

Relationship Testing of Deceased Individuals



Technical Bulletin 40-024

Setting the Standard for Quality DNA Identification

In death, unresolved questions of biological relationships can impact surviving family members at a number of different levels, including custody, inheritance, social security and public assistance.

DNA Testing

Recovery of DNA from remains is often highly successful, depending on the quality of preservation. Usually a number of different sample types are collected so that in the event that one does not yield suitable DNA the likelihood of successful DNA recovery from at least one sample will typically remain high.

- Buccal Swab - it is often useful to moisten the swab with sterile distilled water prior to swabbing an embalmed person
- Fingernail clippings from one hand
- Blood or FTA blood card
- Autopsy Tissue Section (1 cm)

Samples should be placed in a suitable container and shipped over night to the laboratory. If fresh tissue is shipped, samples should be frozen and shipped on dry ice.

Legal Relationship Testing

Legal relationship testing involving deceased individuals has the same basic requirements as any other legal test. However, consent requirements will be different and sample identification will come from the facility that has current custody of the samples. To adjust for this, Chromosomal Laboratories will provide you with the necessary forms to use. The third party administrator, next of kin or person with legal authority* needs to contact the facility that has the samples or body of the deceased to make arrangements.

1. The samples of the deceased individual must adhere to a strict chain of custody. The facility with the samples will fill out the **Chain of Custody/ Affidavit of Identity** form. It is best to have the pathologist, coroner or funeral home send the samples directly to Chromosomal Laboratories. It is not necessary for the third party administrator to take custody of the samples at any time. The samples are never to be in the custody of the next of kin, or any other person involved in testing.
2. The next of kin, or person with legal authority*, fills out the **Third Party Client Authorization** form. This form gives Chromosomal Laboratories and its affiliates authorization to use the samples of the deceased in a relationship test. This form must be submitted to Chromosomal Laboratories prior to testing. Alternatively a court order, that clearly states that the samples of the decedent be tested for paternity can be used.

*Legal Authority includes, Next of Kin, Power of Attorney, Executor of Estate, etc. For more information on who has legal authority over the deceased and their samples consult your State Laws.



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