



POLICY ON FORENSIC TESTING AND EXAMINATION IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 This document is a policy of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine and relates to performing forensic medical examinations and the collection of forensic tissue samples within Emergency Departments.
- 1.2 The policy is applicable to Emergency Departments in general.

2. POLICY

- 2.1 The primary focus of an Emergency Department is the delivery of emergency medical care to the acutely ill and injured.
- 2.2 The routine collection of forensic evidence is not a core activity of Emergency Departments.
- 2.3 Emergency physicians should be aware of the principles of preservation and collection of forensic evidence and work with forensic practitioners to achieve the best patient outcomes.
- 2.4 Forensic considerations are subordinate to clinical care.
- 2.5 Agreed processes for collection of forensic evidence in Emergency Departments must be appropriately resourced by the requesting agency, including evidentiary procedures and court attendance.
- 2.6 Victims of alleged sexual assault have the right to access an appropriately trained forensic practitioner.

3. PROCEDURE AND ACTIONS

- 3.1 Emergency Departments should have procedures in place for referral of victims of alleged sexual assault to appropriate services.
- 3.2 Emergency Departments should have formal arrangements in place with the Australian Federal Police regarding the management of individuals suspected of "body packing" drug smuggling.