

LAB REPORT

*Nebraska State Patrol
Crime Laboratory*



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EVIDENCE RECEIPT HOURS

MONDAY - FRIDAY
9AM - 4PM

CONTACT

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The Mission of the Crime Laboratory Division is to provide quality and timely forensic science services to the State of Nebraska. To fulfill the mission of the laboratory, the following objectives are supported and understood by the staff of the NSP Crime Laboratory:

To provide timely, effective and impartial forensic services to aid in the investigation of crimes; To provide relevant, professional and impartial testimony in judicial proceedings; To disseminate scientific information and educate the criminal justice community regarding forensic science matters; To provide traceable and accurate results that are pertinent to the needs of the criminal justice community.

ABOUT US

LAB EXPANSION

Update

The facility expansion project is moving along as expected. The first phase encompassing Controlled Substances and Toxicology are in the process of moving the forensic scientists into their expanded space. The next two phases covering Biology & Latent Prints and Evidence Receiving & Administration are on schedule for completion in late spring or early summer. The final phases will be the remodel of space for Firearms and a training room.

Keep your eye out and check the Crime Lab website for updates on accessing the laboratory as entrances will be temporarily shifting again this spring to accommodate construction needs.



South Side of Building, Facing North

BIOLOGY BULLETIN

CASEWORK CORNER

The Biology-Casework section's turn-around time has been significantly reduced over the recent years. If your agency has any cases that haven't been submitted for biological fluid identification and/or DNA analysis that you would like to have tested, please submit them to the Crime Lab.

Also a friendly reminder to submit Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits that have been collected, even if the case is not active. The only exception to this is that kits marked Anonymous should not be submitted unless the status has changed to a Partial Report or Full Report.

DATABANK DIGEST

We are offering four free online trainings for Offender DNA Sample Collection in 2026: March 24th, June 24th, September 18th, and December 9th. This training content is geared toward individuals collecting convicted offender samples on behalf of Corrections, Probations, etc. and includes:

- Overview of CODIS
- Details about state statutes relevant to the offender collection process
- CODIS Prelog usage
- Collection Card completion
- Sample collection process

Please email the NSP CODIS Helpdesk (nsp.codishelpdesk@nebraska.gov) to sign up for a session!

STATISTICS

In addition to casework, analysts are often involved in activities such as testimony, attending or providing training, community outreach, instrument maintenance, method validations, and other quality assurance practices.

TURN-AROUND TIMES

18	CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES NUMBER OF DAYS	174	FIREARMS/TOOLMARKS NUMBER OF DAYS
42	BIOLOGY - VIOLENT CRIMES NUMBER OF DAYS	184	LATENT PRINTS NUMBER OF DAYS
88	BIOLOGY - NON-VIOLENT CRIMES NUMBER OF DAYS	26	TOXICOLOGY NUMBER OF DAYS
9	BIOLOGY - DATABANK NUMBER OF DAYS		

Turn-around times may be impacted by requests for examinations that need to be completed by other sections first.

2025 CODIS STATISTICS

2595	OFFENDER PROFILES ENTERED
366	FORENSIC PROFILES ENTERED
149	TOTAL HITS 13 CASE TO CASE HITS 136 OFFENDER TO CASE HITS
148	INVESTIGATIONS AIDED

2025 AFIS STATISTICS

401	VALUE LATENTS SUBMITTED TO AFIS
253	LATENTS IDENTIFIED ("COLD HITS" AND KNOWN)
173	COLD HITS

*38.38% OF ALL IDENTIFIED LATENTS
WERE COLD HITS.

*Cold Hit = the individual was not listed on the NSP750 in any capacity (e.g., suspect, victim, elimination, law enforcement) and cold hit identification in a case has provided an investigative lead for law enforcement

TURN AROUND TIMES ARE BASED ON A 3-MONTH AVERAGE AND ARE ACCURATE AS OF 1/29/2026.

2025 LAB SUCCESSES

In July of 2025, the Nebraska State Patrol Crime Laboratory became an implementer of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) Standards. OSAC is an organization whose goal is facilitating the development of technically sound standards. The implementation of the OSAC standards is voluntary, but doing so can build trust in forensic results and ensures that the most robust methods are used in the most consistent manner possible. To date, the Latent Print and Biology Sections have self-adopted standards on the OSAC registry in their everyday practices and operations and reported these usages. The Nebraska State Patrol Crime Laboratory will continue to review OSAC standards for all sections in the upcoming year with a goal of expanding the Laboratory's OSAC implementation status.

The NSP Crime Lab completed our annual Accreditation Surveillance Activity with zero nonconformances. This is continuing evidence that the Crime Lab is operating at a very high level of quality.

The IT section, which is currently filled by one individual, has been working with the various sections of the laboratory throughout the year to make the best use of the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS). IT has also worked with the Biology section to upgrade their DNA analysis software, which provided quite the challenge due to the system's configurations. Lastly, IT coordinated the implementation of an electronic method to send and receive faxes.

The Procurement Contracts Officer has been a catch-all duties position. Whether it is monitoring the construction workers' access to the Crime Lab, taking care of the pool vehicles, maintaining service and vendor contracts, ensuring our telephones are working or submitting over 1150 Purchase Orders, he has kept the gears of the lab well oiled! This allows forensic scientists to put more focus on casework and other technical aspects of the job.

The Case Management section had an extremely busy year as the amount of traffic coming into and out of the building has significantly increased with all the construction, and this will continue well into 2026. Meanwhile, they continue to answer and redirect phone calls, be the faces of the Crime Lab during interactions with the submitting law enforcement agencies, and check in and return evidence while maintaining its integrity.

The Biology-Casework section maintained a backlog of two to three months while having several forensic scientists in different steps of the training process. On top of that, several projects were also completed which will improve the quality and timeliness of the results. Lastly, they successfully completed the Quality Assurance Audit for the FBI.

2025 LAB SUCCESSES

The Biology-Databank section continued to focus on customer outreach by providing quarterly online trainings to their collection agencies, which resulted in a decrease of collection errors. Improvements were also made with the addition of new software and instrumentation that reduced the sample processing time and allowed for the complete digitization of all Databank case records.

The Controlled Substances section focused heavily on backlog reduction while also completing training of two new forensic scientists. Within one year, they reduced their backlog from 101 days to 17 days! As with every legislative session, new drug-related bills required evaluation as these bills can directly impact the analysis required by the section.

The Firearms/Toolmarks & Footwear/Tire Tread section was able to provide faster turn-around times in 2025 when compared to 2024. They have also been working tirelessly to implement digital notetaking, which has been challenging due to the intricacies and wide variety of analytical documentation necessary to comply with established quality standards and discipline best practices. The section has been fully staffed with the same individuals for over eight years, and they are excited to add an additional forensic scientist in January 2026.

The Latent Prints section completed several validation projects which will prove beneficial in the examination of evidence for prints. They also completed the in-house training of the newest forensic scientist which should help reduce the backlog during 2026. The section was involved with the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) upgrade proposal and have started working to implement the new system. They also provided several training courses to individuals across several law enforcement agencies during 2025.

The Toxicology section has been working on the validation of a new instrument and method while also completing the training of the newest forensic scientist. A change to the administrative code regulating DUI-D testing became official after over a decade of working on it, which will prompt several procedural changes in the future.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS



Did you know...

THE CRIME LAB ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE HAS ORGANIZED SEVERAL FUN EVENTS OVER THE COURSE OF LAST YEAR INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO CHRISTMAS IN JULY, A CELEBRATION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE WEEK, LABS-GIVING, AND A HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE.



*Here's to
2025!*

Director

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Quality Assurance

Manager: Vicki Hopkins vicki.hopkins@nebraska.gov

Case Management Supervisor: Tiffanie Leffler

Biology & Physical Sciences

Manager: Jeff Bracht jeff.bracht@nebraska.gov

Biology-Databank Supervisor: Katherine Rector (Technical Leader/State CODIS Admin)

Biology-Casework Supervisor: Heidi Ellingson (Technical Leader)

Biology-Casework Supervisor: Brandy Porter

Firearms/Toolmarks Supervisor: Kent Weber (Technical Leader)

Latent Prints Supervisor: Mariana Ward (Technical Leader)

Chemistry

Manager: Celeste Laird celeste.laird@nebraska.gov

Controlled Substances Supervisor: Jerry D. Smith (Technical Leader)

Controlled Substances Supervisor: Spencer Effle

Toxicology Supervisor: Christine Reisen (Technical Leader)

Questions?

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

CALL: (402) 471-8950

EMAIL: NSP.CRIMELAB@NEBRASKA.GOV

CODIS QUESTIONS:

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RAPID DNA QUESTIONS:

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Want more information on a topic in a future newsletter?

EMAIL THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR: NSP.CRIMELAB@NEBRASKA.GOV

CONTACT US