

Information Bulletin

Fire Debris Analysis Evidence Packaging

Overuse of Evidence Tape on Fire Debris Containers

During fire debris analysis, certain types of evidence sealing tapes displayed patterns that were similar to a known ignitable liquid. This finding was attributed to excessive amounts of tape used to package the evidence containers. The excess adhesive can make its way into the sample when chemists physically examine the sample prior to analysis. This interference can potentially cause misinterpretations of the data and/or misleading reports.

Prevention:

- Avoid sealing cans all the way around the circumference of the lid.
 - The tape is not meant to be used as a vapor-tight seal.
- Only use one line of tape across the top of the can.
 - The tape is used to indicate there was no tampering with the can in the time period between collection and analysis.
 - Ensure that the lid closed completely. Use caution in closing with hammers and mallets as they can create leaks in the seal
- Whenever new tapes are purchased for use, submit a sample for testing to the laboratories
 - This allows fire debris analysts to be aware of any patterns that can be attributed to the tape.
- Avoid taping any arson bags used to secure evidence.
- Do **NOT** store evidence tape or other items inside the evidence container.

DO:



DON'T:



Information provided by the NYPD Forensics Laboratory and NYS DCJS Technical Working Group on Fire Debris Analysis.

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