

*A Current  
Educational  
Bulletin For  
Submitting Law  
Enforcement  
Agencies*

*A Closer Examination From The Benchtop ...*

# UNDER *the* SCOPE



MISSOURI STATE HIGHWAY PATROL • CRIME LABORATORY

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To improve efficiency, please notify the lab if analysis of your evidence is no longer required.

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## Two DNA Units: Who Tests What?

The DNA Casework and CODIS Units at the MSHP Crime Lab have the same common goal: assisting law enforcement with criminal investigations using DNA profiling techniques. However, the units have different requirements of the agencies submitting biological material for testing.

The CODIS Unit is responsible for entering DNA profiles from offenders into CODIS, a national database of DNA profiles. RSMo 650.055 requires certain convicted offenders, arrestees, and sex offenders to submit a DNA sample for this database. Offenders do not have the right to refuse to give a sample. The Missouri Offender DNA Sample Collection kit contains instructions and all of the materials needed for sample collection. They are available to Corrections and Law Enforcement personnel, free of charge, upon request. The kits should not be used for any other purpose and are the only acceptable form of sample submission. The offender samples are not considered evidence and have no evidentiary chain of custody.

The DNA Casework Units are responsible for developing DNA profiles from crime scene evidence and reference standards associated with a criminal investigation. The crime scene evidence may be examined for the presence of blood or semen and DNA profiles developed. A reference standard is a sample of biological material known to be from an individual, which can be compared to crime scene evidence in order to determine if that person is connected with the crime scene. Reference standards from suspects, vic-

tims, and other individuals in contact with the evidence should be collected, if possible. In cases where a suspect does not consent to providing a reference standard, a court order may be necessary to obtain one. Buccal (oral) swabs are the preferred type of reference standard, but blood collected in a blood tube will also be accepted. Reference standards should be individually packaged and submitted to the lab alongside the evidentiary items in the case. The Missouri Offender DNA Sample Collection kits should never be used to collect a reference standard.

The CODIS database should not be routinely used in place of obtaining a reference standard from a known suspect. When a DNA profile developed from crime scene evidence "hits" to an offender in CODIS, the offender's name and other identifying information is released to the submitting agency. Since the offender sample is not considered evidence, it is necessary for the agency to obtain a reference standard from the individual and submit it to the DNA Casework Unit. The DNA Casework Unit will compare the reference standard directly to the evidentiary profile and issue a report. Collecting the reference standard early in the investigation and submitting it alongside the crime scene evidence will decrease the time it takes to complete laboratory testing.

The integrity of the DNA results is dependent upon proper collection and submission of offender and casework reference standards. Feel free to contact the laboratory with any questions regarding the collection of these samples or to request training for your agency.