

## FAQ ABOUT FORENSIC DNA ANALYSIS

Will my DNA profile be the same as someone else's?

Only identical twins have the same DNA profile.

Can you use a person's DNA sample to tell if they have certain medical conditions?

No. Testing performed in the CODIS Laboratory is restricted to specific sites of DNA (known as CODIS loci) which don't reveal medical information.

What happens with a convicted offender sample after it has been entered into the CODIS database?

Every sample is retained in the CODIS lab after DNA typing. When there is a match between an offender sample and a casework sample, the original convicted offender sample is re-typed to verify the result. Upon confirmation of the match, identifying information of the convicted offender is released to the casework submitting agency. This investigative lead may be used to establish probable cause in a court order to obtain an evidentiary known reference DNA sample from the offender. The casework laboratory can then perform DNA analysis on the known reference DNA sample which can be presented as evidence in court.

Are there requirements to participate in CODIS?

Yes. The Federal DNA Identification Act requires that all labs:

- Comply with Quality Assurance Standards issued by the FBI Director
- Are an accredited federal, state, or local criminal justice agency
- Limit access to the DNA samples and records in accordance with federal law

## DNA & PRIVACY CONCERNS

The CODIS database has the power to help convict the guilty and exonerate the innocent. This is accomplished through strictly regulated procedures established by the FBI. Each state has a CODIS administrator who is responsible for the overall quality and security of the DNA data entered into their state's database. **Only state administrators and their designees** have access to their state's database and only the FBI has access to the national CODIS database (NDIS). In addition, all DNA scientists who type DNA for entry into the database **must have a background check by the FBI.**

State law prohibits the use of convicted offender DNA samples for anything other than specific authorized uses. RCW 43.43.753 states in part that DNA samples may only be used for: "purposes related to criminal investigation, identification of human remains or missing persons, or improving the operation of the system authorized under RCW 43.43.752 through 43.43.758."

No names or personal identifiers of offenders are stored in CODIS. When an offender sample is entered into CODIS, only the following information is included:

- The DNA profile
- The CODIS Laboratory agency identifier
- A numerical identification number assigned to the sample upon receipt in the CODIS Laboratory
- The CODIS Laboratory personnel associated with the DNA analysis



### WASHINGTON STATE PATROL

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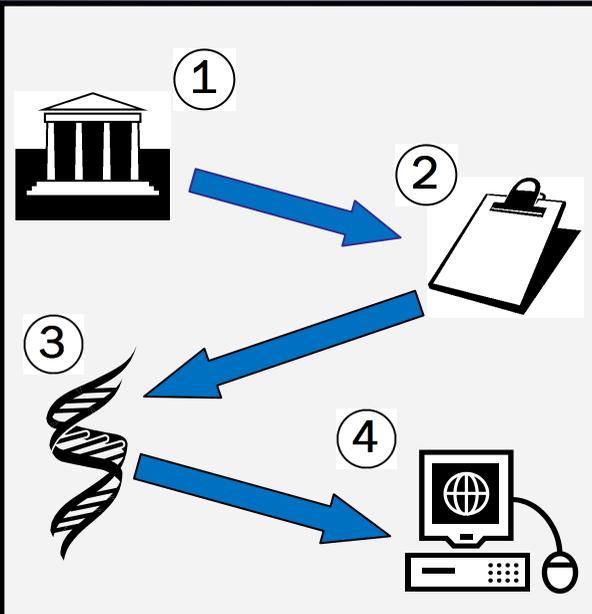
CODIS  
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THE  
COMBINED  
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SYSTEM



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## WHAT HAPPENS TO A CONVICTED OFFENDER DNA SAMPLE?



**1 Agency Collection:** A DNA sample is collected from a qualifying offender by law enforcement and mailed to the CODIS Laboratory.

**2 Administrative Processing:** In the lab, the offender data is reviewed, assigned a unique lab number, and entered into the laboratory's administrative database.

**3 DNA Typing:** The sample is processed, analyzed, and peer reviewed to obtain a DNA profile.

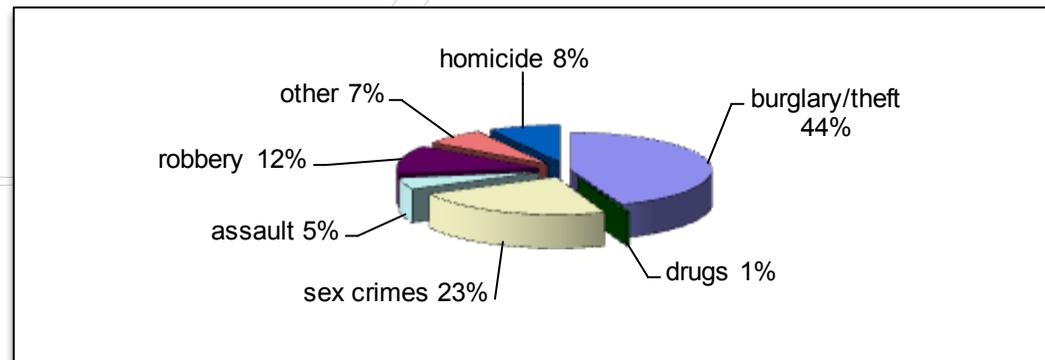
**4 CODIS Entry:** The profile is entered into the CODIS database and subsequently searched against all casework profiles. A "hit" occurs when an offender profile matches a forensic profile, providing important leads to the investigating agency. Hits can occur at the state level of CODIS or at the national level (between states).

## SUCCESSSES

*Christmas Eve 1986, a 62-year-old woman, Dorothy Burdette, was brutally beaten and murdered. Her body was found wrapped in a blanket under an overpass of Interstate 90. Witnesses recall seeing the victim, a few days earlier leaving a local café with a younger man. Detectives released sketches of the man, but all leads were exhausted and the case remained unsolved for over two decades. Evidence from the crime scene was submitted to the Washington State Patrol Crime Laboratory for biological fluid examination and DNA analysis in 2008. A forensic scientist at the crime laboratory was able to develop a male DNA profile from semen found on the blanket the victim was wrapped in. That male DNA profile was searched against Washington's CODIS database, where at the time no additional investigative information was obtained. In 2010, a CODIS hit was produced to Gary Trimble, who was serving a 5-year prison sentence at the time in Montana for violating his probation for an intimidation conviction. Trimble was transported to Spokane County, Washington, where he was found guilty of the first degree murder of Dorothy Burdette and sentenced to 17 years in prison.*

Washington's CODIS program has had more than 2,900 hits since implementing STR-DNA typing technology in 2001. A hit is defined as a confirmed match between a convicted offender and a casework DNA sample (or matching casework samples) that aids the investigation. Since CODIS is a national program, hits include not only in-state confirmed matches, but also matches to DNA profiles from other states.

Data collected on these hits demonstrate the value of the program. **About 50% of cases producing a hit are in a violent crime such as homicide, rape, robbery, or assault.**



**Approximately 70% of CODIS hits are to a convicted offender in the database for a "minor" crime such as drug possession or burglary.** This demonstrates the impact of the "All Felons" law that was passed in 2002 which requires that all convicted felons provide a DNA sample for CODIS use. Coupled with the resources to type the incoming DNA samples, the law has dramatically increased the number of CODIS hits.

Prior to the passage of the "All Felons" law, the size of Washington's convicted offender database was about 35,000 profiles and it took approximately 2 ½ years to achieve 100 CODIS hits. **The database has now grown to more than 250,000 profiles resulting in 350 hits in 2014!**

## CODIS Quick Facts

- CODIS is the acronym for **C**ombined **D**N<sub>A</sub> **I**ndex **S**ystem; blending forensic science and computer technology into an effective tool for solving crimes.
- All 50 states, the FBI, the Armed Forces DNA ID Laboratory and, Puerto Rico contribute DNA profiles to the national level of CODIS.
- Legislation in every state requires a DNA sample from anyone convicted of a felony; some states also specify certain misdemeanor offenses. Additionally, 28 states, Puerto Rico, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Laboratory, and the US Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory (DoD) require a DNA sample from an arrested individual.
- Washington state's database law (RCW 43.43.754) requires a DNA sample from anyone convicted of a felony or one of the following:
  - Stalking
  - Harassment
  - Communicating with a minor for immoral purposes
  - Assault 4 with sexual motivation
  - Custodial misconduct 2
  - Patronizing a prostitute
  - Sexual misconduct with a minor 2
  - Violation of a sexual assault protection order granted under chapter 7.90 RCW
  - Anyone required to register as a sex or kidnapping offender
- All CODIS labs must have a documented expungement process to delete a DNA record at the state and national levels when certain conditions are met. In Washington state, an expungement shall be performed on a convicted offender DNA sample when a written request is received by the CODIS Laboratory accompanied by a certified court order reversing any convictions on a qualifying offense.