

Property Crimes Emphasis Yields Record Number of Hits

At the scene of a property crime, DNA can be deposited by the perpetrator in a number of ways. DNA can be transferred just by touching an object (door knobs, steering wheels, etc.), or it can be deposited through a body fluid, such as blood or saliva. Traditional types of blood and saliva evidence are:

- A blood stain found at the point of entry of a burglary
- A cigarette butt found in the ashtray of a recovered stolen vehicle; the victim does not smoke
- A drink can found in a burglarized home that the victim did not consume

Non-traditional types of blood and saliva evidence include:

- Half-eaten pepperoni found inside a recovered stolen vehicle
- A popsicle stick found inside a burglarized home
- A toothbrush found inside a bag left by a perpetrator prior to stealing the victim's car
- Cheese with bite marks in it found inside a burglarized home

Whether routine or out of the ordinary, DNA evidence can be extremely helpful in identifying suspects in property crimes. For 14 months, the WSP Vancouver Crime Laboratory tested DNA evidence in property crime cases to determine its usefulness.

Project Statistics

- Only blood and saliva samples were processed
- Usually a maximum of 2 samples per case
- Most common samples: cigarettes (42%), blood stains (35%), and drink containers (20%)

As of April 14, 2011:

- 159 samples processed in 127 cases
- 140 profiles uploaded to CODIS database

- 89 names given to agencies as a result of matches in CODIS database
- 1 unsolved case linked to an unsolved Oregon case as a result of a match in CODIS database
- 2 profiles matched the suspect reference submitted by agency
- In four separate instances, one offender was linked to two different cases
- In one instance, one offender was linked to three different cases

DNA analysis can be extremely helpful in identifying a suspect in a property crime case. However, cooperation between the agency investigating the crime, the crime laboratory, and the prosecutor's office is essential. With good communication from all parties and adequate funding, DNA analysis can be an important tool to solve property crimes.

Updated Offender Legislation

"Clean up" language for RCW 43.43.7541 passed in the last legislative session which clarifies that for every sentence imposed under chapter 9.94A RCW for a crime specified in RCW 43.43.754, a mandatory fee of \$100 shall be assessed.

The intent of the new language is to ensure that the \$100 fee is assessed not only on convicted felons but also on juveniles and those convicted of qualifying gross misdemeanors and misdemeanors.

As a reminder, if the Washington State Patrol CODIS Crime Laboratory already has a DNA sample from an individual for a qualifying offense, a subsequent submission is not required to be submitted [RCW 43.43.754 (2)]. In these situations, the \$100 fee should still be assessed.

The mandatory fee not only provides financial support to the CODIS Crime Laboratory, it supports collection efforts state-wide since twenty percent of the fee is transmitted to the agency responsible for collection of the biological sample.

Staffing Changes for the CODIS Lab

Due to streamlined laboratory processes and improved sample collection, two of the CODIS Lab scientists transferred to the casework-side of DNA analysis. One other scientist resigned and is now working at a research laboratory at the University of Washington. This brings the CODIS Laboratory down to a staff of three scientists, one office assistant, and the CODIS Manager.

There has been zero impact to services and no increase in backlog. Thank you for your diligence in collecting quality DNA samples to help us spend our limited resources wisely!

Keep up the good work, including:

- Making sure the SID is on the Submission Card
- Checking the criminal history record to see if we already have a sample for an individual
- Providing quality thumbprints to expedite print verification on CODIS hits
- Printing legibly on the Submission Card

If you have any questions about how to check criminal history records to get a SID number or determine if we already have a sample for an individual contact Marianne Patton at confel@wsp.wa.gov or 206.262.6152. This simple step helps save time and money for the CODIS Lab and the collecting agency.

Special points of interest:

Identical twins have the same DNA profile, but different fingerprints. If you know your offender has an identical twin, please note this on the submission card

As of August 2011, there have been 268 hits to the CODIS database!



Jean Johnston, CODIS Manager



Marianne Patton, Office Assistant



Natasha, Monica, & Robert, forensic scientists

S e r v i c e W i t h H u m i l i t y



View of downtown Seattle from the roof of the CODIS Crime Laboratory.

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