



# Idaho State Police

Service Since 1939



Colonel Ralph W. Powell  
Director

C.L. "Butch" Otter  
Governor

**To:** All Idaho Prosecuting Attorneys, County Sheriffs, and Police Chiefs

**From:** Major Clark Rollins, ISP Police Services Commander

**Subject:** Important ISP Forensic Services DNA Evidence Update

**Date:** January 8, 2014

## Synopsis:

- **January 13, 2014 IPSFS will begin returning DNA packets on all current and former case submissions.**
- **ISPFS will begin returning any remaining liquid DNA extracts.**
- **The proper storage condition for DNA packets and liquid DNA extracts is frozen.**
- **ISPFS will return (without analysis) cases submitted without appropriate reference samples.**

## Details:

On January 13, 2014 Idaho State Police Forensic Services (ISPFS) will begin returning all biological evidence to the submitting agency after analysis. For many years ISPFS retained sample cuttings and other probative evidence in biology and DNA cases for long-term storage. Samples from the evidence items in these cases were retained for the convenience of laboratory staff when further testing might be requested. The samples were also retained for potential further testing as new technologies developed or new case theories were investigated. In some cases the retention of biological evidence in a "DNA packet" allowed the laboratory to freeze the most probative items while waiting for reference sample submission. Effective immediately, if appropriate reference samples are not submitted with the case evidence, all biological evidence will be returned to the submitting agency. The evidence may be resubmitted to the laboratory at any point, but all case submissions accepted by the laboratory must include the appropriate reference samples. Cases submitted without reference samples result in extra work for the analysts and the delay of analytical work on other cases. Complete submissions allow us to be more efficient for all customers. Customers should call the laboratory in advance of submission and speak to the biology staff about what reference samples will be required on a specific case.

The biological evidence cuttings, swabs, reference samples, and other biological materials currently stored at the ISPFS laboratory have been stored frozen in the Meridian laboratory with strict chain of custody protocols. The ISPFS laboratory also preserved any remaining DNA from the extraction process. If the DNA was not consumed in testing, the laboratory preserved the liquid extraction sample (frozen) for potential further testing. **Beginning January 13, 2014 all extracts will be returned as a new evidence item in the case.** The new evidence envelope(s) will have a barcode label identifying the item as a DNA extract. The item packaging will also have a sticker to remind the submitting agency to keep the liquid

sample **frozen** for long-term storage. Currently stored extracts will be returned over the next few months as laboratory evidence staff members have time to process these items back to the submitting agency.

ISPFS wants to ensure that probative biological evidence on each case is preserved correctly. ISPFS will continue to create DNA packets with the probative cuttings from the case evidence. We recommend that agencies **freeze** the DNA packet and any extracts returned by the laboratory. Agencies without the ability to freeze these small packets and extracts should contact ISPFS management immediately. ISPFS has very limited ability to provide a small freezer to smaller agencies without budget for this resource. ISPFS believes that law enforcement agencies in Idaho have developed policies and procedures to properly store biological samples. The majority of law enforcement agencies have also purchased freezers to properly store biological evidence. National, regional, and local trainings have educated evidence technicians and law enforcement officers about the importance of proper long-term storage conditions for biological evidence. We believe that the best policy is for evidence to be retained in one location with each law enforcement agency ultimately responsible for the preservation or final disposition of the evidence.

Questions should be addressed to ISP Forensic Services Biology/DNA Discipline Leader Cyndi Hall at 208-884-7173 or [cyndi.hall@isp.idaho.gov](mailto:cyndi.hall@isp.idaho.gov)