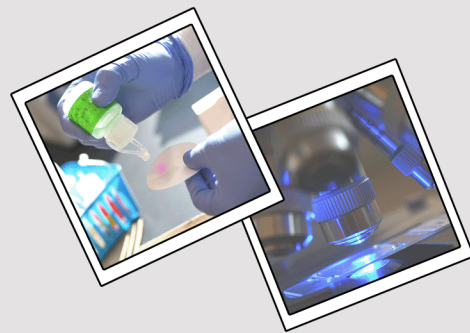


# North Carolina State Crime Laboratory

## Forensic Update



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Dear Criminal Justice Stakeholders,

I am encouraged to see the progress that is being made as we come out of this hundred-year pandemic. I hope this update finds you and yours safe and healthy. The laboratory has remained open and our scientists have continued to analyze evidence. If you have a case that needs to be expedited, please continue to submit those via FA web to receive the fastest response.

This installment discusses our new RFID technology and improvements to Firearms evidence processing. Here at the laboratory, we are continuously evaluating and improving our processes to provide the highest level of service to our customers. We welcome your feedback on these topics, or others, at any time.

As always, if you have questions or need assistance, please reach out to us.

Very Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Vanessa Martinucci.

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"Truth through science."

## RFID Implementation and new Packaging Requirements

The North Carolina Crime Laboratory is pleased to announce implementation of radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology to track evidence submitted to the Laboratory. Each item received by the Laboratory will obtain an RFID label which will aid in inventory efficiencies and monitoring evidence movement through reader gateways. This new technology requires a procedural change in the way we receive evidence:

1. **MINIMUM PACKAGE SIZE REQUIRED:** Due to the increase in the packaging real estate required to fit both the Crime Laboratory's RFID labels and the submitting agency labels, the Laboratory is implementing a minimum envelope and packaging size of 6 in. x 9 in., effective July 01, 2021.
2. **ALL ITEMS RECEIVED IN INDIVIDUAL PACKAGING:** All items must be individually packaged upon submission. Please do not package two or more items together inside an outer container.

**\*We also are requesting that agencies use as few layers of packaging as possible. In the past, many agencies have used smaller envelopes in the collection of firearms evidence (projectiles and casings) and then repackaged in an outer layer. (Multiple layers of packaging slow down analysis time because scientists are required to label and document each individual layer.)**

The Crime Laboratory's policy for Evidence Submission and all other Laboratory procedures and forms are located here: <https://ncdoj.gov/crime-lab/iso-procedures/>

## Important Firearms Examination Changes

The Firearms Section at the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory is implementing improvements to the way firearm's evidence is submitted, worked, and reported. Please note the following updates to our process below:

### A. NIBIN/IBIS

NIBIN is the national network used to compare ballistic evidence to solve violent crimes involving firearms. Since 1994, the North Carolina State Crime Lab has generated 5,585 leads for law enforcement officers. That makes the State Crime Laboratory first in the Carolinas and ninth in the nation for leads.

Thirty-four percent (34%) of NIBIN entries result in a lead in the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory system. Those leads are reported to law enforcement officers, who can then use them to solve crimes. Both the Raleigh and Western campuses of the State Crime Laboratory have NIBIN terminals for entries.

Nationally, the ATF has made changes to the submission criteria of test fire and evidence entry into the NIBIN database. Ideally, the ATF would like test fires entered within 24-48 hours of a shooting incident to maximize the leads for law enforcement. Due to the transient nature of the firearms, the faster the entry into NIBIN, the more likely a hit will occur.

The State Crime Laboratory has made great strides in improving entry time into NIBIN and can process NIBIN evidence in *less than a week*.

Important Note to Law Enforcement and Prosecuting Attorneys:

The Firearms Section will triage all eligible cases through the NIBIN system prior to any request for microscopic comparison. After NIBIN entry and in a multi-item case, the Forensic Scientist will work the evidence of highest

evidentiary value, taking into consideration the crime, items submitted, and location seized for all items submitted. The Forensic Scientist working the case will be reaching out to the appropriate agency contact and/or District Attorney's Office as necessary to complete all case analysis.

**B. NEW SUPPLEMENTAL FORM FOR FIREARMS ANALYSIS**

In order to facilitate the speed of examination, Firearms evidence will now require a supplemental form that is to be completed prior to submission and brought with the evidence upon delivery to the Laboratory. <https://ncdoj.gov/crime-lab/iso-procedures/>. The form will also be posted in the Forensic Advantage Web Portal on the main splash page.

**C. SUBMITTING AGENCY TRIAGING OF EVIDENCE IN MULTI-ITEM CASES**

Should more than 20 items need to be submitted at a time, please contact the Laboratory's Firearms Section for approval to discuss the details of your case. (Contact information is provided below.)

**D. TRIGGER PULL REPORTING AND OTHER REPORTING CHANGES**

The reporting of Trigger Pull analysis will only be completed when Trigger Pull of the firearm is in question. The request must be made by the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and be approved by the Forensic Scientist Manager.

The Firearms Section is discontinuing the use of Ks and Qs labeling. Laboratory Reports from the Firearms Section will report the items according to the Laboratory and Agency Item numbers only.

The Laboratory expects you to see significant improvements in the turnaround time of Firearms Examinations by implementing these changes. If you have additional questions about submissions for firearms evidence, please contact the Manager of the Firearms Sections:

Raleigh Laboratory Firearms Section

Contact: Forensic Scientist Manager Jennifer Slish [jslish@ncdoj.gov](mailto:jslish@ncdoj.gov)

Address: 121 E. Tryon Road, Raleigh, NC

Phone: 919-582-8909

Western Laboratory Firearms Section

Contact: Forensic Scientist Manager Ana Baxter [abaxter@ncdoj.gov](mailto:abaxter@ncdoj.gov)

Address: 300 Saint Pauls Road, Hendersonville, NC 28792

Phone: 828-654-0525