

**FORENSIC TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY  
OFFICE OF CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER  
CITY OF NEW YORK**

**COMPUTER ASSISTED TOXICOLOGY SPECIMEN DISCARD**

**POST MORTEM SPECIMENS**

**PRINCIPLE**

A Database based program searches the Toxicology Database for cases with specimens which may be discarded. This is applicable for post mortem toxicology case numbers from 2003 to present. Discard criteria are that there is no save request for the case and that the toxicology report was finalized at least **six** months prior to discard. The program automatically documents the date discarded for each specimen in the Specimens Received subform of the Main Toxicology Database.

**Note:** *The specimen discard program only works on the computer in the accessioning area.*

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Log into the network.
2. Double click on the Discard Entry icon (TOX DISCARD). Enter your Database user name and password.
3. In about a minute, a screen will return the prompt, "Scan Label," and a yellow box with a blue backlit Toxicology number at the top.

**Note:** *A scan will not take if the Toxicology number is not back lit in blue. If not blue, place the cursor in the box and click.*

4. Using a scanner (trigger activated or "always on"), scan the **Toxicology** number barcode or manually enter the toxicology number.

**Note:** *The preferred method of entering the Toxicology number is by scanning. However, manual entry is allowed if scanning is ineffective, difficult or inefficient. If the Toxicology number is entered by hand, numbers **must** be visually verified before specimens are discarded.*

Expected results of scan:

- a. Specimen ready for discard:

The red box on the screen displays “Select Specimen to Discard”  
Proceed to step 5.

b. Specimen not ready for discard/no save request:

The red box on the screen displays “Select Specimen to Discard”

No specimen types will appear on the screen; however the appropriate discard date will be indicated. Place a label on each specimen and write in the discard date that appears on the screen. Place specimen in the storage area designated for “SAVE” cases in the freezer. Proceed to screen next specimen.

c. Specimen has a SAVE request:

The red box on the screen displays “STOP - DO NOT DISCARD SPECIMEN”

You will see the following in a DataEase Error window:

<Required field ‘LaboratoryNumberLink’ was not entered>

Click on “OK”

In another DataEase Error window you will see:

<Error 305 Saving Current Changes>

<Required field not entered>

Click “OK”

Place a “DO NOT THROW AWAY HOLD SPECIMEN UNTIL” label on the specimen and place it in the storage area designated for “SAVE” cases. If possible locate all other specimens on the case and treat similarly.

Put cursor in Toxicology number box and click to back light Toxicology number.  
Proceed to scan next specimen.

**Note:** Some specimens have four barcodes :

*Tox. number*

*ME number*

*Department barcode (T)*

*Specimen type barcode*

*See Troubleshooting below if you scan something other than the Toxicology number label*

5. Under the “Discard ?” column click the box next to the specimen to be discarded. A check mark will appear in the box. If you have multiple specimens, check all appropriate boxes.

6. A "Confirm" button will appear next to the checked box(es). Verify that the number on the specimen(s) and the number on the screen match. Click on one confirm button. The computer will show the discard date(s) in the appropriate column.

You may discard the specimen(s) only **AFTER** the discard date(s) appears.

**Note:** The information in computer window will NOT clear between scans.

7. Scan the next specimen number to be discarded and repeat the above process.
8. When finished click on the EXIT box. Another box will appear with the question: Save changes? Yes/No. Choose Yes (click in circle near YES-black dot, if not already present, will appear) and click on OK.

**Note:** If there is no response when the EXIT box is clicked, click on the X in the upper right corner. The questions outlined above will appear.

9. To exit back to the network, close the program window (click on "X" in upper right corner).

## TROUBLESHOOTING

1. If the barcode won't scan:
  - a. Make sure the number in the yellow box is blue back lit. If not, click on the yellow box. This will change the number to blue back lit. Proceed as normally, or enter the Toxicology number by hand. Use backspace to remove the previous number.

**Note:** **DO NOT** use F5

2. If you scan the wrong barcode, or the scan returns an inappropriate read, rescan the correct barcode. If the rescan fails, enter manually the toxicology number. Use backspace to remove the incorrect number.
3. If a specimen exists which is not in the database:

**DO NOT DISCARD THE SPECIMEN!!!**

On a blue label write "NIC" (not in computer) and place it on the specimen. Make a record of the toxicology number, specimen and weight. Periodically, give the record to a supervisor for

resolution. The case file and the computer database will be updated and the specimen should display on the screen the next time it is evaluated for discard.

4. Error messages: If you get any error messages not previously mentioned, consult a supervisor.

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