

North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Forensic Update



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Dear Criminal Justice Stakeholders,

As the newly named Director of the State Crime Laboratory, I am honored and humbled to have the opportunity to lead the colleagues I have worked alongside for twenty four years.

For those of you who may not be familiar with me, let me introduce myself. I started my career with the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory in 2000. I was initially hired as a DNA Database Analyst and then promoted to a Forensic Scientist in the Forensic Biology Section where I served as a Forensic Serologist and Forensic DNA Analyst. I also served in the role of Forensic Scientist Supervisor over the DNA Database and in 2013, was promoted to the Forensic Scientist Manager of the section. In 2016, I accepted the role of Assistant Director over Administrative Operations for the laboratory system and remained in this position until May of this year, when I accepted the Director role.

If you have any questions, concerns, or feedback, please contact me via email at athompson@ncdoj.gov, by office line at 919-582-8761 or by cell at 919-532-6976.

Amanda W. Thompson

Director

North Carolina State Crime Laboratory



Section I: Updates for our Law Enforcement Partners

Rapid DNA for Crime Scenes Update in North Carolina

The State Crime Lab is developing infrastructure needed to assist our LEA stakeholders who have an interest in using Rapid DNA instruments to generate DNA profiles from crime scene samples. The goal of this program is to produce quality DNA profiles that can then be uploaded to CODIS (Combined DNA Index System). The lab has been drafting policies and procedures and planning for our own validation of the instrument.

There is movement in the forensic community at the national level to provide the needed guidance in order for this workflow to move forward including:

- Draft standards for the use of RAPID DNA were released in early June 2024. This provides the framework to analyze crime scene Rapid DNA evidence.
- Results from the multi-lab study to evaluate Rapid DNA Instruments for crime scene use are projected to be released in 2024.
- The FBI has updated and released several documents related to Rapid DNA. Those include the Guide to All Things Rapid DNA, the Crime Scene Rapid DNA Requirements for CODIS, and the Rapid DNA Crime Scene Technology Advancement Task Group Recommendations. Links to these documents can be found at: [Rapid DNA — LE \(fbi.gov\)](#)
- Additional guidance and educational opportunities will also be released throughout 2025.
- The FBI is projecting that all components will be in place to move forward with entering crime scene DNA profiles generated by LEA using Rapid DNA instruments into CODIS by 2025.

The Crime Lab is planning additional meetings with our stakeholders who have purchased these instruments later this year.

If your agency would like more information or is considering purchasing a Rapid DNA instrument, please contact Amanda Overman at 919-582-8882 or aoverman@ncdoj.gov. The Crime Lab would like to work with your agency to ensure that you are able to maximize the capabilities of these instruments.

Customer Survey 2024 and Training Opportunities

The State Crime Lab has launched its annual customer survey through mid-September. The Lab has the capability to provide training in forensic topics either in person or online. If your agency (LEO and/or Legal) is interested in topics regarding specific forensic disciplines, cold case evaluation, or evidence submission, please let us know by filling out the survey and providing your contact information.

The link to the annual survey can be found here: [Annual Laboratory Customer Survey - NCDOJ](#) or [scan the QR code to access the link on a mobile device or computer.](#)

Annual Survey QR Code






Update on Staffing and Turnaround Time

In 2013, the State Crime Lab incorporated Lean Six Sigma principles as a way to streamline processes to aid in the reduction of backlogs and turn around times without sacrificing quality of work. The Lab currently has a 220 day (six month) average turn-around time for all examinations. Examinations such as DWI-Blood Alcohol testing, Gunshot Residue, Ignitable Liquids, Latent Evidence, NIBIN entry, and Seized Drug Analysis now have a turn-around time of **2-5 months**.

*** The State Crime Lab is actively hiring firearms examiners; however, we currently have only four trained examiners. In order to best serve our customers in a timely fashion, the Lab is requesting as much notice as possible to complete these examinations. If you need a Firearms comparison examination expedited to meet a trial date, please submit a rush request to the laboratory at least 90 days in advance of that date.

Attention DNA Collectors: Training videos now available for DNA Standard collection for Convicted Offenders and Arrestees

The State Crime Lab’s DNA Database Section has recently completed a series of brief, on demand training videos. The intended audience includes law enforcement personnel, probation officers, and prison staff responsible for the collection of convicted offender or arrestee DNA samples. The three video topics include 1) lawfully owed DNA, 2) how to verify if a subject is in the CODIS database, and 3) the proper method of collecting and submitting DNA samples from convicted offenders or arrestees for inclusion in the DNA Database. These videos may serve as either a helpful refresher or may be used as part of training new personnel.

<p>Lawfully Owed DNA in NC: https://youtu.be/R33_HjzTAwM In this video, learn about Lawfully Owed DNA samples and how to find out if DNA samples in your jurisdiction need to be collected.</p>	
<p>Confirmation of DNA Sample Collection: https://youtu.be/gHo1PsqX-U In this video, learn how to confirm if a subject (arrestee or convicted offender) already has a DNA sample on file at the NC State Crime Laboratory.</p>	
<p>Collection of DNA samples: https://youtu.be/1Tnw-Y4Kpkk In this video, learn how to collect and DNA Database sample from an arrestee or convicted offender for inclusion in the State DNA Database & CODIS.</p>	

Section II: Updates for our Legal Stakeholders

Stop Work Notice and Blood Destruction Process Change

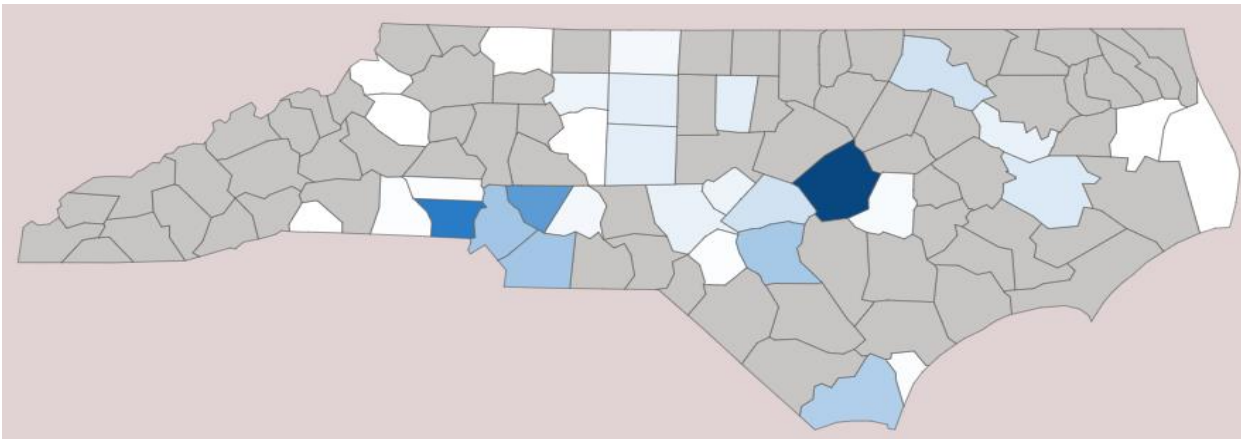
The State Crime Lab is improving the stop work and blood destruction workflow as past practices for providing these to District Attorney's offices were manual and tedious. Previously the process included: an AOC check, creation and emailing of a list to the districts, and review by the districts. After review, the list was returned via email to the Crime Lab.

As of this week, the stop work and blood destruction lists are now posted on a secure SharePoint site and updated *weekly*. Employees in the DA's Offices assigned to review the lists now have the ability to establish automated notification alerts when new lists are added by the crime lab for their district/county. Each district office will only have access to their respective district folder. Each district has been notified of this change and a person within the district has been granted access.

The switch to this SharePoint site is a precursor to a new electronic portal being developed for stakeholder access. Please contact Forensic Scientist Manager Tim Baize at tbaize@ncdoj.gov for assistance and/or more information in providing access for additional personnel within your office.

Remote Testimony Update

With the passage of G.S. 15A-1225.3 (b1), the Crime Lab welcomes the use of REMOTE VIRTUAL TESTIMONY for District Court DWI Trials. To date, the Crime Lab has testified 70 times virtually. There are currently 400 virtual subpoenas active in our queue and 193 already adjudicated. If a county has interest in starting remote testimony, please contact Toxicology Forensic Scientist Manager Wayne Lewallen at wlewallen@ncdoj.gov and Crime Lab Legal Counsel Jason Caccamo at jcaccamo@ncdoj.gov to schedule a trial run to test equipment. See the below map for counties who have taken advantage of the remote option.



New process for Expert Witness Testimony Evaluations Subpoena Reminder

In an effort to streamline expert testimony evaluations, the previously used paper form has been replaced by a QR code now visible on the Curriculum Vitae (CV) of each testifying scientist. To provide an evaluation, simply scan the QR code and complete the online survey. The link to courtroom testimony evaluation can also be found here: <https://ncdoj.gov/crime-lab/crime-lab-customer-survey/> or by scanning the QR code:

Expert Testimony Evaluations QR Code



As a reminder, the Lab does not accept subpoenas via hand delivery. Subpoenas for current Lab employees should be uploaded through the Forensic Advantage (FA) web portal system. If there are any questions about the FA web portal and subpoenas, please reach out to one of our court coordinators or Forensic Scientist Manager Tim Baize at tbaize@ncdoj.gov.

CONTACT THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE CRIME LABORATORY

The North Carolina State Crime Laboratory is committed to providing guidance and assistance to our customers. If you have questions concerning an analysis or potential submission, please use the following contact information:

- Raleigh Laboratory: 919-582-8700
- Triad Regional Laboratory: 336-315-4900
- Western Regional Laboratory: 828-654-0525