

# North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Forensic Update



Volume 7, No. 1

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Dear Criminal Justice Stakeholders,

This installment has a variety of topics that may be of interest to your agencies.

Within this issue, you will find information regarding the Laboratory's capabilities in latent evidence, as well as the latest news regarding the evolution of "Rapid DNA". The State Crime Laboratory is interested in partnering with those agencies who are working toward implementation of Rapid DNA technology in their agencies. Please read for more information.

There are some changes to submission guidelines that submitting agencies should be aware of regarding seized drugs and trace evidence testing (i.e. gunshot residue and filament examination).

The State Crime Laboratory is proud to announce the launch of a summer forensic "Lunch and Learn" series for Law Enforcement. Flyers are available at each Evidence Control location as well as online on the Splash page of the Forensic Advantage portal.

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. If you have a case that needs to be expedited, please continue to submit rushes via the FA web portal to receive the fastest response.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Vanessa Martinucci".

Vanessa Martinucci  
Director, North Carolina State Crime Laboratory

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"Truth through science."

# North Carolina State Crime Laboratory

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### *Latent Evidence – Did you know?*

With the rise and emphasis on DNA collection, the State Crime Laboratory has seen a decrease in submissions for latent evidence (fingerprints, footwear, and tire tracks). The discipline of latent evidence is still a valuable tool for possible identification of subjects. The Latent Section receives items for processing, comparison, footwear, and tire tread impressions. Latent print examiners and footwear/tire tread examiners are available in all three Laboratories (Raleigh, Greensboro, Edneyville). The State Crime Laboratory utilizes the NC AFIS and FBI Databases to search identifiable prints. Property crimes make up 80% of the Latent evidence caseload. A suspect is not required to enter the Latent print into AFIS or FBI database.

The State Crime Laboratory accepts evidence in the following types of cases in Latent Evidence:

- All property crimes (with or without victim/suspect prints)
- Homicides
- Crimes against persons
- Postmortem impression response
- Shooting related cases-guns, ammunition, magazines, gun boxes, etc.
- Larceny, Robbery
- Cold Case Reviews - Please contact the Laboratory prior to submission
- Post-conviction analysis - Please contact the Laboratory prior to submission

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### *Seized Drug Evidence: Packaging Requirement Change*

#### **IMPORTANT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR NARCOTICS CASES AND CRIME SCENE UNITS**

All drug evidence (with the exception of wet, botanical plant material or bulk submissions) with an offense date after **August 1, 2023** must be packaged and submitted in clear “see through” bags. This includes all layers of packaging. Do not use manilla or paper envelopes as exterior packaging, **Evidence Control needs to see inside the bag at submission.** Manilla envelopes defeat the purpose of the clear packaging. As a reminder, ensure evidence containing needles is properly packaged and labeled; the Laboratory has received several items with needles that were not appropriately packaged.

The Laboratory is making this change for two reasons: 1) Officer safety and 2) faster triage for quicker analysis time. If the evidence is not packaged correctly, the submitting officer will be required to fix the packaging or return to the agency for repackaging. Help the Laboratory and your employees mitigate the risk of needle sticks.

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### *Forensic Biology Updates*

#### **RAPID DNA**

Over the next 12-18 months, the State Crime Laboratory will be evaluating Rapid DNA technology in our laboratory and developing recommendations for its use in North Carolina. Our goal during this period is to take the opportunity to provide you with sound scientific advice and clear legal guidance.

Currently, the State Crime Lab does not recommend use of Rapid DNA on crime scene samples. This follows the guidance from the FBI, SWGDAM, NDAA, ASCLD, etc. Rapid DNA instruments are currently not well-suited for the types of samples that are commonly encountered at crime scenes - variable amounts of DNA and mixtures. The FBI is working with all stakeholders to advance Rapid DNA technology so that it may be used for entry and/or searching of crime scene DNA profiles in CODIS in the future. For the most up-to-date information, please visit: [FBI.gov](http://FBI.gov) and type Rapid DNA in the search box.

As of this publication, there are two Rapid DNA instruments approved for use by the Director of the FBI for performing Rapid DNA Analysis on arrestee reference samples in the law enforcement booking agency and on any reference samples in an accredited DNA laboratory. ***Rapid DNA is NOT currently approved for use on crime scene samples for entry and/or searching in CODIS.***

*If you are considering the implementation of Rapid DNA technology in your agency, feel free to contact the State CODIS Administrator Amanda Overman by email at [aoverman@ncdoj.gov](mailto:aoverman@ncdoj.gov).*

#### **Outsourcing evidence for DNA testing**

The FBI has strict guidelines regarding the entry of DNA profiles developed by a private laboratory into CODIS. At this time, **the only private laboratory from which we can accept data for CODIS entry is Bode Technology** in Lorton, VA. The State Crime Laboratory will not retest evidence that has undergone DNA analysis at another laboratory. If you are considering sending evidence to a private laboratory for DNA analysis, we welcome the chance to discuss your case before making the decision to outsource. We may be able to assist you in expediting testing of the evidence.

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### **Trace Evidence: Changes**

(Phone: 919-582-8900)

**Light Bulb Analysis:** The Crime Laboratory is **discontinuing light bulb filament analysis** due to the lack of submission over the last 4 years and the recent increase in the use of LED bulbs. Please contact the Trace Evidence Section for a list of forensic service providers that still offer this service.

**Gunshot Residue kits:** The State Crime Laboratory is changing the analysis scheme for gunshot residue analysis. The 2 part “combo kit” is no longer required for testing (SEM and AA analysis). The State Crime Laboratory is **now recommending the Primer Residue Collection Kit for SEM (Scanning Electron Microscopy) containing 2 adhesive lifts**. Please contact the Trace Evidence Section if there are questions regarding which kit to order.