

DNA Evidence Collection - Touch DNA Swabs (aka Epi Swabs)

Maine State Police Crime Laboratory – Forensic Biology Section

Supplies:

- Gloves
- Distilled water
- Standard sterile cotton swabs (with or without the protective caps)
- Swab boxes (for swabs without the protective caps)
- Evidence packaging (e.g. envelope)

WHAT to swab:

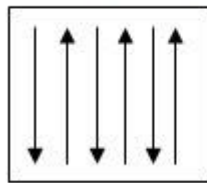
- Areas/surfaces the perpetrator handled the most.
- Items in contact with the perpetrator's mouth (e.g. cans, bottles, straws, half-eaten food, chewing gum, face mask, etc.).
- Clothing and cigarette butts should be collected & submitted to the Lab, not swabbed.

HOW to swab:

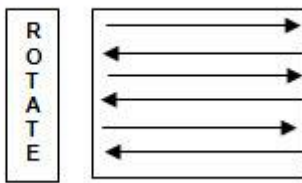
* Gloves should be worn when collecting DNA evidence and changed frequently, especially between items*

1. Dampen swab(s) with distilled water (1-3 drops per swab).
2. Rub the swab over the desired area with pressure, using all sides of the swab, including the tip.

Vertical Swabbing



Horizontal Swabbing



3. Close protective cap or place in swab box.
4. Place swab(s) in evidence packaging.
5. Label evidence packaging with a description of the swabbed area ("DNA swab" or the like is **INSUFFICIENT**, please describe what you are swabbing).

Other Considerations:

- Avoid areas/surfaces that the victim(s) handled heavily (e.g. doorknobs, keys).
- Avoid areas/surfaces that lots of people handle (e.g. business entrances).
- Avoid areas/surfaces with well-defined fingerprints, these should be preserved and submitted for Latent Prints.
- Collect reference samples from suspects if possible.
- Collect reference samples to be used for elimination purposes (from victims, homeowners, residents, employees, etc.). These will only be compared to their specific case and won't be entered into the database.