



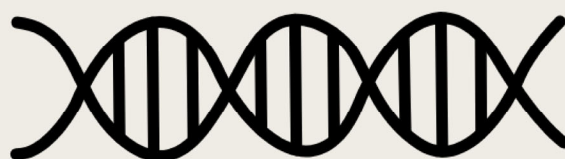
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WSP DNA PROGRAM

JAN 2025

Cheers

TO THE NEW YEAR



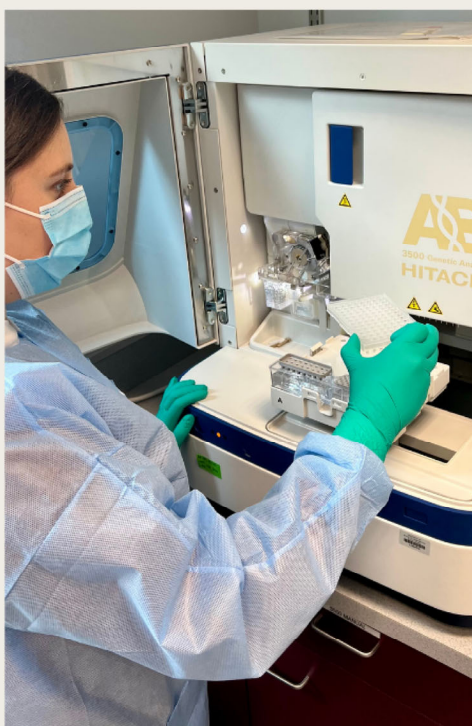
A Program Update

Welcome to our new program-wide newsletter! 2025 is no exception to the fast-paced changes typical in the field of forensic DNA. We are starting off the year with a bang, full of process changes and exciting developments. We have created this periodic newsletter to help share any notable happenings going on in the WSP forensic DNA program, so please look to see more of these in the future!

Thank you for your continued partnership to help make our DNA program a success.

Happy New Year!

The WSP DNA Team

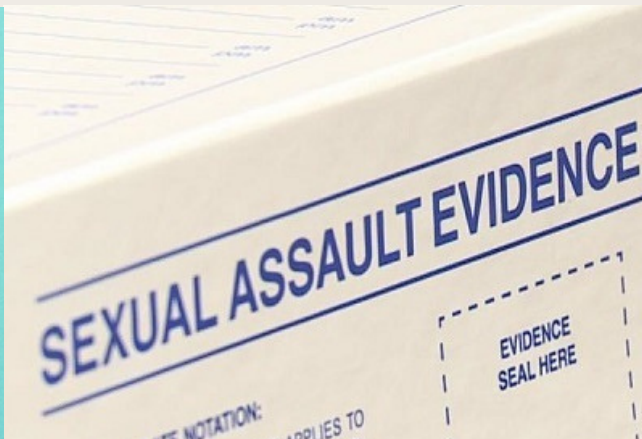


In this newsletter:

Latest projects, service updates, free resources, and more. Keep reading!

Add to your calendar:

1. Launch of new offering of DISC service: Jan 2
2. Rapid DNA Nationwide Webinar: Jan 13
3. Sexual Assault Awareness Month: April
4. Innocence Network Conference; Seattle: April 4-5
5. National DNA Day: April 25



A Program First

TIMELY TESTING AND NO BACKLOG

After years and years of hard work and dedication, as well as federal and state resources going to improve the capacity of the lab system, the large backlog of previously untested sexual assault kits (SAKs) is effectively gone. As of this writing, there are 4 kits in the final stage of processing, and testing will be wrapped up for each one any day now.

SAKs submitted to the lab now are tested in an average of 42 days. Since May of 2022, over 94% of all SAKs have been tested within the legislative mandated 45-day turnaround time.

Last year, the State Auditor's Office conducted a follow-up audit of the WSP Crime Lab's efforts to test the backlog of historical SAKs. "The State Patrol has done commendable work," said State Auditor Pat McCarthy. "Everyone who submits a sexual assault kit deserves to know it will be treated with seriousness and due diligence, and through this independent review, we can confirm that is now the case in Washington."

This was a team effort and we thank you for collaborating with us to get these kits submitted, tested, and results entered into CODIS whenever possible.

Submitting SAKs for Testing

HELP ENSURE A SMOOTH KIT SUBMISSION:

Please take a minute to look at RCW 5.70.040 for legal requirements pertaining to the submission of SAKs to the crime lab.

All submissions are sent to the WSP High-Throughput DNA Section of the Vancouver Crime Laboratory using our SAK-specific Request for Laboratory Examination Form. Please be sure to use the latest form (last revised in November 2024)

For more info on tracking and testing kits, visit us here:

<https://wsp.wa.gov/sak>

FOR LATEST SUBMISSION FORMS:

[HTTPS://WSP.WA.GOV/FORENSICS/CRIMLABS.HTM](https://wsp.wa.gov/forensics/crimlabs.htm)



Announcement

PAPERLESS CASE RECORDS

For requests received by the lab starting in 2025, case records will be maintained in a digital format for ease of access and secure retention. All detailed information not included in the lab report will be readily available.



We are here to help

DON'T HESITATE TO CALL OR EMAIL US!

Please take advantage of our expertise anytime:

- We can provide clarification or more details on our observations and results
- Pretrial discussions with the scientist are key for understanding and correctly interpreting reports. We welcome these opportunities.



DNA Casework Lab Reports

NEW IMPROVEMENTS FOR 2025

We're excited to introduce the latest updates to our DNA laboratory reports! These changes are designed to improve clarity, consistency, and usability of reports, as we know they tend to be complex at times. The changes will also bring efficiency to the lab, improving our reporting process times and overall quality. Here's a quick overview of the key updates and what they mean for you.

Condensed Format for Enhanced Readability:

The new layout is designed for easier reading, allowing you to find key information quickly.

Results/conclusions, methods used, and items tested will continue to be summarized in the report. Any other extra details, if needed, can instead be found in the case file.

Clearer Limitations and Disclaimers:

We've added explicit limitations and disclaimers to ensure you better understand the context and meaning of our results.

Glossary of Definitions:

A glossary is now included to define key terms, making it easier for everyone to understand technical concepts.

Updated Terminology:

We've updated our terminology to align with the latest recommendations. References to "sperm and non-sperm fractions" are now replaced with "fraction 1" and "fraction 2" for better accuracy.



DNA Index of Special Concern (DISC)

ASSISTING INVESTIGATIONS WITH NEW SERVICE LAUNCH

To facilitate the searching of Arrestee Rapid DNA profiles generated by FBI-approved Rapid DNA booking systems, the FBI created a virtual index in CODIS called the DNA Index of Special Concern (DISC) that local law enforcement agencies (LEA) can opt to additionally participate in.

The DISC consists of a subset of unsolved forensic unknown DNA profiles that are currently being searched in CODIS from homicide, sexual assault, kidnapping and terrorism cases.

Starting this January, any qualifying samples from these case types can be requested to be DISC-enabled and searched against the Rapid-enrolled

arrestee samples (while the arrestee is in custody) from participating booking facilities. Our state does not have arrestee DNA collection laws; therefore, these rapid booking stations are currently located outside the state of WA. To be DISC-enabled, additional information from law enforcement is required, and can be submitted to the lab on the form titled "Casework Metadata to DISC-enable Crime Scene Evidence DNA Profiles". The WSP is pleased to now be able to enable eligible profiles into the DISC, allowing us to assist further in connecting serious crimes with persons who are currently or were very recently in police custody.

TAKE A LOOK AT OUR NEW DISC FLYER WITH FAQS AND OUR NEW METADATA FORM

We've summarized some features of the DISC, as well as answers to some frequently asked questions, in a 1-page flyer.

A new form to collect required case metadata was also created.

Access them here:

[HTTPS://WSP.WA.GOV/FORENSICS/CRIMLABS.HTM](https://wsp.wa.gov/forensics/crimlabs.htm)



Coming Up

NATIONWIDE WEBINAR

January 13, 2025 9:00 AM PST

New FBI Rapid DNA CODIS
Proposal, federal funding, & more

Find out more at:
<https://www.gorapiddna.com/>



Rapid DNA at WSP Labs UPDATES AND SAMPLE TIPS

Plans ahead for 2025 and Rapid DNA:

In addition to enabling certain DNA profiles already in CODIS to the DISC, WSP will be evaluating the latest guidance from the FBI pertaining to modified Rapid DNA on case samples through any updates made to the Quality Assurance Standards (expected to be released mid-year). WSP has previously procured three Rapid DNA instruments and will determine how to strategically incorporate the technology while meeting our key program goals and quality system.

For those agencies with their own Rapid DNA instruments, the "A-swab/B-Swab" strategy should be employed for Rapid DNA sample collection. Samples should be high-yield, single-source DNA samples only.

- A-Swab: swab/sample for WSP Crime Lab analysis.
- B-Swab: swab/sample for Rapid DNA analysis.

Use the side-by-side collection where biological material is collected 'together' during the swabbing motion (bouquet method) versus the A-Swab is collected first and the B-Swab is collected second (sequential method).



Free Resources

GUIDE TO ALL THINGS
RAPID DNA

For agencies with Rapid DNA implementation questions, please see the latest guide, last revised in April 2024.

<https://le.fbi.gov/file-repository/guide-to-all-things-rapid-dna-4-10-2024.pdf/view>



10,000 Hits & Counting

A CODIS MILESTONE

Since 2001 when WSP joined the National DNA Index System, the WSP Crime Lab's DNA testing program has produced over 10,000 hits. In 2024 alone, almost 1,000 hits were generated.



Reminder!

PROPERTY CRIME CASE ACCEPTANCE EXPANDED

Due to improved capacity, the DNA program lifted some former restrictions on property crime cases in April 2024. We are now accepting more cases than ever before. Contact your local lab with any submission questions.

Great
work!

2024's 4th Quarter Metrics

AVERAGE TESTING TIMES

In addition to focusing on reducing turnaround times for the testing of sexual assault kits, the lab system is now offering overall reduced turnaround times for evidence in other case/sample types. Based on our last quarter's completed cases, the lab system has a 2-3 month average turnaround time for DNA casework requests, and a 6-month average turnaround time for processing CODIS convicted offender database samples.

THANKS FOR READING TO LEARN
OUR LATEST! BEST WISHES TO YOU
IN THE NEW YEAR.



WSP DNA PROGRAM

