



Idaho State Police

Service Since 1939



Colonel G. Jerry Russell
Director

C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor

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Idaho Law Enforcement Officers Performing Fire Investigations


RE: Idaho State Police Forensic Services Fire Analysis

The purpose of this communication is to notify your agency that the Idaho State Police Forensic Services (ISPFS) laboratories do not currently have the ability to process fire analysis casework. The resignation of two staff members in the last few months left the laboratory without a fire analyst to perform this type of casework.

Management at the ISPFS has been working on options for law enforcement agencies in Idaho to address this critical need. The proactive solution developed by the laboratory is being immediately implemented. The Idaho State Police and the Idaho State Fire Marshal are working collaboratively on a two prong approach. First, accredited laboratories with the ability to work these cases have been contacted and asked to assist Idaho by providing casework services. Second, training is already underway to allow this service to be offered again by ISPFS. While an accelerated training schedule has been implemented, it is anticipated that the partner labs will be used for a six to twelve month period.

At least five accredited laboratories have agreed to partner with ISPFS to process these cases. Idaho is extremely grateful to these surrounding state partner laboratories that are willing to help accomplish this analysis. There are several conditions to getting these cases worked by our partner laboratories.

- Each case must meet certain minimum criteria and will be prioritized by rules established by the Idaho State Fire Marshal, ISPFS, and ISPFS partner laboratories. Priority is designated as follows:
 - Fire crimes against persons or fire related fatalities with unknown cause
 - Fire crimes in places of assembly (churches, schools, hospitals, public buildings)
 - Fire crimes with loss amounts of over 1 million dollars
 - Fire crimes in a residential setting or loss amounts under 1 million dollars
 - Fire crimes with very little damage or loss
- The prosecutor must verify in writing that the case will be prosecuted criminally if the outcome of the investigation is criminal in nature.
- All submissions to the partner laboratories will be shipped directly to and from the partner laboratory, but must be coordinated through ISPFS. The contact at ISPFS for coordination is Quality Manager Matthew Gamette. He can be contacted at matthew.gamette@isp.idaho.gov or 208-884-7217.
- The cases must be packaged properly and are limited to the number of samples agreed upon in advance by the partner laboratory. Technical assistance and packaging requirements will be provided by ISPFS and packaging requirements will be verified before shipping.
- There will be no cost for the laboratory analysis, but the travel related costs for expert testimony (if necessary) will be the responsibility of the prosecuting agency. Every effort has been made to perform the analysis as close to Idaho as possible to minimize travel costs.


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