



Idaho State Police

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To: All Idaho Prosecutors, Criminal Defense Attorneys, and Law Enforcement Agencies
From: Matthew Gamette, ISP Forensic Services Laboratory System Director
Subject: **Implementation of Male DNA Screening Method for Sexual Assault Kits**
Date: **February 20, 2018**

Idaho State Police Forensic Services (ISPFS) is committed to providing high quality scientific analysis utilizing the best methodology and latest technology. As such, the ISPFS Biology/DNA section will be implementing an improved method for screening sexual assault evidence collection kits effective February 21, 2018.

The improved screening method is based upon the detection of male DNA in order to determine which samples from within the kit will undergo the full STR DNA analysis process. The traditional method of screening sexual assault evidence collection kits currently being utilized is based upon the identification of specific biological fluids. This traditional method is limited in that there are only tests available to identify a small number of biological fluids. Because the improved method is based on the detection of male DNA, it is not limited to only those specific biological fluids that can be identified with available tests; therefore, the method is more sensitive and can provide potentially useful information in certain types of cases (i.e. digital penetration, groping, fondling, etc.) that the traditional method cannot.

The improved method will also help reduce turnaround times for the analysis of sexual assault evidence collection kits in accordance with the statutory requirements of Idaho Code Chapter 29, Title 67, Section 67-2919. Since implementation of this legislation, ISPFS has seen a greater than 100% increase in DNA case submissions. The traditional method is extremely laborious and time intensive while the improved method is much more efficient in comparison.

The improved method is being implemented following a significant amount of research and validation work conducted by the ISPFS Biology/DNA section. Similar methods based on the detection of male DNA are being implemented at forensic science laboratories across the United States as the nation seeks to process sexual assault evidence collection kits using better and more efficient methods.

The improved screening method based on the detection of male DNA will constitute the standard testing procedure utilized by ISPFS on all sexual assault evidence collection kits in which the victim is female and the perpetrator(s) male. ISPFS will maintain the capability of performing traditional screening methods based on biological fluid identification for other types of evidentiary items, as well as, sexual assault evidence collection kits in cases with female perpetrators and/or male victims. ISPFS will not utilize the traditional method to screen sexual assault evidence collection kits with female victims and male perpetrators unless it is absolutely necessary for the successful investigation/prosecution/defense of a specific case. In those limited circumstances, the traditional method will only be utilized upon approval of the ISPFS Biology/DNA section following a written request from the prosecuting attorney documenting the need for such testing, or upon receipt of a court order.

If you have questions related to a specific case or sexual assault evidence collection kit testing in general, please contact Biology/DNA Supervisor and Technical Lead Darren Wright at (208) 884-7173 or darren.wright@isp.idaho.gov

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