

Process Overview

The four main steps involved in the laboratory processing of a drug test result are **Accessioning**, **Screening**, **Extraction**, and **Confirmation**.

Accessioning involves the initial processing of a sample into a laboratory's system. This includes verifying that the sample was sealed and shipped properly, assigning a random LAN (Laboratory Accessioning Number), and completing any additional data entry not provided by an electronic chain of custody system.

Screening involves an initial quick check for drugs of abuse. While Screening is a cost-effective way to rule out drug usage on the majority of samples, a positive screen needs to be confirmed to be admissible in court. Any samples that are presumptively positive in Screening do require a secondary confirmation.

If a sample is presumptively positive in the **Screening** stage, more hair is pulled from the initial specimen and prepared for **Extraction**. In this stage, drugs are extracted from hair at a much lower concentration than in other methodologies (ex. urine or oral fluid), which is why hair drug screening is the most difficult methodology to perform.

Confirmation of any positive screening result is conducted via GC/MS, GC/MS/MS or LC/MS/MS. All presumptive positive samples are washed prior to confirmation as needed. The entire laboratory process from **Accessioning** to **Confirmation** is reviewed under both the CAP (College of American Pathologists) Hair designation and the accreditation to ISO / IEC 17025 standards.

