

Forensic Services Newsletter

SUMMER 2009

The Idaho State Police Forensic Services Coeur d'Alene, laboratory is moving. The new ISP combined facility is scheduled to open July 17th 2009. **Between 7/6/09 and 7/17/09**



the ISP Forensic Service lab in Coeur d'Alene will not be accepting evidence. The new address and contact information for the lab is listed on the back page of this newsletter. Evidence submissions to the forensic laboratory must be made to "Suite B" so that the chain of custody is correct. For those dropping off evidence, the main entrance to the facility is on the south side of the building and forensic services is on your right as you walk in the main doors. The services offered at this laboratory remain the same. This new facility will be the first in the state to experiment with remote video conferencing testimony by the scientists. This will save thousands of dollars and increase productivity!

IMPORTANT ALS CHANGES

ISP forensic services has changed our policy for releasing results to Department of Transportation Driver Services for administrative license suspensions. In the past the lab sent a copy of the lab report to Driver Services when they requested one. In order to streamline the process, the lab will begin sending a copy of all reports that have DUI or DUID selected on the submittal form. If you have a situation when you do not want the results on a DUI or DUID to be submitted to Driver Services for administrative license suspension, please make a note of it on the submittal form.

WHAT'S NEW

We have discontinued the practice of listing the submitting investigators phone number on the case report. We realized that investigators may be reluctant to put a cell phone number or a direct phone number on the submittal form when they know that information will appear on a report that will be given to attorneys and defendants. By changing our current practice, we hope that investigators will start putting numbers down that make it easier for the lab to contact them rather than a general department number. We also encourage investigators to provide an email address to make contact with the lab easier.



[ISP Forensics Website](#)

Submission Facts

ISP Forensic Services accepted **11,989** items of evidence for processing last year. The two highest requested services were controlled substances with **7,474** items and Toxicology with **2,438** items.

UPCOMING TRAINING

Course	Location	Dates	Contact
Evidence Packaging and Preservation	Clearwater Co.		Register
Evidence Packaging and Preservation	Bonner Co.		Register
Evidence Packaging and Preservation	Shoshone Co.		Register
Evidence Packaging and Preservation	Kootenai Co.		Register
Latent Print Basics	Meridian POST	8/11	Register
Breath Testing Specialist (BTS)	R1 ISP	8/27-8/28	Register
Breath Testing Specialist (BTS)	Meridian POST	9/10-9/11	Register
Latent Print Basics	Meridian POST	November	Register
Breath Testing Specialist (BTS)	Meridian POST	12/3-12/4	Register

Did you Know?

ISP Forensic Services surveys over 300 investigators each year regarding the quality of service offered by the laboratory system.

* The first day of all BTS classes is Alcosensor/ Lifeloc and the second is Intoxilyzer 5000/ EN .

ISP FORENSIC SERVICES

FOCUS ON

Fun Facts

- Fingerprints are used as the basis for criminal histories in all police agencies;
- You can outgrow your shoes but not your prints as they will stay the same no matter how old you are;
- Mark Twain used fingerprinting evidence to solve a crime in one of his fictional novels, "Life on the Mississippi" (1883);
- No two identical fingerprints have ever been found.



With recent hiring and training, the ISP Impression Evidence Section is the largest section in ISP Forensic services. The section consists of four full-time Latent Examiners, a half time Latent Examiner, a Shoe and Tire Track Analyst and a full time Supervisor. There are currently three analysts cross training in the Shoe and Tire Track discipline.

GOALS FOR 2009

- 90 day turnaround on latent print cases
- Remodel of latent processing and digital imaging lab
- All staff members fully trained



Point of Fact:

When a suspect's or elimination fingerprint cards are submitted to ISP Forensic Services for comparison the cards need to be treated the same as other items of evidence. The fingerprint cards need to be sealed in an evidence envelope with a proper chain of custody. This will ensure that the evidence is handled correctly.



For more information on [examiner certification](#)

IAI Latent Print Examiner Certification

All ISP Latent Examiners are required to obtain IAI Certification.

Certification Requirements include:

- Minimum of 80 Hours of Certification Board approved training in latent print matters.
- Minimum of two (2) years full-time experience in the comparison and identification of latent print material.
- A Bachelor's Degree.
- An 8-hour written test.
- Oral board or mock trial.
- 80 Continuing Education Credits every five years



How to record a latent print after powder processing

Once the latent print has been developed on a surface using black print powder and a powder applicator brush, you should blow away excess powder from the surface. The print is now ready to be photographed and, or lifted using a lifting tape.

Use a piece of tape large enough to cover the print. Affix one edge of the tape onto the surface next to the print; apply in a smooth motion over the print removing any air bubbles that might form. The latent print is now ready to be lifted and placed upon the glossy side of a white latent lift card. Place the tape on the card in the same fashion you did to lift the latent print.

Fill out all of the blank spaces on the back of the lift card to document all pertinent information. Make a sketch showing the item and surface the latent print was developed on. Indicate the location the print was in before lifting. Draw an arrow toward a reference point in the sketch, and then make sure a reference arrow is marked on the lift itself. This shows the orientation of the latent print as it was on the surface.

LOTS OF PRINTS!

ISP Forensic Services made 21,232 latent print comparisons last year from 1,665 items.

Due to staffing increases, ISP Forensic Services made 10,537 comparisons just last month.

Superglue Processing

To increase the chances of recovering latent prints on non-porous items of evidence an item can be fumed in a matter of minutes just by using a coffee warmer and a plastic container. In a garage or outside simply put the item next to the coffee warmer, plug in the coffee warmer, put a small amount of super glue into a coffee cup on the warmer. Place the plastic container over the top of the evidence item and coffee warmer. A white film will form on the surface of the evidence in a short amount of time. Fuming time will vary, about five minutes should be sufficient. Care must be taken not to "over glue" the item. Any latent prints on the item will be better preserved after lightly fuming with superglue; this will increase the success of identifying subjects.

LATENT PRINTS

TIPS FOR TAKING MAJOR CASE PRINTS

Major case prints should be taken from the victims, suspects, and others who had access to the scene anytime there is a major crime. A full or partial set of major case prints should also be taken for lesser crimes where you know you recovered a certain type of print.

For example, you recover a palm print when processing the scene of a burglary or fingertip prints when processing a fraud case. A full set of major case prints will include the following: a standard fingerprint card, a palm print sheet for each hand, and a finger sheet for each hand. When taking the palm print sheet, the palm should be rolled from wrist bracelet to finger tips using a cylinder to facilitate rolling (try securing a piece of paper around a length of pipe or a coffee can). Using a cylinder will allow you to easily capture the center of the palm and more detail from the joints of the hand than placing the palm on a flat surface. The palm print sheet should also include both sides of the hand rolled independently (the knife edge rolled from side to side and the thenar portion i.e. the meaty portion at the base of the thumb rolled side to side). To complete the finger sheet, individually roll the entire length of each finger nail bed to nail bed. Next, repeat those same fingers (full length again) laying them down individually and rolling up on to the tips. Finally, an additional set of finger tips is captured by rolling the finger tips from one side to the other. The prints on the finger sheet should be labeled with the finger number they originated from (i.e. 1-5 beginning with the thumb of the right hand going towards the little finger and 6-10 for the left hand). NEVER roll back and forth when applying ink to the hand or the hand to the paper – the goal is one smooth motion. Take multiple prints if they don't turn out well.



It is easier to spend a little extra time now than to bring the person in again later because you didn't get what you needed. Be sure to include the case #, signature of person taking the prints and person being printed, and the date on all major case print sheets.



Photographing Prints:

Simple steps to improve your latent print photography:

- Take an overall/orientation photograph to document the location of the latent print
- Switch your camera to the TIFF or RAW file format; if your camera does not have this capability use the highest resolution JPEG file format
- Switch your camera to macro mode (usually indicated with a flower), or use a macro lens if using an SLR camera
- Place a scale or ruler next to the latent print
- If possible, use a tripod to eliminate movement and camera shake
- Make sure that the camera is perpendicular (90°) to the latent print
- Fill the frame with your subject (the latent print and scale)
- Focus carefully - if possible, use the manual focus mode on your camera
- Take more than one photo to ensure a good exposure



Paper Processing

ISP Forensic Services currently utilizes different chemical techniques that can be used to recover latent prints from paper evidence items.

- 1) Ninhydrin can produce excellent results on paper. Paper treated with Ninhydrin can sometimes develop prints a day to week after processing so it is recommended to recheck the paper at least 24 hours after processing.
- 2) 1,8 Diazafloren-9-one (DFO) and 1,2 Indanedione fluoresce, which makes them great for developing latent prints on colorful papers. If the paper does not fluoresce these methods provide an excellent contrast for visualizing latent prints.
- 3) Do not Powder Paper. Despite what some Forensic Supply Companies may have told or shown you, powdering paper should not be done. Powdering paper develops fewer latent prints and of poorer quality than chemical methods, and once applied greatly diminish the results that could be achieved via chemical methods.

CONTACTS



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Lab Manager
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What do the numbers show?

Discipline	Target Turnaround Time	Average Turnaround Time	Cases closed in FY 2009
Blood Alcohol	45 Days	9 Days	1909
Blood Toxicology	45 Days	**123 Days	265
Urine Toxicology	45 Days	46 Days	664
Biology/DNA	60 Days	54 Days	77
Biology/Screening	60 Days	39 Days	214
Controlled Substances	30 Days	18 Days	4935
Latent Prints	90 Days	**197 Days	423
Firearms/Toolmarks	60 Days	28 Days	60
Fire Debris	45 Days	119 Days	28
Shoeprint/Tire Track	90 Days	145 Days	3

****The increase in toxicology turnaround time was due to validation of a new screening method. These turnaround times will be significantly decreased by August 2009. The latent print section has completed training three new examiners to tackle the current backlog.**

FEEDBACK

ISP Forensic Services welcomes your feedback, questions, and kudos.

"Ms. Lamora Lewis (Pocatello Chemist), I wanted to thank you for your assistance in a recent felony jury trial in Franklin County...You presented yourself very well and you did an excellent job in helping the jury understand the subject matter of your testimony...." -R. Todd Garbett (Franklin County Prosecutor)

"It is still a very slow timeline for comparison of latent prints. The suspect could have moved or done other crimes by the time the results get to us." The addition of several latent examiners in the last few months, one new latent examiner position we will fill before December 2009, and the addition of an AFIS terminal to the lab will speed latent print case turnaround times. Currently, the oldest unassigned cases in the lab are from March 2009. Reducing the latent print case turnaround time is one of the top priorities for ISP Forensic Services!

"I work closely with the lab in Coeur d'Alene and find them all to be of the highest caliber. They are extremely easy to work with and always outgoing and professional."

"The staff in the forensics office have always been a great resource. They are helpful, professional and a pleasure to work with. They seem to take every case seriously. I have worked with the forensics staff on cases as simple as misdemeanor paraphernalia to complex cases such as meth labs and they have always exceeded my expectations."

Submit your questions

If you have questions you would like answered in future editions of this newsletter, please [email](#) them to us. Please be concise and specific.