



The Lab Report

Volume 4, Issue 3

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In This Issue...

This issue of the NSP Crime Laboratory quarterly newsletter, The Lab Report, will feature the following topics: the recent NSPCL ASCLD/LAB-*International* accreditation, a discussion on the controlled substances section residue policy (covering residues, syringes, and swabs), CODIS News, and an update on the progress of the new NSPCL facility!

There are several **FREE training opportunities** that will be offered to all of our submitting agencies as well - a DNA webinar and the 2014/15 Crime Lab Road Show (DNA and its application in court)

If you have any questions/concerns regarding the topics related to this issue of The Lab Report, please do not hesitate to contact us (laboratory staff contact information - pg. 12).

Enjoy!

Amy Weber (Firearm/Toolmark Section Analyst - editor, The Lab Report)

The Backlog Corner

(*approximate turnaround times are calculated for routine cases only - RUSH cases not included)

Biology Unit: 183 assignments (approx. 5 month turnaround time)

Physical Sciences Unit:

Firearm/Toolmark cases: 21 assignments (approx. 3.5 month turnaround time)

Footwear/Tire cases: 3 assignments (approx. 1 month turnaround time)

NIBIN: 16 assignments (approx. 2 month turnaround time)

Latent Fingerprints Section: 71 assignments (approx. 2.5 month turnaround time)

Chemistry Unit:

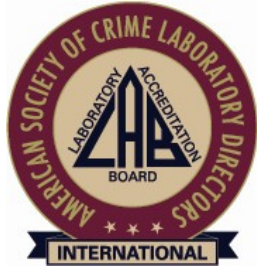
Controlled Substances: 773 assignments (approx. 4 month turnaround time)

Toxicology: 120 assignments (approx. 2.5 month turnaround time)

Trace: 7 assignments (approx. 2.5 month turnaround time)



ASCLD/LAB accredited since 2004.



ASCLD/LAB-*International* (ISO) Accreditation

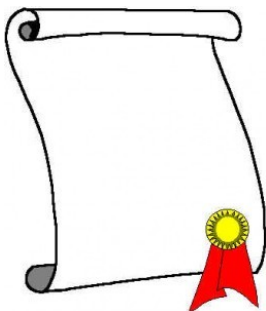
On September 3, 2014, the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB) granted ASCLD/LAB-*International* accreditation to the NSP Crime Laboratory (NSPCL) in the field of Forensic Science Testing. The NSPCL accreditation includes the disciplines of Drug Chemistry, Toxicology, Biology, Trace Evidence, Firearms/Toolmarks (including footwear and tire impression analysis) and Latent Prints. ASCLD/LAB-*International* accreditation is granted for a period of four years. The NSPCL has been accredited since 2004 through the national ASCLD/LAB Legacy program.

The ASCLD/LAB-*International* accreditation program for forensic science testing is based on international ISO/IEC 17025:2005 standards for testing laboratories as well as additional requirements developed by ASCLD/LAB specific to forensic science testing laboratories. Laboratories participating in the accreditation process must meet established standards in the areas of management, operations, personnel, procedures, equipment, physical plant, security, and health and safety. In order to obtain international accreditation, all of the NSPCL technical, administrative, and quality procedures were carefully reviewed by a team of assessors. This review process culminated in a week long on-site assessment in July. During that week the assessment team reviewed extensive amounts of documentation and conducted interviews with laboratory staff to insure that the laboratory was following all required procedures and standards. The assessment team consisted of an ASCLD/LAB lead assessor and six other assessors, all with extensive forensic crime laboratory experience.

“Adding the international accreditation to its list of accomplishments speaks to the dedication and professionalism of all of our Crime Lab staff,” said Colonel David Sankey, Superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol. “The recognition ensures our patrons that the Crime Lab is operating to the highest standards possible.”

ASCLD/LAB accredits crime laboratories in the United States and internationally. The NSPCL is now one of 396 crime laboratories currently accredited by ASCLD/LAB. The number includes 184 state labs, 134 local agency labs, 31 federal labs, 20 international labs and 27 private labs. You can learn more about the ASCLD/LAB-*International* accreditation process by logging onto their website at:

www.ascl-d-lab.org/international-testing-program/



ASCLD/LAB-*International* (ISO) Customer Focused Approach

ASCLD/LAB-*International* - What changes can the submitting agencies expect? While there are many things that will not change from our previous *Legacy* program accreditation, there are some things that you will be seeing / noticing as a direct result of the new *International* program.

On the technical side of things, you have already read about the drug and firearms sections reporting “measurement uncertainties”. On the administrative side of things, you will begin to notice a “**customer focused**” approach.

A “customer focused” approach will include requests from the NSPCL for annual feedback to help us improve our services, to offer better communication at the submission stage as far as what services we are and are not capable of providing, and to take steps to ensure our reports are as clear and useful as possible.

The NSPCL staff looks forward to fully implementing this customer focused approach as yet another way to continually improve our quality management system.

If you have any questions regarding ASCLD/LAB-*International* accreditation and/or the customer focused approach for continual quality management system improvement, please contact: **Pam Zilly, Lab Director** (Pam.Zilly@nebraska.gov) or **Vicki Hopkins, Quality Assurance Manager** (Vicki.Hopkins@nebraska.gov)





Controlled Substances Section - Residue Policy

As part of our continuing effort to reduce the turnaround time for drug cases, the Nebraska State Patrol Crime Lab would like to send a reminder of our residue and syringe policies and some **updated information regarding submission of swabs for drug testing**. It is our hope that if these policies are followed, more time can be spent testing the most probative items of evidence, as well as items that have a greater likelihood of yielding quality results.

Residues

Items that contain residue amounts of substances, will only be tested if the evidence meets one of the following criteria.

- The residue is the only item in the case or the only item that can be tied to a specific suspect. – **MUST** be indicated on submittal form.
 - One residue of a kind per suspect will be tested – **MUST** be marked to indicate which suspect is assigned to each residue.
- The residue was the probable cause for a search – **MUST** be marked as such on the submittal form.
- Prosecutor is able to give justification for testing - **MUST** be approved prior to submission to the lab.

Items that do not meet the above testing criteria should not be submitted.

If no **specific** information is provided on the submittal form, the analyst will select which items to test based on the guidelines above. **SPECIFIC information MUST be provided to request testing of additional items of residue. “Please test all” does not provide specific information to warrant testing.**



Controlled Substances

Celeste Laird (Mgr.)

Vicky Cowan

Abbey Dodds

Mandy Horn

Meggan Macomber

Controlled Substances Section - Residue Policy

Syringes

There is **NO** submission or testing of hypodermic syringes at the Crime Laboratory.

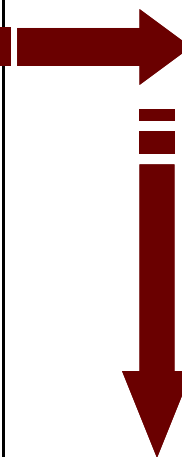
Cases submitted to the laboratory containing hypodermic syringes will be returned to the submitting agency without testing. The case may only be resubmitted if the syringe is removed.

Syringe liquid may be submitted, and will be tested, only under the following circumstances:

- It is the only item in the case;
- It was the probable cause for a search – **MUST** be clearly labeled as such;
- The prosecutor can provide clear justification that testing is vital to a case and this is approved prior to submission to the lab;

Proper collection of syringe liquid or rinsing of dry syringes – REMEMBER: Syringes pose a considerable biohazard risk. Please exercise extreme caution when dealing with them.

- Any clean, leak-proof vial will work for collection of the liquid. A good choice is **“red topped” vacutainer tubes** commonly used for blood collection. Many local hospitals and clinics are willing to provide a few free of charge.
- If liquid is present in the syringe, puncture the red cap with the needle and compress the syringe plunger to force the liquid into the tube.
- If no liquid is present in the syringe, remove the plunger and fill the body of the syringe with rubbing alcohol or water. **Rubbing alcohol is preferred by the lab due to ease of testing, however if none is available water is acceptable.** Allow the liquid to sit in the syringe for several minutes and then follow the procedure listed above.
- Please **indicate whether alcohol or water was used** for rinse on the submittal form
- **DO NOT swab the inside of the syringe** – see information regarding swabs to follow.





Controlled Substances Section - Residue Policy

Swabs

For the past year the lab has seen an increase in the number of swabs being submitted for controlled substance testing. These have mostly been swabs of syringes that were “dry”, but have also included swabs of items where suspected drug residue was located.

We have found that nearly always, testing of swabs yields negative results, but when we receive the rinses of syringes and the actual items with the suspected drug residue, we are typically able to identify controlled substances.

Testing of items which have an extremely low likelihood of yielding results is time consuming and negatively impacts the case turnaround time. We must focus our resources on testing the best evidence to yield results. Therefore only the items fitting the above policy and syringe rinses will be tested.

The Nebraska State Patrol Crime Lab will NOT test swabs for the presence of controlled substances. PLEASE NOTE – this ONLY pertains to CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE testing. Any swabs received for controlled substance analysis will be returned to the submitting agency without testing.

Controlled Substances

Celeste Laird (Mgr.)

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Meggan Macomber



If you have any Questions and/or concerns about the NSPCL Policies on the analysis of residues, syringes, and/or swabs for controlled substances, please contact Celeste Laird - Chemistry Unit Manager (Celeste.Laird@nebraska.gov)

FREE Convicted Offender DNA Sample Collection Training



The Nebraska State Patrol is excited to announce that we will be providing **FREE** training to the agencies [that collect DNA from convicted offenders per state statute.](#)

This training will be held in Lincoln and **broadcast via the web on November 14, 2014, from 0900-1100 am.** We are providing the webcast in hope that people who are unable to travel, or who cannot get away from the office, will be able to benefit from the training.

The Nebraska State Patrol Crime Laboratory would like to thank all of our Convicted Offender DNA Sample Collection Agencies for their hard work and dedication to the program. Last year the DNA database aided 76 investigations and as of August 20, 2014 the database has aided 60 investigations this year.

Please click on the hyperlink below to register for the training and select whether you will be attending in person or via the webcast. Another email will be coming at a later date with specifics on how to access the webcast and where parking availability is for those who are attending in person.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JXXYFKX>

Please feel free to disseminate this information to other individuals who collect DNA from convicted offenders per state statute, and who would be interested in this training.

If you have any questions regarding this training opportunity, please contact Jason Linder - DNA Manager (Jason.Linder@nebraska.gov) or Katie Rector - CODIS State Administrator (Katherine.Rector@nebraska.gov)

CODIS

Jason Linder (Mgr.)

Katie Rector (Sup.)

Christel Davis

Hillary Duin



CODIS News!

Last quarter we reminded agencies that DNA profiles obtained from the UNMC HDI Laboratory are NOT automatically submitted into CODIS. We also provided information regarding the NSP 751 form and how to request that such a DNA profile be submitted into CODIS.

In addition, we would like to make sure that our submitting agencies are aware that once the CODIS submission request is received by the Nebraska State Patrol Crime Lab (NSPCL), there may be follow-up questions and/or testing that is needed before the DNA profile can be entered. This is important to note so the agency is prepared for the additional costs if subsequent testing is needed.

Such testing may include running elimination standards to ensure that we are not violating FBI regulations and entering in DNA profiles of victims, consensual partners etc., into the database. Violating FBI regulations would lead to the loss of access to CODIS for the entire State of Nebraska. Other additional testing may include running a suspect known reference sample if the case is involved in a CODIS hit. This sample would need to be run by the original testing laboratory (UNMC HDI Laboratory) so that they may do their comparisons and make their interpretations. **The additional testing that may be required is critical and necessary in order to put some DNA profiles into CODIS - Please evaluate cases to be submitted carefully and prepare to budget for this possibility.**

The NSPCL will not test items if the case has already been submitted to another laboratory. All testing needs to remain with the original laboratory used in the case. If the case is worked by the NSPCL, eligible DNA profiles are automatically entered into CODIS; form NSP 751 is not needed.

CODIS

Jason Linder (Mgr.)

Katie Rector (Sup.)

Christel Davis

Hillary Duin

Coming Soon! 2014/2015 NSP Crime Lab Road Show Training



The NSPCL is in the process of planning our next Crime Lab Road Show statewide training! The focus of the upcoming training will be:

DNA evidence and its application in court

We will be disseminating more specific information as we finalize our plans and confirm dates and venues so stay tuned!

This training will be FREE to all agencies who wish to attend!

UPDATE: New NSP Crime Laboratory Facility Progress

In July the contract for construction of the new NSP Crime Laboratory facility was awarded to **Cheever Construction**. The building phase of the project was kicked off with a ground breaking ceremony on August 14th at the new location, the intersection of NW 39th Street and Air Park Road in Lincoln.

The approximately 28,000 square-foot facility will be about double the size of the current facility and will allow for increased efficiency to better meet the needs of law enforcement in our state. The Lincoln Airport Authority will pay for the construction of the new building and be reimbursed by the state through a long-term lease arrangement.

The new building should be completed by the fall of 2015.



Future home of the NSP Crime Lab at the intersection of NW 39th Street & Air Park Road in Lincoln. Photo taken June 9, 2014

UPDATE: New NSP Crime Laboratory Facility Progress

NSP Crime Lab groundbreaking ceremony, August 14, 2014

From left to right: Lincoln Airport Authority Executive Director John Wood, Governor Dave Heineman, Attorney General Jon Bruning, NSP Colonel David Sankey



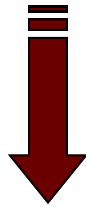
The first shovels of dirt turned over; let construction begin!

From left to right: Governor Dave Heineman, Attorney General Jon Bruning, State Patrol Colonel David Sankey, Crime Lab Director Pam Zilly, BVH Architect Steve Clymer, DLR Group Architect John Badami, Leasing Coordinator Paula Sedlacek, Lincoln Airport Authority Executive Director John Wood.

UPDATE: New NSP Crime Laboratory Facility Progress



BVH architect's rendition of the new NSP Crime Lab





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Monday-Friday
9am-4pm

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