TAPE

Tape consists of at least a flexible backing and an adhesive. It may be found at a variety of crime scenes, such as wrapped around improvised explosive devices (IEDs), used to bind victims, or on threatening letters or envelopes. Tape may also provide a variety of evidence types, including latent prints, DNA, hairs/fibers, explosive residue, and miscellaneous trace evidence.

Significance

The examination and comparison of tapes and adhesives may reveal:

Classification/Identification of the Material

- Type of adhesive (electrical tape, duct tape, rubber cement, etc.)
- Scrim (fiber) count may indicate household versus commercial use duct tape.

Comparative Associations

- A possibility of common origin between a questioned sample and roll of tape.

Physical Match

- The tape itself can be examined for a physical match with known tapes.

Collection

When possible, submit tape still adhering to the substrate to minimize loss of trace evidence, latent fingerprints, or contact impressions. If unable to submit substrate, do not distort or tear the tape during removal. If the tape is cut during removal, mark cut ends accordingly.

Sources of Questioned Samples

- Pieces
- Bindings
- Wrappings

Sources of Known Samples

- Rolls of tape

Packaging

<u>Pieces</u>

Individual pieces should be placed on clear transparency film (look for transparency film for laser printers at any office supply store). An alternative is fire debris plastic bags.

<u>Rolls</u>

Tape rolls can be placed in a cardboard box, envelope, or paper bag.

<u>Wrappings or Bindings</u>

Place in a plastic fire debris bag.

Precautions

Do NOT place pieces of tape on paper because the paper is hard to remove from the adhesive.

Do NOT wad or fold the tape onto itself.

Do not place pieces of tape on plastic document protectors because they contain chemicals that interfere with analysis of the adhesives.

Package questioned and known samples in different packaging.

Item/Material	Collection Methods (In Order of Preference)	Packaging	Additional Notes
Tape – Ligature	1. Dismantled Object	Mark any cuts made in order to remove from victim. Place laser transparency film (not report covers) on any loose adhesive faces and then place in a paper bag.	The ends of wrappings are excellent candidates for physical match to the end of a tape roll. Tape is generally of interest for DNA, Latent Prints, and Trace.
Tape – Rolls	1. Intact Object	Place inside a paper bag. If the sides of the roll are sticky, place transparency film (not report coves) on the sides and then place in a paper bag.	The end of the tape roll may be used for physical match. The sides of the roll may have other trace materials of interest. Tape is generally of interest for DNA, Latent Prints, and Trace.
Tape – Small Pieces	1. Intact Object 2. Dismantled Object 3. Picking	Individual pieces of tape are typically adherent to some object. It would be best to leave intact on the object and package the object or a dismantled portion of the object. If not, remove with a metal tool and place on a laser transparency film (cellulose acetate). Label the film and place it inside a paper envelope.	Do NOT use report covers for tape or adhesives. Report covers have a chemical that may found in some adhesives. The direct contact of the adhesive surface on the report cover can result in extraction of that chemical into the adhesive. Tape is generally of interest for DNA, Latent Prints, and Trace.
Tape – Wads	1. Intact Object	Don't wad tape, leave it on the object if at all possible. If someone else has already wadded the tape, then place transparency film over the most exposed adhesive areas and place in a large paper bag.	Tape is generally of interest for DNA, Latent Prints, and Trace.

Item/Material	Collection Methods (In Order of Preference)	Packaging	Additional Notes
Tape – Wrappings	1. Intact Object	Tape used to wrap an object as part of crime should be left on the object (e.g. tape on bed sheets, plastic bags, tarps). Package the object in paper. If extensive areas are present with the adhesive face exposed (such that it would stick to the paper bag), then place transparency film on those faces.	The ends of wrappings are excellent candidates for physical match to the end of a tape roll. Tape is generally of interest for DNA, Latent Prints, and Trace.