

Scientific Working Group for



Update on the Activities of the Scientific Working Group for Forensic Toxicology

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INTRODUCTION

The Scientific Working Group for Forensic Toxicology (SWGTOX) is a relatively new SWG. Established in October 2009 by the Forensic Toxicology Council (FTC), SWGTOX has held three formal meetings.

The Co-Chairs of SWGTOX are appointed by the FTC. An Executive Committee comprised of the Chairs, Committee Chairs and two Members-at-large manage this SWG.

MISSION

The mission of SWGTOX is to develop and disseminate consensus standards for the practice of Forensic Toxicology.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of SWGTOX are to establish standards for the practice of forensic toxicology, including the following areas:

- Standards, practice, protocols including quality assurance and quality control
- Education and training requirements
- Accreditation
- Certification

Further:

- SWGTOX will provide guidance for the development of a Code of Professional Conduct for forensic toxicologists and laboratories
- SWGTOX will identify general areas of research and development needs in the field of forensic toxicology
- SWGTOX will promote public awareness of the field of forensic toxicology.

STRUCTURE

SWGTOX is structured after the White House Interagency Working Group (IWG) structure with three standing committees in the areas of:

- Standards, Practices and Protocols
- Education, Ethics, Outreach and Certification
- Research, Development, Testing and Evaluation

SWGTOX may have up to 50 voting members and additional consultants and invited guests as required to accomplish the group's objectives. Currently SWGTOX is comprised of 39 members from the United States and Canada representing Federal, state, local government laboratories, private laboratories, academia, research and accreditation bodies. Consultants from the United States, Europe and Australia are serving on SWGTOX.

SCOPE of ACTIVITIES

The scope of SWGTOX activities concerns toxicological matters in:

- Post-mortem Toxicology (assist in determination of cause and manner of death)
- Human Performance Toxicology (DUI - both blood and breath alcohol, DUID, DFSA (drug facilitated sexual assault)
- Workplace Drug Testing (non-Federally mandated programs)
- Other types of Medicolegal and Criminal Investigations (e.g., poisonings, attempted murder or other criminal cases)
- Court-mandated testing (Probation/Parole, Child Services, Drug Courts)

While the work product developed by SWGTOX will be the standard of practice in all forensic toxicology disciplines, the scope of SWGTOX activities will not necessarily include those specialized areas where mandated, codified rules and regulations currently exist.



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DOCUMENTS

After drafting, SWGTOX documents first go through an approval process within SWGTOX. SWGTOX members provide comments on draft documents to the sub-committee that developed the standard document. After this internal comment period, the document must be approved by SWGTOX members prior to release for public comment. All draft documents are posted on the SWGTOX web-site, www.swgtox.org for a public comment period of 60 days. Additionally, an attempt is made to distribute draft SWGTOX documents to all professional organizations that have a connection to forensic toxicologists. After the public comment period, the sub-committee that developed the document will review all submitted comments. The final revised document must once again be approved by the entire SWGTOX committee.

SWGTOX Document	Sub-Committee Draft	SWGTOX Member Comment Period	SWGTOX Member Approval of DRAFT	Public Comment Period	SWGTOX Adoption
Standard for Codes and Guides of Professional Conduct	✓	✓	✓	✓ <small>closed June 2011</small>	
Standard Practices for Method Validation in Forensic Toxicology	✓	✓			
Standard Practices for Quality Assurance in Forensic Toxicology	✓				
Standards for Forensic Toxicology Certification Boards	✓				
Standards for Education for Forensic Toxicology Practitioners	✓				
Standard for Laboratory Accreditation in Forensic Toxicology	✓				
Standards for Research in Forensic Toxicology	✓				

CONTACT SWGTOX

If you have a topic that you believe SWGTOX should address, please contact a member of the SWGTOX Executive Committee. A member of the Executive Committee or the Executive Secretary will respond to each request.

comments@swgtox.org