



Colonel Bill Gardiner
Director

Idaho State Police

Service Since 1939



Brad Little
Governor

To: Idaho Prosecutors

From: Matthew Gamette, ISP Forensic Services Laboratory System Director

Subject: DNA Reagent Notification

Date: August 10, 2026

As part of its ongoing quality assurance efforts, Idaho State Police Forensic Services (ISPFS) is providing notice regarding an issue identified during an internal quality review involving DNA testing performed between February 2024 and December 2025.

During the quality review, ISPFS determined that a reagent prepared on October 5, 2023, by a biology/DNA analyst contained a slightly different acid than the one specified in laboratory procedures. That reagent was later used to prepare three separate lots of a secondary reagent, known as TE buffer. Following the laboratory's normal preparation, validation, and deployment process, those lots were placed into service and used in casework between February 2024 and December 2025. Upon discovery of the issue, the affected reagents were immediately removed from service, and a review was initiated.

TE buffer is used during several stages of DNA analysis, including DNA quantitation, amplification, and sample normalization, when necessary. ISPFS conducted extensive research and testing to evaluate the potential effect of this substitution on DNA casework. The results demonstrated that the effect of the acid substitution on the amplification process was minimal and did not lead to incorrect DNA profiles. The review further determined that the issue did not result in contamination, incorrect allele calls, or erroneous DNA profiles.

The greatest potential effect would involve reduced signal strength in samples containing very small amounts of DNA. In practical terms, this could affect the ability to include or exclude a low-level contributor within a mixed DNA profile, causing the low-level contributor to potentially be deemed uninterpretable. However, the laboratory's review did not identify any such instances in the cases evaluated.

ISPFS completed a root cause analysis and implemented corrective actions immediately after the issue was discovered. In most cases, sufficient DNA material remains available to repeat the testing process, if necessary. Although no impacted cases have been identified, ISPFS believes it is important to provide this information so that prosecutors, as well as defense counsel, have complete and accurate information when reviewing potentially affected cases. ISPFS is prepared to review or retest any case for which additional evaluation is requested.

Please contact Matthew Gamette matthew.gamette@isp.idaho.gov or Rylene Nowlin at rylene.nowlin@isp.idaho.gov with any questions regarding specific cases or requests for additional review or retesting.

700 S. Stratford Drive, Suite 125 • Meridian, Idaho 83642-6202

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