

## **Preservation of Evidence**

Many sexual misconduct offenses are also crimes in the state or locality where the incident occurred. Victims of sexual misconduct often have legal options that they can pursue. These options are available solely at the discretion of victims. CNM encourages those individuals who have experienced sexual misconduct to preserve evidence to the greatest extent possible. CNM does not conduct forensic tests as part of the investigation process; however, the results of such testing conducted by law enforcement may be submitted as evidence to be considered as part of CNM's investigation process.

Some general evidence preservation guidelines are:

1. Do not alter, dispose of, or destroy any physical evidence.
2. Preserve evidence of electronic communications by saving them and taking screen shots of all relevant electronic messages.
3. If there is suspicion that a drink may have been drugged, inform a medical assistance provider or law enforcement so they can attempt to collect possible evidence from the drink or through other means.

Evidence preservation guidelines for sexual assault

- Victims of sexual assault who wish to preserve evidence should go to a hospital or medical facility immediately to seek a medical examination for evidence collection.
- Victims of sexual assault should not shower, bathe, douche, smoke, brush teeth, eat, drink or change clothes or bedding before going to a medical facility.
- Victims who do change clothes or bedding should not wash the clothes or worn bedding used during the assault and should bring these items to the hospital in a non-plastic bag.