



**CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE
TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY**

Samples appropriate for DNA testing are held for a minimum of **ONE YEAR** from the date of death. If a request is being made on a case that is over a year old, it is possible that the Toxicology lab may no longer have a specimen available. Normally testing is done on fluoridated blood. However, the DNA testing laboratory may deem other samples suitable.

In order to release a specimen for DNA testing, the Toxicology Lab must have a letter from the next of kin stating their desire to have a specimen released for DNA testing. If unsure who the next of kin is, the order of precedence is as follows:

1. spouse of decedent
2. parent(s) of decedent
3. sibling(s) of decedent

Notice that the mother of the child, unless she falls into one of the above 3 categories, is not allowed to write the release letter.

The letter should state that the individual writing the letter is the next of kin to the decedent and should state the relationship. It should also list the decedent's name, the date of death and the individual authorizes the release of a specimen for DNA analysis by a lab of the next of kin's choice. This letter **must** be notarized. It should be mailed to:

**Toxicology Laboratory-DNA Request
321 S. University Ave.
Philadelphia PA 19104**

At the same time, the party requesting the DNA testing should choose the lab for testing and have the testing lab send the Toxicology Lab the appropriate kit to transfer the sample. Please note that the Toxicology Lab will **only** send specimens to other labs for analysis; there is no DNA analysis done at the Toxicology Lab.

If the next of kin refuses to authorize specimen release, then a court order is required for the Toxicology Lab to release a specimen to a DNA testing laboratory. While in the process of obtaining a court order, the party requesting the DNA testing should notify the Toxicology Lab that a sample suitable for DNA testing purposes (normally fluoridated blood) should be held longer than the standard one-year specimen retention period.

Contact person in the Toxicology Lab for DNA testing for Lisa Mundy, (215) 685-7460. The lab chosen to do the testing should contact the Toxicology Lab directly with any questions. After receipt of both the letter from the next of kin authorizing release of the specimen (or a court order) and the specimen collection kit from the DNA testing lab, the specimen will be sent to the DNA lab for analysis. The Toxicology Lab retains copies of all paperwork.

Sample Authorization Letter

(Today's Date)

To whom it may concern:

My name is Jane Smith and I am the mother of John Smith, who died on January 1, 1999. I authorize the release of a specimen for paternity testing. If you have any questions, please contact me at (215)-555-1234.

Thank you,

(signature here)

Mrs. Jane Smith

1234 Market Street

Philadelphia PA 19100