

Request Assistance

Any law enforcement agency operating in the TVRCFL's service area may request assistance with the following activities —

- ***Pre-Seizure Consultation*** – The TVRCFL can help with search warrant preparation (only as it applies to digital evidence) by advising on related language that may be included in the affidavit.
- ***On-Site Seizure and Collection*** – Requests for this type of assistance should be made a minimum of 48 hours in advance (the more lead time the better) by submitting a completed Field Service Request Form to the TVRCFL and/or its satellite network. On occasion, an agency will uncover digital evidence that they are unprepared to manage. Under these circumstances, the advance notice requirement is waived. Once the RCFL evaluates the search request, the Operations Manager assigns it to an Examiner for action.
- ***Duplication, Storage and Preservation of Electronic Equipment and other Digital Evidence*** – Examinations are typically conducted on copies of the original evidence. Therefore, RCFL Examiners, can either duplicate (or copy the information) the media on-site, or they will bring the electronic equipment to the laboratory where they will duplicate the media and perform the examination.
- ***Prompt, Accurate, and Impartial Examinations of Digitally Stored Media*** – RCFL Examiners will conduct a thorough and objective examination of an electronic device to locate digital evidence and turn it into something that the investigator can review. It is *not* the Examiner's responsibility to analyze the data for its meaning or significance to the investigation. This impartiality and objectivity lends credibility to both their findings and subsequent court testimony.
- ***Courtroom Testimony*** - As records are recovered from seized electronic equipment, the prosecutor is likely to direct the Examiner to introduce the digital evidence into court. As an expert witness, the Examiner explains under oath, how they conducted the forensics examination and what they discovered as a result.

Requesting Services

When requesting assistance, the law enforcement agency should first contact the TVRCFL to discuss the request, and then carefully complete one of the following forms or letters

- ***Request Letter*** – Non-participating agencies should write a letter on their stationary that briefly explains the nature of the request. The letter must contain a Chief, Sheriff, or Agency Head signature, and can accompany the Service Request Form.
- ***Service Request Form*** – Requests for assistance are accepted on a case-by-case basis from any law enforcement agency in the RCFL's service area. The RCFL prioritizes each request according to the nature of the crime and uses the Service Request Form to monitor and track cases. Click [here](#) to read some helpful tips about submitting a request to an RCFL.

Forms

Tips for Law Enforcement

- ***When Submitting a Service Request Form or an Evidence Custody Form*** - The case agent or officer should be as concise and thorough as possible. These forms are used to make decisions about the request, therefore, any vague or ambiguous terminology may make it more difficult to interpret or understand what services are needed. As a result, delays in processing the request may occur.
- ***Turning On or Accessing a Computer*** - Indicate on the Service Request Form if you or anyone else in the chain of custody attempted to turn on or access the computer prior to submittal. This is very important information for the Examiners to have.

- ***Search Warrants*** – If a field service request is pursuant to a search warrant, include a copy of the warrant with the Field Service Request form. Likewise, if the service request is a result of a consensual search, a copy of the agency's "consent for search" form must be included. Failure to include this documentation may cause a delay in processing the request.
- ***Handling Sensitive Equipment*** – Always use extreme caution or take precautionary measures such as grounding the static electricity before touching any of the internal components of the computer or handling sensitive electronic equipment. For example, if the internal workings of a computer are exposed, the equipment could be damaged by a buildup of static electricity that is held by the human body. (Walking across a rug can produce a static electricity voltage of up to 12,000 volts.) The hard drive is especially susceptible to static electricity, even if it is exposed to a small amount of voltage, while a microchip can be damaged with as little as 500 volts of static electricity. If you're unsure about how to handle the equipment--defer to a professional.