



Evidence Preservation

Preserve any evidence

Evidence of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking should be preserved as soon as possible, even if you are unsure about reporting to the University or filing criminal charges. Preservation of evidence is essential for both law enforcement and campus disciplinary investigations.

Write down, or have a friend write down, everything you can remember about the incident, including a physical description of the assailant. You should attempt to do this even if you are unsure about reporting the incident in the future.

Forensic Evidence

If you choose to report the assault and pursue legal options, a prompt forensic examination can be crucial.

Steps to Preserve Forensic Evidence

Avoid drinking, bathing, showering, brushing your teeth, using mouthwash, or combing your hair.

Do not change clothes. If you have already changed your clothes, place your clothing and other items (sheets, blankets) in a brown paper bag (a plastic bag may destroy evidence).

Go to a hospital emergency department which has the capability to provide a Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE or "rape kit") and medical care for victims of sexual assault and intimate partner violence. **A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE), a healthcare provider trained to provide comprehensive care for a victim, can collect forensic evidence.**

A SAFE (rape kit) can only be completed within 5 days of the assault. You have the right to refuse the entire exam or any part of it at any time.

You may also decide to complete a forensic exam anonymously.

If you suspect that you are the victim of a drug-facilitated sexual assault, ask the hospital or clinic where you receive medical care to take a urine sample. Drugs, such as Rohypnol and GHB, are more likely to be detected in urine than in blood. Rohypnol stays in the body for several hours, and can be detected in the urine up to 72 hours after taking it. GHB leaves the body in 12 hours.

Consider bringing someone to the hospital with you for support.

Louisiana College Department of Safety and Security can assist in the procurement of transportation to or from the hospital.

You do not have to specify the details of why you need to go to the hospital to the Police officer.

Physical Evidence

Physical evidence should be preserved even if you choose not to go to the hospital for a forensic exam. Save all of the clothing you were wearing at the time of the assault. Put each item in a separate paper bag (do not use plastic bags). Save all bedding (blankets, sheets) and put each in a separate paper bag. Take photographs of any visible physical injuries (bruising, scratches) for use as evidence. If you report to law enforcement, they may want to take their own photos as evidence.

Electronic Evidence

Evidence such as texts, emails, Facebook posts, chats, pictures, videos or other forms of electronic communication can be helpful in a college or criminal investigation. Download, save to a .pdf, take screen shots, or use other methods to preserve electronic evidence.