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## TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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### MEMORANDUM

**To:** All Law Enforcement Agencies, District Attorneys and Medical Examiners

**From:** Mike Lyttle, Assistant Director, TBI Forensic Services Division

**Date:** September 12, 2018

**Subject:** Gunshot Residue (GSR) Kit / Testing

#### Gunshot Residue Sample Collection and Testing:

Since June 1, 2015, in keeping with best practices in the forensic community and accreditation requirements, the TBI Crime Laboratory performs gunshot residue (GSR) testing by scanning electron microscope (SEM). As such, the old Gunshot residue swab hand kits have been replaced by the SEM Gunshot residue kits. These kits may be picked up at all three of the TBI Crime Laboratories. They are contained in a white envelope bearing the TBI seal and the title GSR SEM EVIDENCE COLLECTION KIT. They contain instruction on collection, the information sheet, and the request for examination form.

**Please throw away all old swab kits that are in yellow envelopes, as the TBI Crime Laboratory is no longer capable of testing for GSR collected with these kits.**

#### Gunshot Victims:

Gunshot Residue testing is used to indicate whether an individual could have fired, handled, or was near a gun when it fired by analysis for antimony, barium and lead. Collecting and/or analyzing a Gunshot Residue kit on an individual with a gunshot wound bears little probative forensic value, because these individuals are **undeniably known** to have been associated with a firearms discharge by virtue of being wounded.

**Effective March 1, 2013, The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Crime Laboratory discontinued routinely performing analysis on Gunshot Residue hand kits collected from individuals who have been shot.**

In rare circumstances, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Crime Laboratory may agree to accept evidence from gunshot victims. Such exceptions will only be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation will continue to routinely perform analysis on Gunshot Residue hand kits collected from individuals who are shooting suspects.**

