

# THE CODIS NEWSLETTER

The Combined DNA Index System



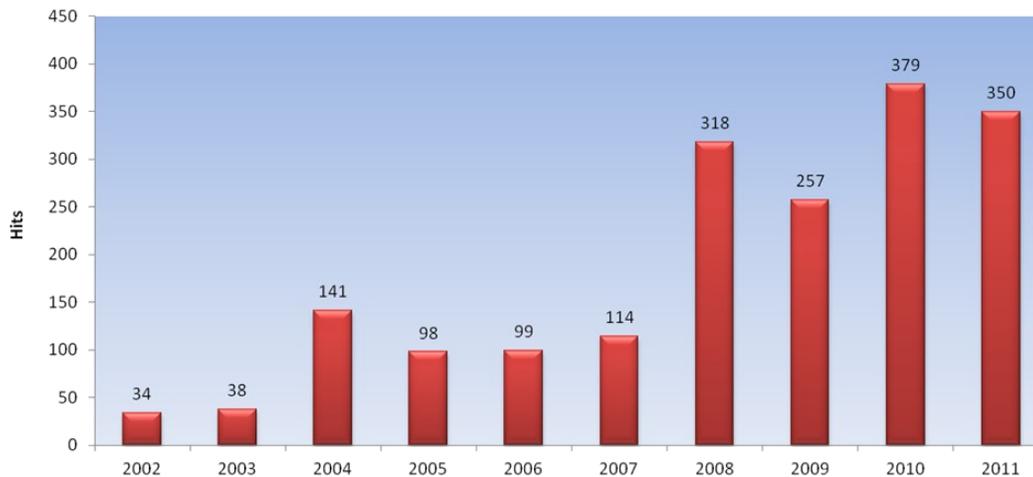
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## 2011 Was A Great Year For Hits

The hard work of all our collectors helped to provide Washington State with 350 hits for 2011!

Yearly CODIS Hits in Washington State



These “hits” are investigative leads in a crime as a result of a DNA match between convicted offender and crime scene samples (or, between crime scene samples). It’s the “hits” that make the Convicted Offender Program so crucial to the people affected by crime. Thank you for helping make these possible! Check out Page 4 for the story of a successful hit.



## Have We Met?

The CODIS Lab had the privilege of visiting four of our collecting agencies in 2011 to provide convicted offender DNA collection training. We would like to thank Clark, Snohomish, and Spokane Counties for hosting us, as well as the Washington Corrections Center. Please contact us if you’re interested in receiving hands-on training by the very same folks who process the samples you collect. We’d be glad to meet you!

## DNA & Privacy

Sometimes you might encounter questions about the confidentiality of the DNA you collect, and you may even wonder about this yourself. Here is some information about DNA and privacy which will hopefully address some of these concerns. As always, please contact us if you would like more information. We're happy to help!

**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 the database. **Only state administrators and their designees** have access to the state-level database and only the FBI has access to the national-level CODIS database. In addition, all scientists who process 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 (16 pairs of digits, generated from "junk" DNA)
- The identification number of the WSP CODIS Laboratory
- A numerical identification number assigned to the sample by the CODIS Laboratory
- The CODIS Laboratory personnel associated with the DNA analysis



**As always, convicted offender collection kits can be ordered by phone (206-262-6020) or e-mail ([confel@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:confel@wsp.wa.gov)).**

**Each kit contains: a DNA submission card, a foam swab, an addressed return envelope, a security seal, one pair of nitrile gloves (optional), and a moist towelette (optional) to clean thumbs after printing.**

**These kits are provided at no cost, and can be customized to include or omit the gloves and towelettes. Please let us know how we can build your kits to accommodate your agency's needs.**

## Duplicate Rates are Down!

Good news! Our rate of duplicate submissions is down from 20% to 15%. As a result, our agencies helped save Washington State time and money. Each submission kit costs us about \$3.50 to produce, not including the time it takes to process the sample. Receiving fewer duplicate samples has cut down on these unnecessary expenses.

Your agency may also sign up to use WATCH (the Washington Access to Criminal History), which allows you to verify offender information, and to check if the CODIS Lab already has a sample for them. In WATCH, if the "DNA Taken" field indicates "Y", we already have a sample for the individual and there is no need to collect another.

### To request access to WATCH:

- Go to <http://watchcj.wsp.wa.gov>
- Click on "Forms" on the upper left.
- Click on "WATCH-CJ Account Application Packet" and fill out the form.
- FAX the form to (360) 534-2073.

Additionally, you can always contact us to check if we already have a sample for an individual, or to verify an offender's State ID number.

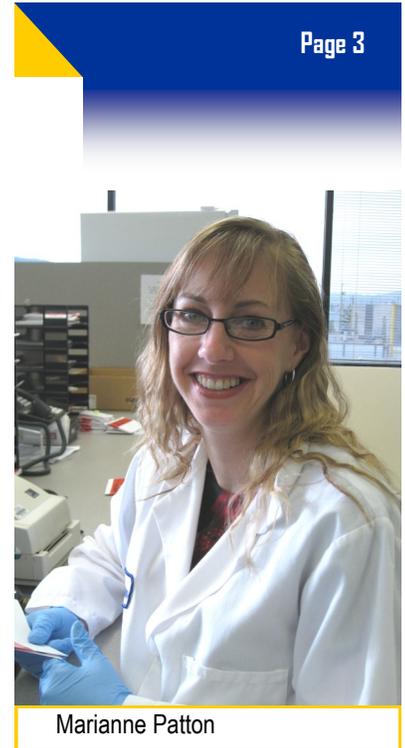
## Please Meet Marianne

Marianne Patton is our Office Administrative Assistant. In addition to assembling the convicted offender DNA kits, she single-handedly receives, opens, and checks all the submission cards you send to us. That's about 1500 samples per month, from among 150 collection agencies across Washington. If information on a card happens to be incorrect or missing, Marianne needs to take extra time to research this. Here are a few things that you can do to help her out:

- Please remember to fill out the back of the card, including your signature and date of collection.
- Please list the degree of the offense, as some offenses only qualify under certain degrees. (A "cheat sheet" of qualifying offenses is provided below for your reference.)

Marianne is always happy to speak with you and to answer any questions you might have. She can tell you if we already have a sample for an individual, help you find an offender's State ID number, or verify if an offense qualifies for submission into the CODIS database. [marianne.patton@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:marianne.patton@wsp.wa.gov) 206-262-6152

Marianne says, "thank you!"



Marianne Patton

*Qualifying Convictions—cheat sheet*

*What convictions are accepted by the CODIS Lab? Here is a handy summary of offenses that qualify in Washington State:*

### Qualifying Convictions for Offender DNA Collection

March 2012

- All felonies
- Harassment
- Stalking
- Communicating with a minor for immoral purposes
- Failure to register as sex or kidnapping offender
- Anyone required to register as a sex or kidnapping offender in Washington State
- Assault 4 with sexual motivation
- Custodial misconduct 2
- Patronizing a prostitute
- Sexual misconduct with a minor 2
- Violation of a sexual assault protection order

**Some offenses can be felonies or gross misdemeanors – please specify on the submission card if any of these convictions are felonies:**

- DV court order/protection order violation
- Telephone harassment
- Foreign protection order violation
- Possession of marijuana (felony only if over 40 grams)
- Bail jumping
- Parole violation
- Hit and run (only covered if injury, attended and unattended not covered)
- Unlawful issues of bank checks (only if more than \$250)
- Indecent exposure
- Riot (covered if with a weapon)

## A CODIS Success Story!

In January of 2010, a girl was sexually assaulted by an unknown assailant in Spokane County. One year after the assault, the DNA collected from the crime was found to match the DNA collected from Louis Kuster, a convicted offender. Kuster went to trial in 2011, was found guilty of 2<sup>nd</sup> degree rape, and was sentenced to 114 months to life.



<http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2011/nov/17/jury-convicts-man-in-2010-rape/>

Kuster's original offense for which the CODIS Lab received his DNA sample was second degree possession of stolen property. This success story demonstrates that the "lesser" crimes committed by convicted offenders often lead to hits of much more serious offenses in the CODIS database.

**A friendly reminder from the CODIS Lab: for those agencies who receive quarterly reports of sex offenders needing DNA collection, please use the State ID (SID) and list "SOR" (for sex offender registry) as the offense on the submission card. The original sex offense should NOT be written down.**

**Thank you!**

## Contact Us

Whether it's to order kits, check if you need to collect a sample, verify offender information, or ask a question about the convicted offender program, feel free to contact us.

Let's keep in touch!

Washington State Patrol  
CODIS Laboratory  
2203 Airport Way South, Suite 250  
Seattle, WA 98134

**(206) 262-6020**

**confel@wsp.wa.gov**



Jean Johnston, Washington State CODIS Administrator

Natasha Pranger, Forensic Scientist

Monica Price, Forensic Scientist

Marianne Patton, Office Administrative Assistant

Robert Dorion, Forensic Scientist