

General/Evidence Submission

Do you have a new submittal form because of your move?

- An updated form with our new address is available on the NSP website at <http://statepatrol.nebraska.gov/formsyoumayneed.aspx>

Where do I send blood for blood alcohol testing?

- Blood alcohol testing is done at the Health and Human Services Laboratory. You can reach the Health Lab at 402-471-8460
- Urine testing for the presence of drugs in DUID cases is done at our laboratory, the NSP Crime Lab.

Why is the state crime laboratory a division of the Nebraska State Patrol?

- The state crime laboratory was formed in the early 1970s by Nebraska Statute 81-2010 which mandates "...Criminalistics Laboratory is hereby established within the Nebraska State Patrol..." This statute also specifies our purpose, which is "shall perform services necessary for the recognition and proper preservation, identification, and scientific analysis of evidence materials pertaining to the investigation of crimes."

What is the cost to have evidence examined by the NSP Crime Lab?

- We are a publically funded laboratory. Our services are free to any law enforcement agency in our state.

Why don't you charge for your services; wouldn't that reduce the number of requests you get for unnecessary or excessive testing?

- We currently have no statutory authority to charge for our services. We depend upon the cooperation of our submitting agencies to carefully evaluate what they are sending in for examination and limit those submissions to the most probative and important items. That cooperation can help optimize the use of the scientist's time and resources allowing us to focus on getting critical items tested in a more timely fashion.

Biology Unit & CODIS

How do I get my case rushed?

- We automatically prioritize death investigation cases. Other cases can be prioritized on a case by case basis for trial or if there is a continued risk to public safety. Contact the lab to make this request or complete an NSP 750B Rush Request. Most rush requests require at least 30 days, so please notify the lab as soon as you have a court date set.

When do I need to complete an NSP 750A form?

- Anytime you are submitting evidence for DNA testing. If you are only submitting reference samples, the NSP 750A is not required.

Can you use a reference from another case in my case?

- The short answer is yes. However, it may depend on how the reference was collected (court order, voluntarily, etc.). It is strongly encouraged that you consult with your county attorney's office to be sure the reference sample will be admissible. If the reference sample was collected by another agency, the lab will also need permission from the other agency prior to using the sample for comparison to your case.

My suspect is in CODIS, so why do you need a reference sample? Can't you use that sample for comparison?

- No. The FBI prohibits the lab from 'cherry picking' samples out of the database for comparison purposes. The only way an evidence profile can be compared against profiles in the database is if it is eligible to be entered into the database itself.

What kind of hair testing can the lab do?

- Hair analysis is limited to identifying hairs as possible human origin and for the suitability for nuclear DNA testing. If the hair is deemed suitable for nuclear DNA testing, DNA testing can be performed.

Does the lab perform criminal paternity testing?

- Not at this time, however, we will be glad to help you find a lab that can do the testing for you.

My evidence was sent to the University of Nebraska Medical Center HDI Laboratory for DNA testing. Can it go into CODIS?

- Maybe. You will need to fill out an NSP 751 form (found on the Nebraska State Patrol website) and submit it to nsp.codis@nebraska.gov or fax it to 402-471-8954. The UNMC HDI Laboratory's case file will be reviewed for CODIS eligibility by the Crime Laboratory. You will be notified whether the evidence was entered into CODIS or not.

I am receiving an Access error when trying to log onto CODIS Prelog – what should I do?

- First, check to make sure that you are using the correct internet browser. CODIS Prelog is only compatible with Internet Explorer (IE) versions 8, 9, and 10. It has also been known to work with IE version 11 in compatibility mode. If you are using the correct browser and you are still experiencing problems please contact Katherine Rector at katherine.rector@nebraska.gov or 402-471-8950.

Controlled Substances Section

Does the NSPCL test pills?

- Yes.
- We ask that the submitting agency check the logo on any pills on drugs.com or with poison control and ONLY submit pills that are controlled substances. For additional details see the [October 2013 edition](#) of *The Lab Report*
- Non-controlled (over-the-counter/prescription only) pills will only be literature searched, no instrumental analysis will be performed

Can I submit a syringe?

- NO. The crime laboratory does not accept syringes.
- You may submit the liquid from the syringe - please see following question.

How do I submit the liquid from a syringe and when will it be tested?

- IF the syringe liquid is the only item of evidence for a suspect, or the probable cause for a search:
 - CAREFULLY rinse through the syringe with rubbing alcohol, or water (alcohol is preferable) allowing the liquid to “sit” in the barrel of the syringe for 60 seconds
 - Place this rinse into a new “red topped” blood collection tube available from any hospital or doctor’s office laboratory
 - Package carefully to ensure it will not break in transit and clearly mark on the submittal form that a syringe rinse is enclosed
 - The rinse will ONLY be tested if there is no other evidence on a suspect or it was probable cause for a search or arrest. This must be CLEARLY indicated on the submittal form.
 - For additional details see the [October 2014 edition](#) of *The Lab Report*

How much of _____ can I submit?

- This varies by substance:
 - **Marijuana** – up to two lbs may be submitted to be weighed. If one brick weighs more than two lbs, the entire brick may be submitted
 - If additional bricks require testing, submit samples ONLY and clearly label them as samples
 - **Cocaine and Heroin** – up to one kilogram maybe be submitted to be weighed. If one brick weighs more than a kilogram, the entire brick may be submitted.
 - If additional bricks require testing, submit samples ONLY and clearly label them as samples.
 - **Methamphetamine** – the entire amount may be submitted

Will all the items I submit be tested?

- Depends on the situation
 - Items which contain residue amounts of substances will only be tested if it meets one of the following requirements
 - The residue is the only item in the case or the only item that can be attributed to a specific suspect
 - 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
 - The prosecutor is able to give justification for testing; this **MUST** be approved prior to submission to the lab.
 - Drug analysts will test all substances submitted which have weight unless the submittal form indicated otherwise.

On what and when will purity analysis be done?

- Purity analysis is done on methamphetamine samples for federal prosecution and in VERY limited situations on large state cases at the prosecutors' request.
 - The federal prosecutor will be consulted regarding need for purity analysis and the amount that will be tested. Not all federal methamphetamine cases require purity
- The NSPCL cannot perform purity testing on residue amounts of methamphetamine

Can the NSPCL perform testing to determine the % THC present in plant material, oils or food products?

- No - they will be tested to determine the presence of THC only.

What if I need latent prints on my evidence in addition to drug testing?

- No drug testing will typically be performed until after latent print analysis is completed, so be aware that requesting latent analysis may slow the receipt of drug analysis results.
 - For large cases (as explained in the quantity of submission question above) the packaging of the drugs submitted for drug testing can be examined for latent prints if requested.
 - If latent processing of additional large seizure packages is deemed necessary, approval must be obtained from the latent print section prior to the evidence being submitted to the laboratory.
 - For "normal" cases, if at all possible, separate the items needing drug testing and the items needing latent print testing. (this will prevent a slowdown of drug results)
 - Powder or plant material items where packaging requires processing for latent prints should be repackaged and submitted separated from the original packaging.

Toxicology Section

How much urine is needed for testing?

- The target amount needed for urine testing is 42 milliliters.
- If less urine is obtained, it may still be submitted but it is possible that all screens and confirmations may not be able to be performed.

What do the cutoff levels listed on toxicology reports mean?

- The cutoff levels reported are specific to select drugs and are a means of ensuring no false positives. They DO NOT have any correlation to impairment

Can the NSPCL Toxicology Section provide impairment information and testimony?

- No, all our testing can provide is information regarding whether a substance was present.
- Field Sobriety or Drug Recognition Evaluation (DRE) is required to provide impairment information.

If I don't have urine can the NSPCL Toxicology Section test blood or other body fluids?

- Title 177 Chapter 7 of the Nebraska Rules and Regulations requires Urine be testing for the presence of drugs in driving cases
- The NSPCL does not have methods or instrumentation to provide testing for any fluid other than urine.

What substances can the NSPCL Toxicology Section NOT test for?

- The NSPCL Toxicology Section cannot test for the following:
 - Synthetic Cannabinoids of any kind
 - Alcohol
 - LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide)
 - GHB (Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate)
 - Antibiotics
 - Duloxetine (Cymbalta)
 - Quetiapine (Seroquel)
 - Carbon monoxide
 - Poisons
 - Inhalants
 - Steroids

Does the NSPCL test urine samples from all sexual assault cases?

- No. the NSPCL does not have the resources to test sexual assault samples unless there is a credible possibility of drug facilitated sexual assault

- The NSPCL is not able to test for at least one of the commonly purported drug facilitated sexual assault drugs, so the NSPCL should be consulted prior to submission to determine if testing at a different facility would be more appropriate.

How should urine samples be stored and transported?

- As per Nebraska Rules and Regulations Title 177, Chapter 7
 - Sample collection shall be in the presence of collection personnel designated by the law enforcement agency to assure that adulteration of the sample does not occur.
 - Specimen containers shall be labeled and shall show the following information on the label:
 - Name of person tested
 - Date and time of specimen collection
 - Initials of the person supervising the collection of the specimen
 - Specimen containers with collected urine shall be sealed and refrigerated as soon as practical.
 - While not in transit to a site for screening or confirmatory testing, and while not under actual testing, all specimens shall be in secured refrigerated storage at four (4) degrees centigrade or less.

Are the NSPCL Toxicology Section and the State Health Laboratory Alcohol Testing Section the same?

- NO they are not the same. We DO NOT perform the same testing and we are NOT housed in the same location.
 - The State Health Laboratory performs testing for alcohol in BLOOD and is housed in the state laboratory building at 3701 S. 14th Street, Lincoln, NE.
- The NSPCL Toxicology Section performs testing for the presence of drug in URINE and is housed in the Crime Lab building at 3977 Air Park Road.
- You MUST submit your samples to the appropriate location to avoid unnecessary delays and chain of custody concerns.

Does the NSPCL Toxicology Section test for alcohol?

- No the NSPCL cannot test for any alcohol whether driving related or not.

Trace Evidence Section

What can the NSPCL Trace Section test for?

- The NSPCL Trace Section performs testing on:
 - Fire debris samples for the presence of accelerants

- Possible low explosive evidence

How do I properly package my arson evidence?

- Fire Debris evidence should be packaged in one of the following to prevent loss of sample:
 - Clean unused paint cans
 - Kapak fire debris plastic bags
 - Nylon fire debris plastic bags
 - DO NOT use regular plastic or paper bags
 - When in doubt please contact the Crime Laboratory

Can you compare a found liquid accelerant sample to the extract residue from fire debris?

- No we do not have this capability.

Firearm/Toolmark Section

Are fired bullets exhibiting damage/distortion of any value for analysis?

- Despite a bullet's damaged appearance/condition, there are frequently bullet traits that can be visualized microscopically. Plus, some bullet information is more definitive in narrowing down the responsible firearm. It is always good practice to submit damaged bullets for a thorough examination. For additional details, see the [October 2011 edition of *The Lab Report*](#).

Can the NSP Crime Lab perform gunshot residue (GSR) analysis?

- The answer to this question requires a brief explanation. There are two common types of GSR testing...one that focuses on the presence of a combination of particles left on or immediately around a person handling/shooting a firearm, and another that focuses on the residues propelled out of the muzzle and sometimes deposited on a target or victim. The NSP Crime Lab can perform the latter type of analysis, called distance determination or range estimation, and usually involves testing of a victim's clothing. The first type of GSR testing can be performed by a number of private labs, and a short list of those labs is available upon request. For additional details, see the [December 2011 edition of *The Lab Report*](#).

How many of the fired bullets/cartridge cases recovered from a scene are needed for analysis?

- All of them! Each item must be examined to determine whether the evidence indicates that a greater number of firearms (and their characteristics) were present than originally believed.

Can the NSP Crime Lab perform analysis on shotgun ammunition components?

- Yes, there is a great deal of information that can be gleaned from shotgun ammunition and compared to firearms and/or unfired ammunition. Testing may include determining shot size and composition, examining wadding characteristics, and even using barrel markings on wads to compare to a firearm. For additional details, see the [October 2011 edition](#) of *The Lab Report*.

What is the best way to send footwear/tire impression photos to the Lab to compare to submitted footwear/tires?

- Photos having potential value for comparative analysis to submitted shoes or tires are considered evidence. Therefore, the photos need to be placed onto a CD/DVD, packaged as evidence, and be accompanied by a submittal form. Ideally, photos should be in the highest quality format possible (and be accompanied by a photo log, if large numbers of photos are submitted). Submitted photos will be maintained in their original condition, with analytical processing and enhancement conducted on a copy of those photos.

Latent Prints Section

Can gloves found at the crime scene be processed for latent prints and DNA?

- Various types of gloves are often found at the scene of a crime, and while they can be a valuable source of DNA and/or latent print evidence, they cannot be processed for both at the same time. The processes used by the Latents Section require rinsing off the item, which in turn “washes off”, or dilutes the DNA. On the other hand, collection of a DNA sample requires swabbing the item, which in turn destroys latent print evidence. The officer therefore must decide which evidence examination would be more significant for the case, and should proceed with one or the other.
- While latent processing generally develops at least some friction ridge detail, it is often found to be of no value for comparison purposes, due to the smudging and smearing (caused by the sweating of the hand), and overlapping of impressions (due to the movement of the hand inside the glove). Our experience has shown that much better results are obtained through a DNA analysis. Since the hand is in a direct contact with the surface of a glove, sweat, oils, and moisture are being contained inside of the glove, often providing a good source of DNA.