



<b>ATF-LS- 5.3</b> <b>Accommodation and Environmental Conditions</b>	Published Online: <b>March 2018</b>
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Unofficial Copy; May Not Be Most Current Version	Page: 1 of 3

## 1. General

1.1. The Laboratory Services requirements supplement the following ATF requirements:

- ATF O 1600.5 Safety, Health and Environmental Services
- ATF O 1720.1 Physical Security Program
- ATF O 1710.1 Identification Media Program

1.2. These requirements apply to evidence before, during and after testing.

## 2. Accommodation

2.1. Laboratories shall have designated areas for the following functions:

- evidence reception
- evidence storage
- laboratory testing
- administration

2.2. Separation of the functional areas of the laboratory serves to:

- control the environmental conditions for testing
- control testing instruments/ equipment and ensure availability of consumable supplies and reference materials
- control personnel access to areas where evidence is handled
- minimize cross-contamination of evidence

2.3. Accommodations shall be made for the evidence types that have defined handling requirements established by the law and ATF, e.g., explosives, firearms, etc. Refer to ATF-LS-5.8 Evidence handling and the technical procedures for more information.

2.4. Measures shall be taken to prevent cross-contamination of evidence. Refer to ATF-LS-5.8 Evidence handling.

### 2.5. Engineering controls

2.5.1. Chemical fume hoods and safety cabinets are available in laboratories where chemicals are used and stored.

2.5.2. Chemical hood maintenance is addressed in the laboratory safety programs and the manufacturer's user instructions.

### 3. Environmental conditions

3.1. Laboratory facilities for testing, including but not limited to energy sources, lighting and environmental conditions, shall be such as to facilitate correct performance of the tests.

3.2. Environmental conditions shall be documented, monitored, controlled and recorded as required by discipline procedures or where they influence the quality of the test results.

3.2.1. Factors that may affect test results may include the following:

- biological sterility
- dust
- electromagnetic disturbances
- radiation
- humidity
- electrical supply
- temperature
- sound and vibration levels

3.3. Environmental conditions that may jeopardize test results or analyses shall be addressed. When environmental conditions invalidate the test results or adversely affect the required quality of any measurement, refer to procedure ATF-LS-4.9 Control of nonconforming work.

3.3.1. When the environmental conditions jeopardize the test results, the condition shall be documented and the examination shall be stopped when necessary. Issues shall be investigated and resolved if possible.

3.3.2. If conditions have been corrected and the examination has not been affected, then the conditions and corrective measures shall be documented and the examination may resume.

3.3.3. When environmental conditions adversely affect the test results, it shall be documented in the case notes and the results shall not be reported if there is doubt as to their validity.

3.4. When information about the environmental conditions is necessary for the interpretation of the results, refer to ATF-LS-5.10 Reporting the results of analysis.

### 4. Security

4.1. Security controls include the following:

- ATF Personal Identification Verification (PIV)
- site-specific electronic pass cards
- password protected alarm systems

- security guards

4.2. Exterior entrances require an electronic pass card.

4.3. Access to the internal areas of the laboratory where testing occurs shall be controlled and limited.

4.3.1. Laboratory Chiefs shall assign access to laboratory areas to ATF personnel whose duties require access to the space.

4.3.1.1. Access assignment records and an accounting of all keys and electronic pass cards shall be maintained.

4.3.1.2. Laboratory Chiefs assign Evidence Control storage access to as few persons as necessary.

4.3.1.2.1. Evidence Control storage access assignments shall be reviewed at least once annually.

4.3.1.2.2. Emergency entry by personnel not regularly assigned Evidence Control storage access shall be documented.

4.3.2. Refer to the site-specific security programs for additional information regarding visitor policies.

## 5. Safety

5.1. Each laboratory shall have a documented safety program.

5.2. The Laboratory Chief shall designate an individual responsible for monitoring the conformance of the laboratory with the safety requirements and maintaining the safety records.

## 6. Housekeeping

6.1. General housekeeping is performed by contractors who must be escorted when working in laboratory areas where evidence is stored or handled.

6.2. Discipline procedures may include periodic laboratory cleaning or maintenance requirements, which shall be documented when performed.

## 7. Records

7.1. The technical, safety and security records generated in accordance with this procedure shall be maintained according to ATF-LS-4.13 Control of records.