 4.4.4** As necessary, the QCO shall provide any needed information and/or records for the review and forward them to the Forensic Scientist Manager.

4.4.5 The management review shall consider, but not be limited to, the following:

- Suitability of policies and procedures.
- Reports from managerial and supervisory personnel.
- Outcome of recent audits.
- Effectiveness of previous actions.
- Corrective and preventive actions.
- Assessments by external bodies.
- Results of inter-laboratory comparisons or proficiency tests.
- Changes in the volume and type of the work.
- Client feedback.
- Complaints.
- Other factors, such as quality control activities, resources, and staff training.

4.4.6 Corrective or preventive actions identified during the management review shall be addressed as provided in the Procedure for Corrective Action and Procedure for Preventive Action.

4.4.7 A summary report of the Section Management Reviews outlining findings and observations shall be included in the Laboratory Quality System Review. This annual report is prepared by the QCM and provided to the Lab Director and shall include a review of the overall effectiveness of the Quality System, the proficiency testing program, the court testimony monitoring system, etc.

4.5 Documentation - The QCO shall retain the management reviews and audit reports according to the Record Retention Schedule as set forth by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources or five years, whichever is longer.

5.0 Records

- Audit summary reports
- Management system review reports

6.0 Attachments – N/A

Revision History		
Effective Date	Version Number	Reason
09/17/2012	1	Original Document
10/26/2012	2	4.2.2 - changed month of October to last quarter of year; 4.2.5 - changed 100 % evidence inspection to 100 % evidence inspection for analysts with 100 cases or fewer and a minimum of 100 cases selected at random for those with custody of more than 100 cases; 4.2.7 – replaced CAR shall be completed with the provision to use the Procedure for Corrective Action and/or the Procedure for Preventive Action