



Designation: E2123 – 16

# Standard Practice for Transmittal of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigation<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E2123; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon ( $\epsilon$ ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This practice describes the basic considerations that will help preserve different items or types of sexual assault related evidence for subsequent analysis. This practice is designed to be used in conjunction with other specifications, guides, and practices associated with sexual assault examinations that are listed in Section 2.

1.2 This practice offers a set of instructions for performing one or more specific operations. This standard cannot replace knowledge, skill, or ability acquired through appropriate education, training, and experience and should be used in conjunction with sound professional judgment.

1.3 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.4 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

## 2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*<sup>2</sup>

[E1459 Guide for Physical Evidence Labeling and Related Documentation](#)

[E1492 Practice for Receiving, Documenting, Storing, and Retrieving Evidence in a Forensic Science Laboratory](#)

[E1732 Terminology Relating to Forensic Science](#)

[E1843 Guide for Sexual Assault Investigation, Examination, and Evidence Collection](#)

[E2057 Specifications for Preparation of Laboratory Analysis Requests in Sexual Assault Investigations](#)

2.2 *Other Standards:*

[The Biological Evidence Preservation Handbook: Best Practices for Evidence Handlers](#) Ballou, S. M., et al., 2013

## 3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of terms used in these specifications see Terminology [E1732](#) and the Compilation of ASTM Standard Definitions (1990).

## 4. Summary of Practice

4.1 Evidence collected from the victim or suspect, other physical evidence from the crime scene, and investigative facts and medical conclusions associated with a sexual assault examination should be treated in a manner that will ensure their suitable preservation for presentation in legal proceedings.

4.2 All individuals associated with the investigation should be prepared to protect the evidence chain of custody and preserve what are often trace amounts of perishable biological materials, and other trace evidence such as hairs, fibers, lubricants, and particulate evidence that may not be visible to the unaided eye.

4.3 These standard specifications are to be used in conjunction with Guide [E1843](#) and Specification [E2057](#).

4.3.1 Additional information can be found in Practice [E1492](#).

## 5. Significance and Use

5.1 The procedures put forth in this standard are designed to preserve sexual assault evidence items during collection, storage, and transmittal for analysis at an appropriate laboratory.

## 6. Procedure

6.1 *Evidence Chain of Custody:*

6.1.1 The chain of custody in a sexual assault examination of a victim is unique in that it may be difficult to control in the midst of administering to the needs of an often mobile and traumatized individual.

6.1.2 An “investigator” in this usage may be, but is not limited to, an emergency medical practitioner, social worker, nurse, physician, or law enforcement officer.

<sup>1</sup> This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [E30](#) on Forensic Sciences and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [E30.11](#) on Interdisciplinary Forensic Science Standards.

Current edition approved April 1, 2016. Published April 2016. Originally approved in 2001. Last previous edition approved in 2010 as E2123 – 10. DOI: 10.1520/E2123-16.

<sup>2</sup> For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org), or contact ASTM Customer Service at [service@astm.org](mailto:service@astm.org). For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard’s Document Summary page on the ASTM website.