

Tamper evident bags

Tamper evident bags

About this guidance

Why tamper evident bags are used Issuing tamper evident bag Using a tamper evident bag Returning, re-using or disposing of tamper evident bags Health and safety for using tamper evident bags	<p>This guidance explains the procedure to follow for securing seized or detained items in a tamper evident bag (TEB), how to use the bag and how to record information about its contents.</p> <p>The guidance provides the following information about TEBs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• why you use TEBs to secure items• the procedure for issuing them• the correct way to use a TEB• how to complete the exhibit label correctly, and• when to use a TEB. <p>Changes to this guidance – This page tells you what has changed since the pervious version of this guidance.</p> <p>Contact – This page tells you who to contact for help if your senior investigation officer or line manager can't answer your question.</p> <p>Information owner – This page tells you about this version of the guidance and who owns it.</p>	<p>In this section</p> <p>Changes to this guidance Contact Information owner</p>
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This page lists changes to the Tamper evident bag guidance, with the most recent at the top.

Date of the change	Details of the change
22 April 2013	Completely revised by the modernised guidance team.

Related links

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Why tamper evident bags are used

Issuing tamper evident bags Using a tamper evident bag Returning, re-using or disposing of tamper evident bags Health and safety for using tamper evident bags	<p>This page explains why you must use tamper evident bags (TEBs) and what they are used for.</p> <p>Why you must use a TEB</p> <p>As a criminal and financial investigation (CFI) officer you must use TEBs supplied by a local police force or by HM Revenue & Customs.</p> <p>All TEBs are used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• preserve evidence, and• produce that evidence as exhibits in court. <p>You must use them to secure and protect items you have seized from a suspect or traveller that may be of 'evidential value' to any future investigation.</p> <p>General rules for using TEBs</p> <p>Tamper evident bags:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• can be used to safely transport or store the exhibit in a controlled way• cannot be opened without leaving an obvious trace• are bar coded so they are easily traced, and• make sure the items kept to use as evidence keep their integrity (quality), as they are sealed with a special adhesive that displays the word 'void' if it is tampered with. <p>It is important you make sure as far as possible any bags you use for exhibiting items are free from possible contamination. You must follow the procedures your team has put in place for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• storing and handling all bags to be used for property or exhibits properly, and	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• recording the unique reference numbers of all TEBs to make sure you maintain a chain of evidence.	
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Issuing tamper evident bags

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Using a tamper evident bag

Why tamper evident bags are used Issuing tamper evident bags Returning, re-using or disposing of tamper evident bags Health and safety for using tamper evident bags	<p>This section tells you how to use, seal and label a tamper evident bag (TEB) correctly.</p> <p>How to use a TEB</p> <p>A TEB is a transparent plastic and leak-proof bag with a strong adhesive seal.</p> <p>When you seize an item, you must always wear a fresh pair of nitrile gloves. If you seize an item that may need to be forensically tested or analysed you must always handle it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• in a clean environment, and• on a clean surface. <p>You must never handle the bag in any way that may contaminate the interior, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• turning the bag inside out when you are preparing it for use• blowing into the bag, or• putting your hands or arms into the bag. <p>You must place the item in the bag at an angle so others can view the contents without needing to open the bag. For instance, you must place a folded piece of paper that may contain writing that could be evidence of a crime into the bag so the writing is visible.</p> <p>How to seal a TEB</p> <p>The TEB seal is an orange adhesive strip covered with a blue ‘tear off’ strip and you can see both coloured strips. You must make sure the contents of the bag do not touch the blue area of the seal because when removed, the blue strip sticks to a green security patch.</p> <p>To seal the bag, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• place the TEB on a flat surface• hold one corner of the orange strip with one hand	<p>In this section</p> <p>Completing the TEB exhibit label</p> <p>Opening and re-sealing tamper evident bags</p>
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- pull away the corner of the touching blue strip with another hand
- 'smooth down' the orange strip in the normal way, and
- make sure you keep contact with the adhesive strip to a minimum.

Using a TEB for items of forensic interest

You must use a TEB for all non-bulk items of property taken during investigations except the items listed below:

- items kept for forensic analysis (fingerprints or DNA)
- documents kept for electrostatic document analysis (ESDA)
- sharp or sharply pointed articles
- clothing kept for forensic examination
- wet items
- items weighing over six kilograms, or
- large or irregular items where it is difficult to seal the mouth of the bag.

Advice on items of forensic interest

Forensic practitioners on secondment from the police are available to give advice to criminal and financial investigation (CFI) staff. They give answers to any questions on the preservation of evidence and the best way to secure each item.

Restricted information – do not disclose – start of section

The information in this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

Restricted information – do not disclose – end of section

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Completing the tamper evident bag exhibit label

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This page tells you how to complete a tamper evident bag (TEB) exhibit label and what information to put in each section of the label.

You only need to complete a TEB label (you do not need to complete a separate 'paper exhibits' label as well). On every TEB there is a double sided pre-printed label. You must:

- complete the front side at the time you seal the bag when you seize an item
- use a ballpoint pen, and
- not fold the bag over in any way where writing the label will leave any indentation on the internal contents.

The reverse side of the label is for the Queens warehouse or property officer to complete if you send the TEB to storage.

The TEB labels may vary between those issued by specific police forces or by HM Revenue & Customs but the key information is the same. The table below tells you how you must complete the sections:

Section heading on the bag	What information it records
Exhibit reference	Insert the unique identification mark for the seized item. For example, Smith 0001.
Office	Insert the name of the office in overall control of the operation. For example, Bristol criminal and financial investigation team B or Birmingham immigration crime team 4.
Search URN	Unique reference numbers (URNs) are issued for each set of premises searched. The national coordination unit issues this number to the search team leader.

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	Lab reference	The forensic provider completes this if the seized exhibit is later sent for analysis.	
	Description of exhibit	You must complete this with enough detail to identify the seized item.	
	From place or person	<p>You must describe the exact location where the item was found. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • second drawer of four drawer filing cabinet, in first floor rear bedroom number 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the room number must correspond to the numbers you give to the rooms in the sketch plan in your notebook. 	
	Taken by	The name of the officer who found the item.	
	Date	The date the item was found.	
	Time	The time the item was found.	
	Signature	The officer who finds and exhibits the item.	
	Sealed by	The officer who sealed the bag.	
	Date	The date the bag was sealed.	
Time	The time the bag was sealed.		

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Opening and re-sealing tamper evident bags

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• what you did to the exhibit• whether you re-sealed the item• the new seal number, and• the original identifying mark or any new identifying marks.	
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Returning, re-using or disposing of tamper evident bags

Why tamper evident bags are used Issuing tamper evident bags Using a tamper evident bag Health and safety for using tamper evident bags	<p>This page tells you about returning unused tamper evident bags (TEBs) and how and when to dispose of them correctly.</p> <p>Returning unused bags</p> <p>Once you have completed a search of premises or the examination of property or exhibits, you seal any unused bags in a fresh bag and return to the issuing office.</p> <p>It may be possible to use these bags again, but you must not use them for items submitted for forensic examination.</p> <p>Keeping unused bags as a control sample</p> <p>If you have already taken sensitive forensic crime scene exhibits for analysis you must keep any unused TEBs as an 'unused material' control sample.</p> <p>When not to use TEBs and how to dispose of them</p> <p>To maintain the integrity of exhibit bags used in sensitive crime scenes, you must discard or destroy any exhibit bag if, for any reason, you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• consider it to be compromised (contaminated), or• cannot prove it to be free of contamination. <p>You must not leave spoilt bags on the premises you have searched. You must put them into a plastic bag and return them to the issuing office for disposal. The issuing office must record the bag numbers and then destroy the bags.</p>	
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Health and safety for using tamper evident bags

Why tamper evident bags are used Issuing tamper evident bags Returning, re-using or disposing of tamper evident bags Using a tamper evident bag	<p>This page gives you health and safety advice for handling items to be stored in a tamper evident bag (TEB) and on the best way to secure the items you are keeping.</p> <p>Things to consider when you handle property and exhibits</p> <p>You must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• wear a fresh pair of nitrile gloves (and liners) at all times when you handle property or exhibits• consider wearing a forensic suit or mask in each situation• if you have a cold or recent cut which has bled, let someone else package items requiring DNA analysis• always wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling property and exhibits• always beware of sharp objects before and during packaging• if you find firearms or explosives on the premises, follow the firearms and explosives safe handling instructions, see related link: Firearms and explosives – safe handling procedures, and• report all accidents, however minor, to the case team or line manager and complete an HSW3 form, see related link: Accidents and incidents at work. <p>You must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• smoke, eat or drink when you handle property or exhibits• bite or tear the plastic bag using your teeth, always use a knife or scissors• remove the air from a package towards your face, the correct way is to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ place the bag with the end to be sealed facing away from your body and face, and○ apply the seal.	<p>Related links</p> <p>Links to staff intranet removed</p>
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Contact

Why tamper evident bags are used Issuing tamper evident bags Using a tamper evident bag Returning, re-using or disposing of tamper evident bags Health and safety for using tamper evident bags	<p>This page explains who to contact for more help with a specific question relating to using Tamper evident bags.</p> <p>If you have read this guidance and still need more help with this subject, you must first ask your line manager.</p> <div><div>Restricted information – do not disclose – start of section</div><div>The information in this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.</div><div>Restricted information – do not disclose – end of section</div></div> <p>Changes to this guidance can only be made by the modernised guidance team (MGT). If you think the policy content needs amending you must email the above contact, who will ask the MGT to update the guidance, if appropriate.</p> <p>The MGT will accept direct feedback on broken links, missing information or the format, style and navigability of this guidance. You can send these using the link: Email: modernised guidance team.</p>	<p>Related links Changes to this guidance Information owner</p> <p>External links Links to staff intranet removed</p>
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This page tells you about this version of the Tamper evident bags guidance and who owns it.

Version	1.0
Valid from date	22 April 2013
Guidance owner	Dave White
Cleared by director	David Pennant Sonia Dower
Director's role	Director – Crime directorate Director – Strategy and intelligence directorate
Clearance date	27 March 2013

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Links to staff intranet removed