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Dear Criminal Justice Stakeholders,

Hopefully you had time during the summer to take some time off to rejuvenate and spend time with your families. As many of you know, the State Crime Lab adopted Lean Six Sigma efficiency methodology to help ensure that we continue to *provide quality forensic analysis in a timely manner*. As agency Director, I am tasked to examine existing programs to determine where reductions can be made due to efficiencies or the elimination of unnecessary programs and expenditures. In an effort to become a more efficient laboratory, Explosives examinations in Trace Evidence and Tool Mark examinations in Firearms will be discontinued effective October 15, 2018.

Should a request be made by law enforcement or prosecutors, primarily in homicide cases, these discontinued services may be outsourced. Please note, however, that we will still perform these analyses on any cases which have already been submitted to the SCL. In this update, you will find revised information on our Evidence Submission Guidelines.

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Specific notable changes for the revised Submission Procedure and Policy:

Forensic Biology:

- ♦ The Forensic Biology Section will process all sexual assault evidence collection kits (SAECKs) utilizing a direct to DNA approach. This testing approach eliminates serological testing of items contained within and related to a SAECK.

Latent Evidence:

- ♦ Latent Evidence will accept up to **ten** latent lifts and/or photographs per submission. **A latent lift is defined as one piece of tape on a backing card, piece of paper, or pre-made fingerprint lifter such as a hinge lifter or gel lift.** The latent lift must be no larger than 8.5 in. x 11 in. (Ex: Three individual pieces of tape on one backing card are three lifts). Photographs may be submitted as hard copies or on a digital media storage device such as a DVD or flash drive. Any subject or victim elimination prints will not count toward the ten lift limit per submission.
- ♦ Any subsequent submission for the same case will also have the **ten** lift/photograph limit and will be worked in sequential order by date of submission.

FORENSIC UPDATE

“Truth through science so justice is served.”

Firearms:

- ♦ Firearms must be packaged separately in a paper or plastic bag or cardboard gun box. Do not use plastic bags for firearms that are being submitted to the State Crime Laboratory’s Latent Evidence Section, Trace Unit, or Forensic Biology Section. **Ammunition must be packaged in a separate container and must not be in the container with the firearm.**
- ♦ IBIS case submissions (at the request of the ATF):
 1. Fired cartridge cases will not be entered into IBIS if the date of offense is older than one (1) year.
 2. Firearms will not be entered into IBIS if the date of seizure is older than one (1) year.

Exceptions due to extenuating circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the Forensic Scientist Supervisor of the unit.

Digital Forensics:

- ♦ Officially providing examinations of digital media for fraud-based incidents where the amount of loss is in excess of \$100,000.00. Fraud-based incidents with losses at \$100,000.00 or less *may be worked if resources permit it*; please call prior to pre-logging evidence.
- ♦ Now providing iPhone/iPad/iPod lock bypass services
- ♦ Cryptographic analysis resulting in encryption bypass for encrypted files/digital storage.
- ♦ For the purposes of submission, one computing device/mobile device/storage media device will be considered one item, and each must be packaged separately in instances when multiple items are to be submitted. We will not accept packages that contain more than one item.

Drug Chemistry:

- ♦ Residues for cases involving manufacture of a controlled substance and hypodermic syringes in overdose death investigation cases may be submitted without a written request from the district attorney's office. Forensic Scientist Manager Approval is required for these submissions. All other residues/hypodermic syringe cases must be accompanied by a written request from the District Attorney’s office and approved by the Forensic Scientist Manager or designee.
- ♦ In multi-item cases only the evidence of highest evidentiary value will be worked (taking into consideration the Schedule, amount, and location seized for all items).

Trace Evidence:

- ♦ Multiple trace examinations will not be performed on questioned items and known items when an association has already been made between those items showing that the two were in contact with each other. A request for exemption from this rule must come from the District Attorney’s office after the positive case record showing the association has been received. A form letter submitted with the evidence prior to any knowledge of the trace results does not qualify as a valid request for multiple trace analyses.
- ♦ When packaging evidence for a physical match examination, separate questioned items from known items, and ensure that any broken edges are protected.

DNA Database Update:

The DNA Database has partnered with CJLEADS to display when an Arrestee or Convicted Offender DNA Database sample is on file at the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory. If “DNA on File: Yes” is displayed for an offender in the DNA tab in CJLEADS, an additional DNA Database sample is not needed.

Effective 10/15/2018, these services will no longer be provided by the State Crime Laboratory:

- ♦ **The Trace Unit** will no longer provide **Explosives Examinations**. For a list of laboratories that still provide this type of examination. Please contact the Forensic Scientist Supervisor in Trace Evidence to discuss options for testing.
- ♦ **The Firearms Unit** will no longer provide **tool mark (e.g. Crowbars, bolt cutters), gunshot residue distance determination, muzzle velocity, suppressor/silencer, or ejection pattern examinations**. For a list of laboratories that still provide these types of examinations please contact the Forensic Scientist Supervisor of the unit.