



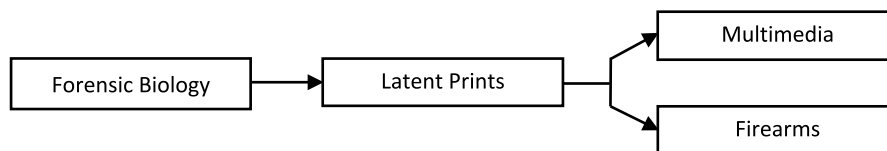
1. Introduction

HFSC stakeholders requesting forensic services may need more than one type of examination/analysis on an item of evidence. For example, a knife may need to be examined for possible latent prints and DNA. When these types of requests are received by HFSC, they are referred to as multi-disciplinary requests, or MDRs. This guideline provides information on how to submit MDRs and how HFSC processes MDRs.

Most MDRs involve requests for DNA, firearms, latent prints, and digital evidence. The typical MDR evidence processing workflow at HFSC is DNA (Forensic Biology) followed by Latent Prints then either Firearms or Multimedia (depending on the type of evidence). However, this workflow may vary based on the type of evidence and the circumstances of the investigation.

Seized drugs requests that include requests for other disciplines (typically latent prints) are handled on a case-by-case basis by section management. Please call 713-929-6760 or email triage@hfsctx.gov.

General MDR workflow:



Note: Multimedia and firearms examination processes result in the loss of DNA and/or LP evidence.

2. How to submit an MDR

- a. HFSC receives requests for forensic services through the “Where’s My Results” portal (portal)
 - i. NIBIN eligible firearms and sexual assault kits are received via the auto-request process.
- b. Access the portal at [HFSC \(houstonforensicscience.org\)](https://houstonforensicscience.org)
 - i. To request a portal account, email requestportal@hfsctx.gov. Please allow up to 24 hours for your account to be active.
 - ii. If you cannot access the portal or do not have an account set-up and need to submit a request immediately, please contact triage@hfsctx.gov.
- c. If an item of evidence needs multiple forensic services, it is important to know which services are needed prior to submitting a request and to submit the requests at the same time. Not submitting requests for MDRs at the same time may result in a loss of evidence.
- d. Submit a request for each forensic service needed on each item of evidence.
 - i. You will receive an email if HFSC is unable to fulfill your request.
- e. If you need additional forensic services on a previously submitted request, submit a new request via the portal as soon as possible.
- f. If you need additional help submitting a request, please visit the portal Help Center located in the upper right-hand corner of the top menu bar.



- g. Priority MDRs will be handled on a case-by-case basis by each discipline.
 - i. Please refer to the HPD Priority Request Review Process or the HCDAO Priority Request Review Process, available on the portal home page under Internal Resources in the lower left-hand corner for more information.
- 3. Firearms (previously documented in HFSC's Magazine Preservation Policy)**
- a. Firearms are submitted via auto-requests to HFSC for NIBIN processing, usually within 24 hours of being submitted to the HPD property room. Once NIBIN processing has started, additional forensic services cannot be performed on the firearm (such as latent print processing or DNA).
 - i. The timeline for NIBIN processing of firearms is in place to meet ATF requirements. ATF manages the NIBIN database and equipment used for NIBIN imaging.
 - ii. Timely NIBIN entry is also critical because the NIBIN database provides valuable investigative leads to participating law enforcement agencies.
 - iii. NIBIN eligible firearms include:
 - 1. Automatic and semiautomatic firearms
 - 2. 12-gauge pump-action and semiautomatic shotguns.
 - b. HFSC implemented the Magazine Preservation Policy in 2020 to address MDRs on firearms and still be able to meet ATF requirements for NIBIN processing. The Magazine Preservation Policy is being incorporated into this guideline and will no longer be a standalone document.
 - c. The Magazine Preservation Policy was designed to preserve the integrity of possible evidence (such as latent prints or DNA) that may have been deposited on the magazine. Preserving the evidence allows for NIBIN processing to be completed as soon as HFSC receives firearms from the property room.
 - d. The following steps are to be taken when submitting firearms to the HPD property room:
 - i. Please wear gloves to complete the following task:
 - ii. Eject the magazine from the firearm and place the magazine into a proper evidence container with limited handling
 - iii. Do not remove cartridges from the magazine – leave them in place.
 - e. The magazine and cartridges may be submitted to HFSC for additional testing (latent prints, DNA). Requests must be submitted via the portal.
 - f. HFSC will utilize a magazine from HFSC's Firearms Reference Collection for NIBIN processing.
 - i. If no magazine is available, then the magazine received with the firearm will be used; however, it will first be processed for latent prints and swabbed for contact DNA.
 - g. NIBIN-eligible firearms are evaluated for possible visible blood prior to processing. If observed, the possible blood is swabbed and preserved for future testing if required.
 - h. Firearms Examinations
 - i. Once NIBIN processing is complete and a notification issued, additional firearms examinations may be requested. Firearms examinations may require the use of the original magazine and/or the original cartridges.



1. If no additional requests for DNA or latent prints are made on the magazine when the request for firearms examination is received via the portal, the evidence will no longer be available for testing in these other disciplines.

4. DNA and/or Latent Print request for Firearms

- a. Please wear gloves when handling the firearm.
- b. If requesting both DNA and latent print processing on a firearm, both requests must be created at the time via the portal. Please read the following sections carefully.
- c. **DNA**
 - i. The following steps are required if requesting **DNA** swabbing of a firearm:
 1. When submitting the firearm to the Property Room, let them know that the firearm needs to be processed for DNA.
 2. Submit a request for DNA via the portal as soon as possible.
 - a. NIBIN processing is auto requested on all NIBIN eligible firearms. Once NIBIN processing is started, the firearm can no longer be swabbed for contact DNA.
 - ii. DNA requests are reviewed and approved by the Forensic Biology triage team prior to being accepted. If you have questions regarding your request email hpsc.fbio.triage@hfsctx.gov.
 - iii. HFSC will review and respond to your request during normal business hours. HFSC will notify you if:
 - a. Additional information is needed
 - b. Your request was rejected. An explanation will be provided for all rejected requests.
- d. **Latent Prints**
 - i. The following steps are required if requesting **latent print** processing on a firearm:
 1. When submitting the firearm to the Property Room, let them know that the firearm needs to be processed for latent prints.
 2. Submit a request for latent print processing via the portal as soon as possible.
 - a. NIBIN processing is auto requested on all NIBIN eligible firearms. Once NIBIN processing is started, the firearm can no longer be processed for latent prints.
 3. If you have questions related to latent print processing on firearms, please email hpsc.lpsupport@hfsctx.gov
 - e. DNA and latent print requests may be submitted on firearms that are not eligible for NIBIN processing (e.g., revolvers, bolt actions and lever action rifles).
 - f. Typically, long guns collected by HFSC's Crime Scene Unit are submitted directly to HFSC for latent print processing.