Forensic Biology Frequently Asked Questions

All Cases

- Does the State Crime Lab (SCL) test evidence in cases where no suspect has been identified?
  - **Yes**. The SCL will accept and test evidence in cases without a known suspect.

- If the suspect in a case already submitted a DNA standard as the result of a felony conviction or an arrest, do I still need to submit a DNA standard for the case?
  - **Yes**. If there is probable cause for a search warrant or if the suspect consents to a DNA swab, please submit it with the rest of your evidence in your case. The DNA samples collected by statute for felony convictions and arrests are not considered evidence and do not have an associated chain of custody.

- When do I need to submit elimination standards?
  - **Elimination standards are required** if a victim, known sexual partner, or witness could have possibly contributed their DNA to the evidence in question (i.e. sexual assault kits, multiple bleeders, owner of an item). This requirement helps ensure accuracy of results.

- Can I submit additional evidence for serology/DNA testing following the initial submission of evidence?
  - **Yes**. After the initial items submitted have been tested, law enforcement may submit additional items for testing. Please refer to Special Notice #3 in the Evidence Guide for item limitations for each case type.

- Can exceptions be made to the evidence submission guidelines?
  - **Yes**. Exceptions to these guidelines are made on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the Forensic Scientist Manager of the Forensic Biology Section to discuss the specific circumstances of your case.

Sexual Assault Cases

- Does the SCL test evidence including rape kits in sexual assault cases where no suspect has been identified?
  - **Yes**. The SCL routinely tests sexual assault cases in cases without a known suspect. The SCL began accepting no-suspect sexual assault kits in 2004.

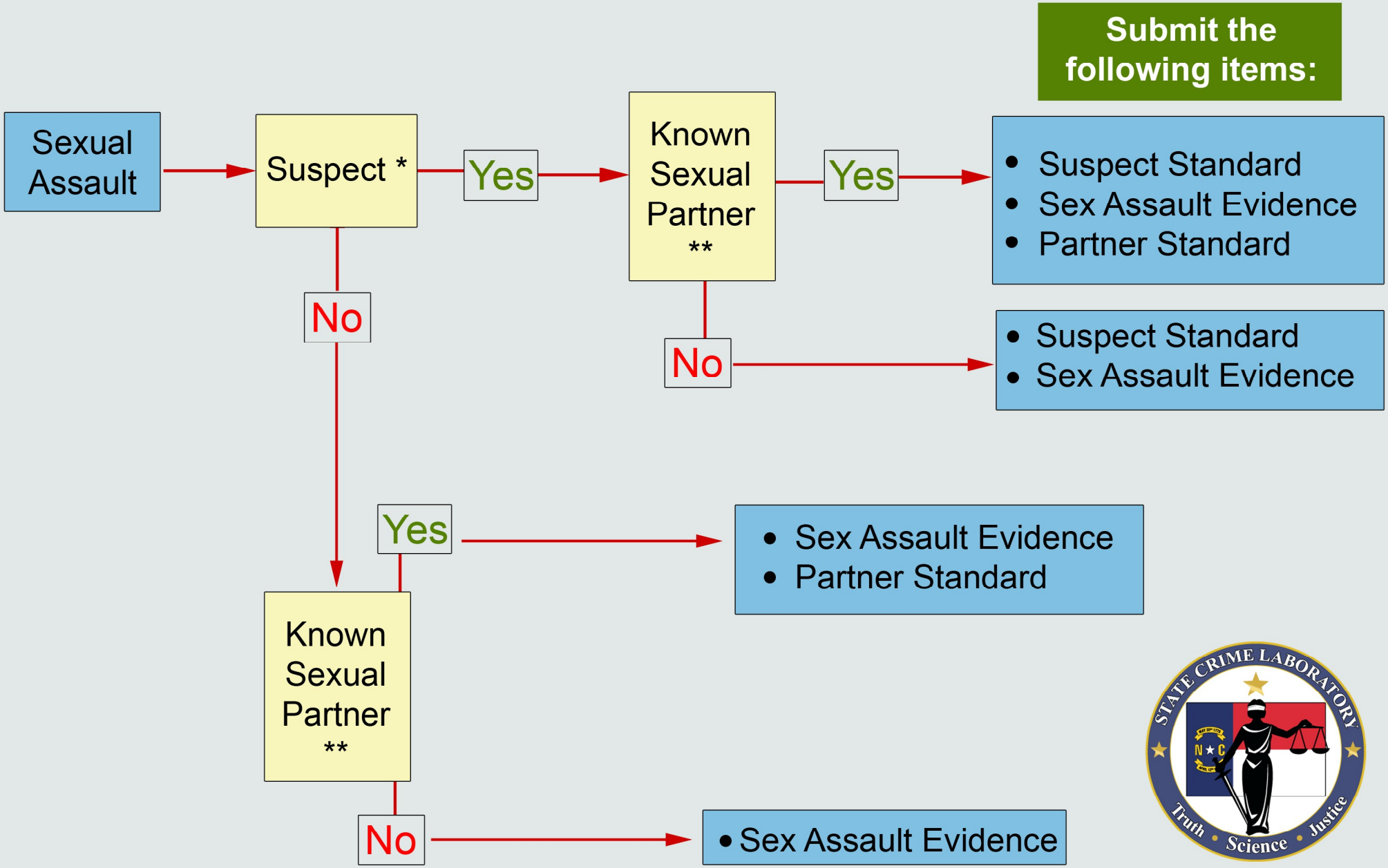
- Does the Forensic Biology Section test sexual assault kits if a DNA standard from the known sexual partner cannot be obtained?
  - **Yes**. If a victim standard has been provided, DNA analysis will move forward, but we request that law enforcement make a good faith effort to obtain an elimination standard from any known sexual partner. This ensures that any DNA profile entered into the CODIS database has originated from the perpetrator of the sexual assault and not a known sexual partner.

Property Cases

- Does the NC State Crime Laboratory (SCL) perform DNA testing on property crimes?
  - **Yes**. The SCL tests samples from property crimes that are believed to contain blood, semen, or saliva as well as objects that may have been left behind by a potential perpetrator such as hats, gloves, cigarette butts, drink bottles, etc.

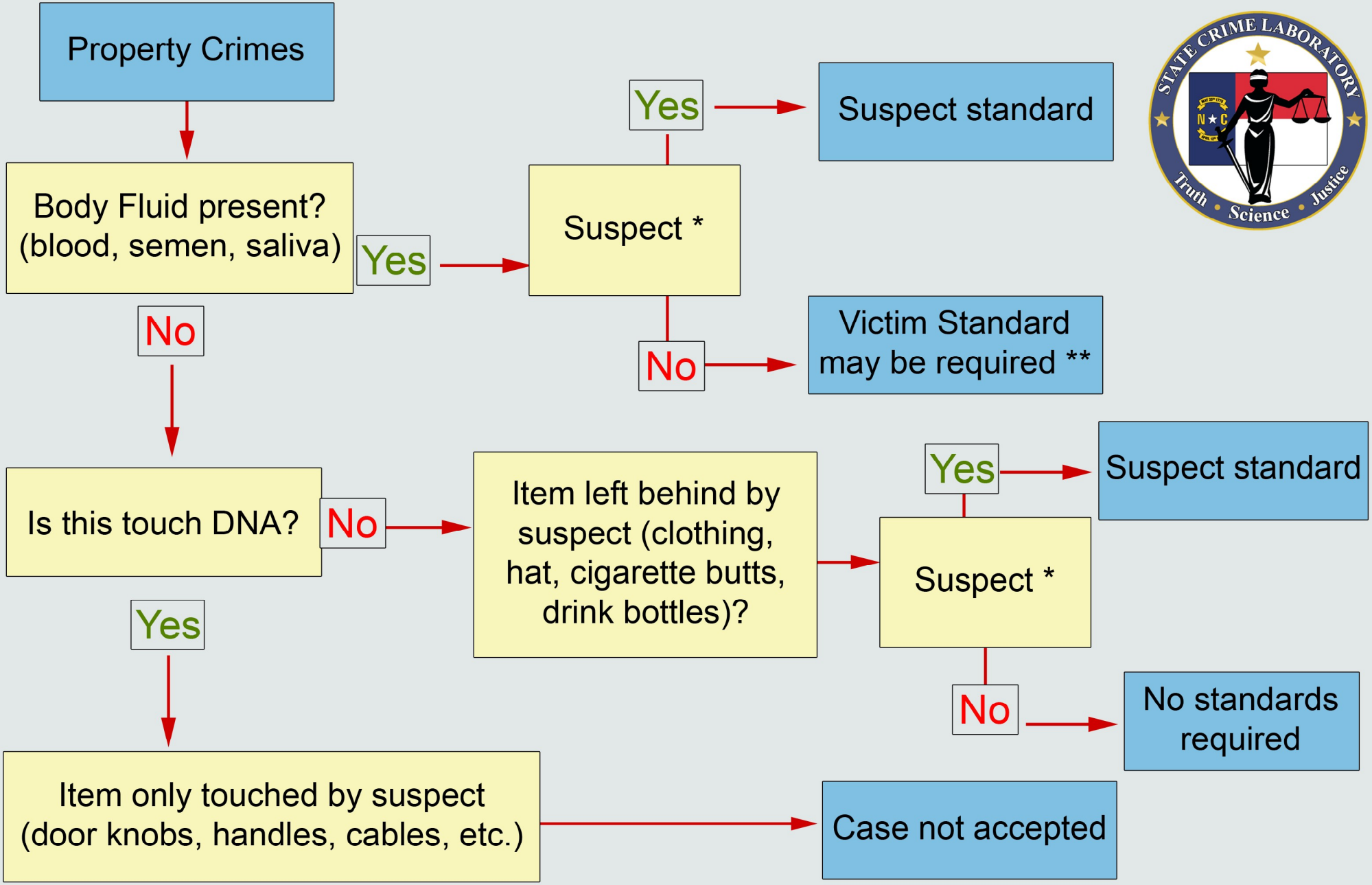
- Does the NC State Crime Laboratory (SCL) perform **Touch DNA** testing on **property crimes**?
  - **No**. The SCL does not perform **Touch DNA** testing on property crimes, which includes samples collected from solid surfaces (door knobs, handles, etc.). **Touch DNA** samples are evidence/ samples in which the likely source of DNA came from contact with the skin and no identifiable body fluid is present. Items such as clothing (for wearer), gloves, cigarette butts, and drink bottles are not considered **Touch DNA** samples.

Forensic Biology Case Submission Requirements for SEXUAL ASSAULT:



* If there is no probable cause for a search warrant, the requirement for a suspect standard does not need to be met.
** Submit a DNA standard from any known partners if the victim has had sexual intercourse within 72 hours of the assault.

Forensic Biology Case Acceptance and Standards Required for PROPERTY CRIMES:



* If there is no probable cause for a search warrant, the requirement for a suspect standard does not need to be met.
** A victim standard may be required depending on the location of the evidence collection and the victim's statement.
Please contact the Forensic Biology Section with specific questions.