

QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA)

FTDTL's goal is to deliver in a timely manner defect-free service to our users by adherence to documented requirements that fully satisfy the highest degree of scientific and legal credibility.

Technical competency can be achieved only by the combination of a number of components such as initial training, experience, continuing education through professional development, proficiency testing, and an appreciation of the scientific protocol/ methodology, all of which must be projected against a background of a proper professional ethic. Each component is important and overlaps the others. One cannot embrace a single component of quality assurance and disregard all others. Quality assurance does not, and cannot, rest on a single component.

Forensic work does not permit the rationalization of substandard work. It is widely expected that all work be exemplary. Anything less than exemplary may be subject to criticism. Whether that criticism is fair or unfair is not an issue; the adversary nature of our system is such that criticism will in fact ensue.

Quality assurance is, and must be, a dynamic endeavor; it is both all encompassing and never-ending. Determining and improving the quality of the laboratory's analytical data by controlling the identifiable and measurable factors that affect the data is a primary goal of a quality assurance program.

The purpose of our QA program is to provide the knowledge that the laboratory meets defined standards of quality with a stated level of confidence. This laboratory quality assurance program addresses the preservation of specimens, the chain of custody of specimens, the competence of technicians/ toxicologists/ chemists, methods, reagents, equipment, and expert testimony.

The success of any quality assurance program is based on the participation, input and support of all laboratory personnel. A commitment to the quality assurance goals of the organization is essential. The cooperative effort of the entire staff is necessary to achieve the established standards of quality.