



**ILLINOIS STATE POLICE  
Division of Forensic Services  
Forensic Sciences Command**

**ESH Appendix 8. COLLECTION AND PRESERVATION OF PAINT EVIDENCE**

1. Using a clean scalpel or blade, remove the paint standard from the damaged items/area(s). If several areas are damaged, use a different clean scalpel blade for each standard, and place each standard in a separate container. Collect paint standards with a sufficient amount to cover, if possible, the face of a dime.
2. When removing paint from a painted surface such as an automobile, safe door, or door jamb, chip the paint off, taking all the layers. Scraping of paint may not provide valuable layer information.
3. Whenever possible, submit all paint transfers.
4. Rather than removing thin paint smears, bring the entire item or suitable portion of the item to the laboratory.
5. When submitting clothing to be checked for paint, be sure the clothes are dry. Package in paper bags. Do not use plastic bags.
6. Use glass or metal containers for liquid paint samples. Do not use plastic containers, because solvents in paints react with the plastic.
7. Recommended containers for paint chips:  
  
Small samples should be placed in a paper packet as follows:
  - a. Pre-mark a clean piece of paper (to eliminate the possibility of crushing paint chips). Place the paint samples on a clean piece of paper and carefully fold the paper so that the paint will not leak out. Seal the packet with tape.
  - b. The sealed paper packet should be placed into a paper envelope or plastic bag. This outer container should be sealed and properly marked.
8. Mark the sealed sample container as follows: case number, date, collected by, and sample description.
9. When submitting evidence that involves automobiles, please include the following information:
  - a. Color, make, model, and year of all automobiles involved in the accident.
  - b. Location of all paint samples and the automobile from which they were obtained.
  - c. A general and brief description of the details surrounding the accident.
10. Be careful in packing small paint chips:
  - a. Do not put paint samples under tape. (The adhesive from the tape interferes with instrumental analysis.)
  - b. Do not put paint samples loose in envelopes because envelopes do not seal completely and the samples may become lost. See 7.a. above.
  - c. Do not put small particles in cotton. It is difficult to remove the particles from cotton.
  - d. Do not put small paint particles directly in plastic bags. Particles should initially be placed in a paper packet as described in 7.a. and 7.b.