



स्वास्थ्य एवं
परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE

सत्यमेव जयते



Standard Operating Procedure for Sample Collection and Testing of Tobacco Products



Prepared by
National Tobacco Regulators Forum
JIPMER, Puducherry

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Introduction

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the standardized process for collecting, handling, and transporting tobacco product samples to National Tobacco Testing Laboratories (NTTLs), ensuring the integrity of samples for accurate analysis.

Product testing is used to generate the data necessary to support both forms of disclosure i.e., disclosure of information by manufacturers to health authorities; and disclosure of information from health authorities to the public. Tobacco product testing provides health authorities with knowledge to evaluate current policies and to develop and implement new or expanded policies and regulations. Thus, the overall aim of testing is to assist tobacco control efforts that advance public health.

The SOP applies to all personnel involved in sample collection, including field staff and State Nodal Officers (SNOs), and covers both smoked and smokeless tobacco products.

Overview of the Sample Collection Process



Tobacco sample collection from field



Sample documentation and transportation

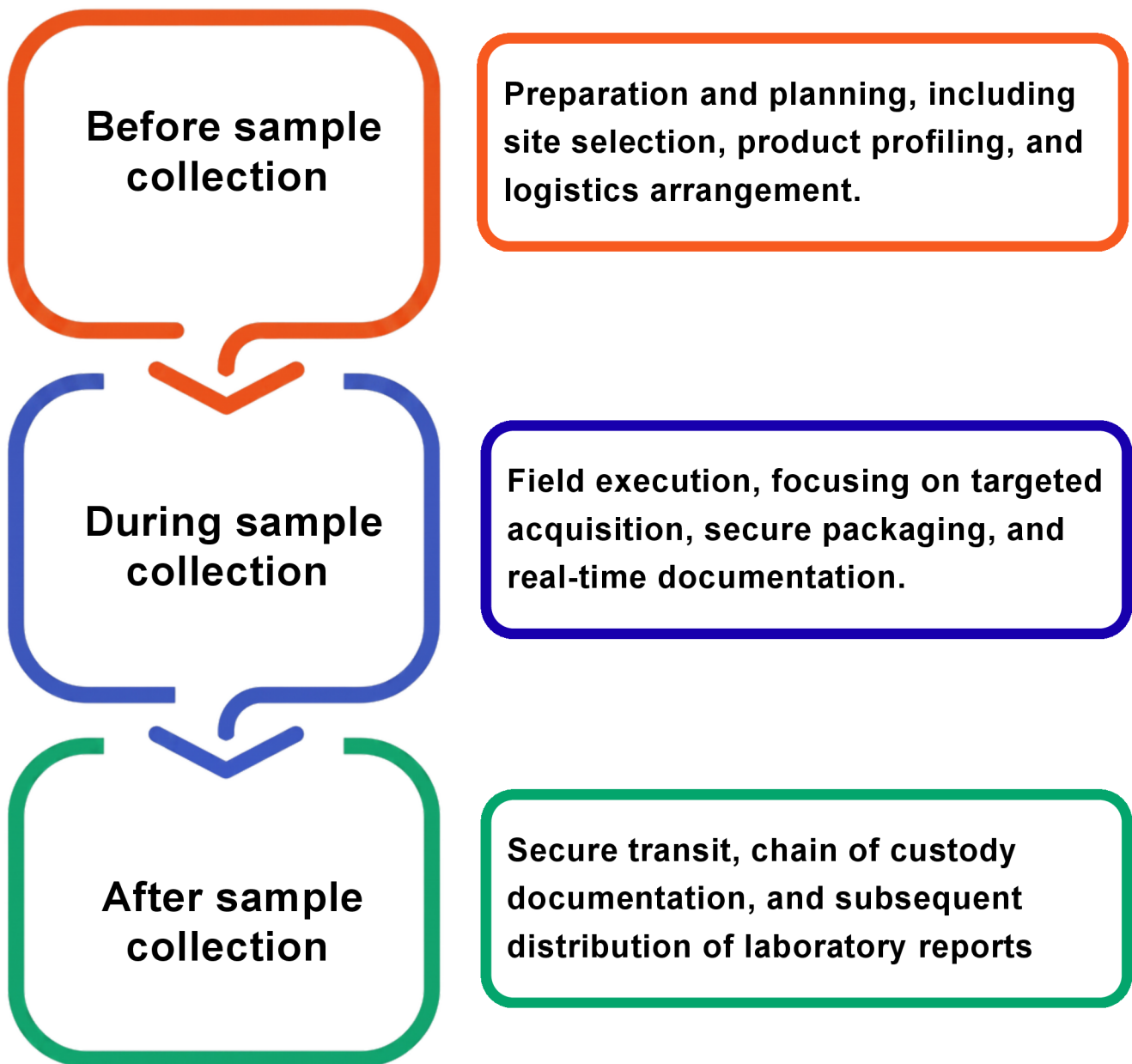


Laboratory Analysis & Reporting

Sample Collection

Steps of tobacco product samples collection

The flow of sample collection process is divided into three major steps:

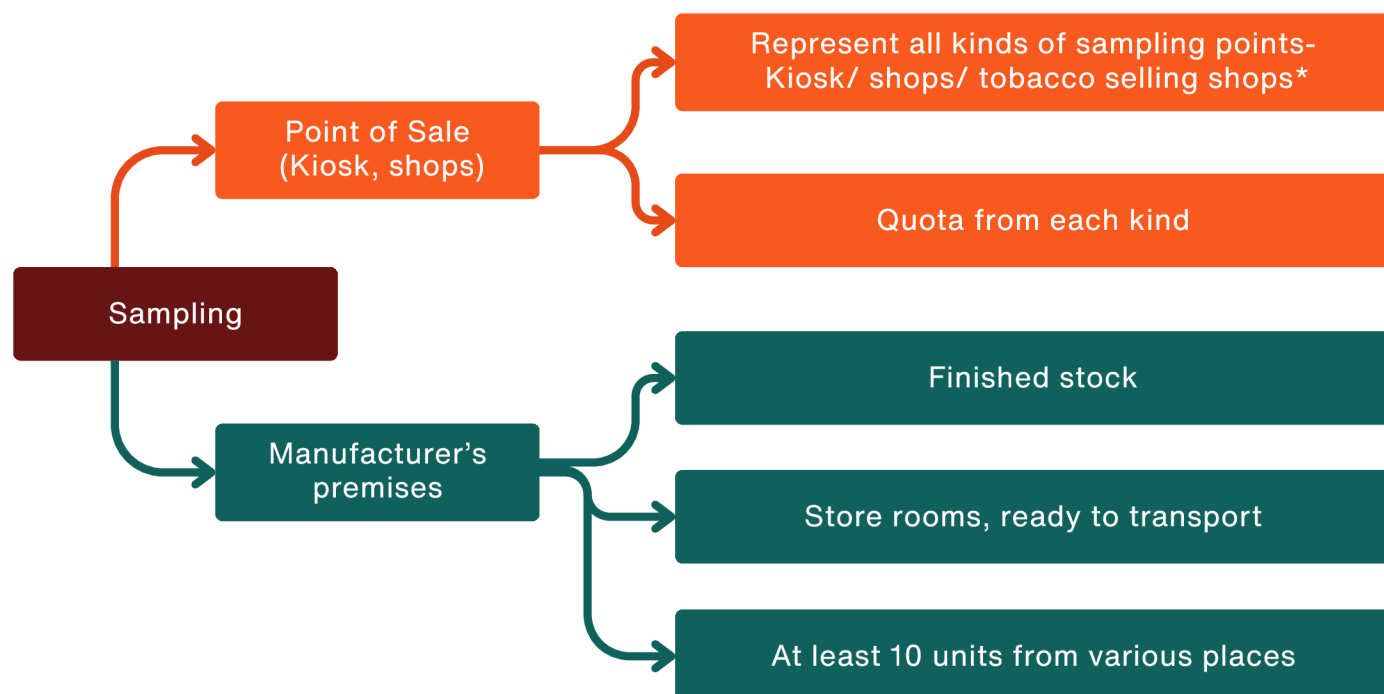


Sample Collection and Management

A. Before sample collection

1. Line listing of sample collection sites – including points of sale and manufacturer/ distributor warehouses.
2. Profiling of common tobacco products available in the region[^]
3. Selection of points for sampling – Rapid assessment of number of points of sale/ manufacturing warehouses based on **Figure 1**
4. Calculate number of collection sites and number of units¹ for each tobacco product to be collected per site as given in **Table 1**
5. Arrange the logistics required for the sample collection (**Table 2**)

Figure 1: Process of choice of places of sampling of tobacco sample



¹Unit: one unit of tobacco product is defined as quantity of tobacco product ready to be offered for sale to the public. For example, one pack of cigarette, one can/pouch of smokeless tobacco etc.

[^]For collection purposes, only products officially sold as tobacco products should be collected for testing.

*Mobile/street vendors will not be included for sampling

Sample Collection and Management

Table 1: Guidance for selection of number of outlets, sampling points and units

Number of outlets	Number of sample points	No of units (pack/pouch/can etc)*
>20	20	2
11-20	10	4
10	5	8

**Each smokeless tobacco product sample should weigh approximately 30 g. For cigarettes, a minimum of seven packets (70 cigarettes) should be provided, and for bidis, at least 10 bundles must be shared. Samples should be sent in the original packaging.*

Table 2: List of items required for sample collection

1. Latex gloves
2. Zip-lock plastic covers
3. Plastic and paper bags of different sizes
4. Marker for labelling the samples
5. Cardboard boxes, cartons
6. Plastic bottles, wide mouth opening, preferably not transparent
7. Moisture-proof sample containers
8. Self-adhesive and transparent tap
9. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual

Sample Collection and Management

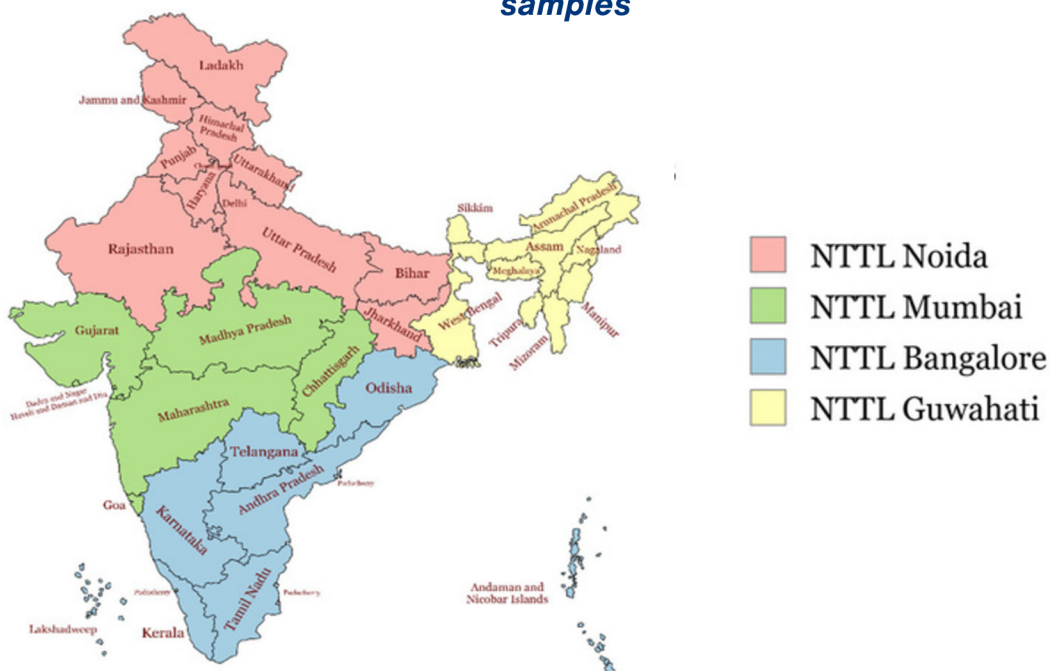
B. During sample collection

1. Collect 40 units of each tobacco product listed after profiling of products
2. Samples collected shall be packed securely with adequate protection against damage (e.g., mechanical damage, changes in humidity, temperature, etc.)
3. Label sample and fill the sample collection form ([Annexure 1](#))
4. Collect any novel products identified during the sampling

C. After sample collection

1. After the sample collection
2. Fill sample shipment form for each sample ([Annexure 2](#))
3. Transport the samples to designated NTTLs in original packaging ([Figure 2](#))
4. Collect the report of testing – Send one copy to NTCP, MoHFW, New Delhi and one copy to be maintained at state level
5. Compare and contrast the results from the previous reports

Figure 2: Location of National Tobacco Testing Laboratories for sending tobacco products samples



Annexure 1

Sample collection form for tobacco products

Form No.	
Date and time of Collection	--/--/---- at --:-- AM/PM
Collected By (Name & Designation)	

Site details

Sampling Location (Address & City): _____

Type of Outlet: Kiosk Supermarket Tobacco Shop Vending Machine
 Manufacturer Importer Distributor Other (Specify) ____

Name of Retailer/Outlet/Manufacturer/distributor: _____

Sample Details

Tobacco Product	Brand Name	Batch No.	Mfg. Date	Exp. Date	Pack Size	Quantity Collected

Sample Condition at Collection:

Sealed and intact Stored under required conditions
 Properly labelled No visible damage or contamination

Remarks (if any): _____

Signature of Sample Collector: _____

Signature of Retailer/Outlet/Manufacturer/distributor (if applicable): _____

Sample Dispatch Details:

Dispatched To (Lab Name & Address)	
Mode of Transport:	<input type="checkbox"/> Insulated Box <input type="checkbox"/> Dry Ice <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigerated Unit <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
Date & Time	--/--/---- at --:-- AM/PM

"Note: Some local tobacco products are sold in loose stacks or non-standard packaging and may lack manufacturing details. In such cases, record any available identifiers such as label description, packaging colour, local name, vendor details, or other distinguishing markings."

Annexure 2

Sample shipment form for tobacco products

Field	Details
1. Type of Product	<input type="checkbox"/> Smoked (e.g., Cigarettes, Bidis) <input type="checkbox"/> Smokeless (e.g., Gutkha, Khaini) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
2. Name / Brand	
3. Date of Sampling	____ / ____ / ____
4. Place of Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural
5. Sample Collection Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Point of Sale <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturer Warehouse <input type="checkbox"/> Importer / Distributor Warehouse
6. Exact Sampling Point (Name & Address)	
7. District / State	
8. Geo-location (if available)	Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____
9. Destination Laboratory	
10. Packaging Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Sachet <input type="checkbox"/> Tin <input type="checkbox"/> Pouch <input type="checkbox"/> Loose <input type="checkbox"/> Bottle <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
11. Marks on Stamp / Label	
12. Manufacturer Pack Code / Batch No.	
13. Total Quantity Collected	
14. Storage During Shipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Room Temp <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigerated <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen <input type="checkbox"/> Insulated Box
15. Condition at Dispatch	<input type="checkbox"/> Intact Seal <input type="checkbox"/> Tamper-proof <input type="checkbox"/> Proper Packaging
16. Mode of Transport	<input type="checkbox"/> Hand Delivered <input type="checkbox"/> Courier <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
17. Dispatched By (Name & Designation)	
18. Signature & Contact	
19. Remarks (if any)	

Annexure 3

Format of letter to be sent along with samples

Date:

From:

Email address:-----

Contact details:-----

To: The Director,
National Tobacco Testing Laboratory (NTTL)
Institute Name
Institute Address

Sir/Ma'am,

We are submitting tobacco product samples for testing at your facility. Each sample has been properly packed, sealed, and is marked with the authorized signature and official stamp/seal.

The details of each sample are as per the table given below:

S.No	Name of tobacco sample	Sample Code by SNO	Quantity (gm)	Batch no.	Mfd. By (If any)	Exp. Date (If any)
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
...						

(Signature/Seal)

Contributors

Dr. Sitanshu Sekhar Kar

Convenor NTRF,
Professor, Dept. of PSM, JIPMER,
Puducherry

Dr. Jayalakshmy R

Co-Convenor NTRF,
Professor, Dept. of PSM, JIPMER,
Puducherry

Dr. Sonu Goel

Convenor Scientific Support Group,
Professor, Community Medicine and SPH,
PGIMER, Chandigarh

Dr. Chirag Goel

Lead Consultant, Scientific Support Group,
PGIMER, Chandigarh

Dr. Revathi U

Ex-Consultant, NTRF, JIPMER, Puducherry

Dr. Anurag Gola

Senior Resident,
Dept. of PSM, JIPMER, Puducherry

Dr. L. Swasticharan

DDG & Director EMR, Dte.GHS,
MoHFW, Govt. of India

Dr. Avinash Sunthlia

SMO NTCP, Dte.GHS, MoHFW,
Govt. of India

Dr. Prachi Rathi

National Consultant NTCP, MoHFW,
Govt. of India

Ms. Shivani

Consultant NTCP, MoHFW,
Govt. of India

Dr. Vedha VPK

National Programme Officer, WHO

Dr. Ambika Naraina

Technical Coordinator, WHO



Contact us:

National Tobacco Regulators Forum

ntrf.jipmer@gmail.com

National Tobacco Control Program

tsu.nttdghs@gmail.com

To explore the National Tobacco Control Program, kindly visit
<https://ntcp.mohfw.gov.in/>