

# Forensic Laboratory Services Bureau

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## TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY

At the Washington State Patrol Toxicology Lab, forensic scientists test blood, urine and other tissues for the presence of drugs and/or alcohol. We receive cases from coroners, medical examiners and law enforcement agencies from all counties in Washington State. This is the only state-run toxicology lab in Washington, and we typically receive over 10,000 cases per year. In the previous 12 months, 47% of the cases received were death investigations, 36% were DUI, and 12% were DRE cases. In 2007, a fulltime analyst averaged 985 cases for the year.

We have a staff of 22, located in the Seattle lab facility on Airport Way.

- Thirteen Toxicologists
- Three Supervisors
- One Property Evidence Custodian
- Administrative Staff
- Public Disclosure Coordinator
- Quality Manager
- State Toxicologist

If you have questions for any of the toxicology staff, please contact us. Normally, we will forward the call to the specific scientist handling your case, but we will do our

best to answer your questions.

Email:  
**toxlab@wsp.wa.gov**



Toxicologist Lisa Noble preparing a blood sample for analysis

### Contact Information

- State Toxicologist:  
**Dr. Fiona Couper**
- Laboratory Address:  
**2203 Airport Way South,  
Suite 360  
Seattle WA 98134**
- Phone: 206 262 6100
- Fax: 206 262 6145
- Email: **toxlab@wsp.wa.gov**

## REQUEST FOR LAB ANALYSIS CONTRACT

When you list evidence on a Request for Analysis (whether submitted to the Tox Lab or Crime Lab) and we accept the evidence, this is considered a contract. For us to be able to allocate adequate

resources and address the large number of cases we receive, it is necessary for us, in some instances, to deviate from this "contract". Usually this means a reduction in the number of items examined for each case. If

you need additional evidence analysis, please contact the scientist and we will do our best to work with your needs for your specific case. We want to be able to meet your needs while using our resources in the most effective and efficient manner.

# TOXICOLOGY LAB SERVICES

## Types of Cases Received:

### Driving under the influence cases

When a person is suspected of driving under the influence, they are asked to perform a chemical test (either a breath-alcohol test or a blood draw). When a blood draw is performed, the Toxicology Lab receives those blood tubes as evidence. All samples receive analysis for blood alcohol. Drug testing is performed on request based on the circumstances of the case.

### DRE (Drug Recognition Expert) cases

When there is suspicion that a person is driving under the influence of drugs, often a DRE is called in to evaluate the person. This evaluation helps determine what class (or classes) of compounds this person has ingested. Blood is then drawn

and sent to our laboratory for analysis.

### Death Investigations

Medical examiners and coroners send blood, urine, and sometimes other tissues from decedents to our



Dr. Brianna Peterson prepares urine samples for analysis.

laboratory for analysis to determine if drugs or alcohol played a role in the person's death.

### Liquor Control Board samples

The LCB submits samples of liquids to how the alcohol content. This aids in the prosecution of people who are illegally selling alcohol-containing substances, or prosecuting establishments or specific individuals for over-serving a patron, or serving alcohol to an underage drinker.

### Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault

If there is suspicion that an individual was sexually assaulted and that drugs or alcohol were involved, the laboratory will receive blood and/or urine for analysis.

## TOXICOLOGY FAQs

### Q: How are samples received at the Lab?

A: Courier services (UPS, FedEx, etc), USPS, and hand delivered. Once they are received in the laboratory, evidence is secured in the evidence vault by the Property and Evidence Custodian until an analyst logs in the case to perform testing.

### Q: Is drug testing always performed?

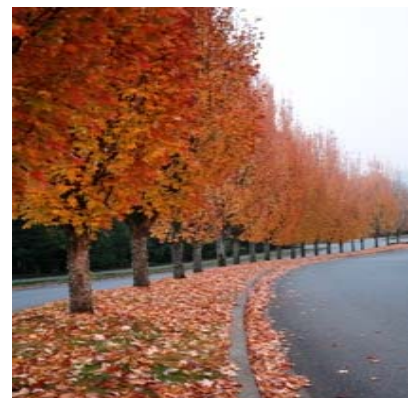
A: No. The requesting agency must request drug testing. In addition, we do not routinely perform drug testing on DUI cases with blood alcohols over 0.10 g/100mL, unless an additional charge is sought, i.e. vehicular homicide or assault.

### Q: How do I submit a public records request and how long will it take to receive the documents?

A. All public records requests must be submitted in writing. You can email, fax or mail in your request (see contact information on page 1). Requests can take up to 90 business days to fill, depending on the number of documents you need.

## FLS BUREAU ODDS 'N ENDS

- To better allocate our DNA resources, the CLD has made the following changes in submission areas.
  - \* DNA cases from Chelan County are submitted to the Marysville lab;
  - \* DNA cases from Kittitas County are submitted to the Seattle lab.
  - \* Yakima and Klickitat County DNA cases are submitted to the Vancouver lab.
- Safety Reminders:
  1. Please do not submit syringes for analysis without consulting the lab .
  2. Firearms, if at all possible, should be submitted unloaded and documented on the RFLE.
  3. Please document on the packaging if potential biohazards are being submitted.



Autumn Colors

Photo courtesy of Mitch Lant

Washington State Patrol

WSP

SERVICE WITH HUMILITY

TOXICOLOGY NOTES AND NEEDS

- Drug Recognition Experts must submit a DRE face sheet with the sample. The toxicologist uses the DRE face sheet to direct testing for the sample. Without that as guidance, only the basic testing is performed.
- Running out of tox lab request forms? All request forms are available at the WSP Breath Test website: <http://breathtest.wsp.wa.gov/Default.asp> under "BTP Public Records Index" and "Toxicology Forms." Please be sure to use only the most current analysis request form.
- You can get a copy of the CV of each toxicologist by going to the WSP Breath Test website (above)
- Please remember to call the lab if the toxicologist needs to appear in court, even if a subpoena has been issued. The scientists receive over 500 breath subpoenas

a month from all over the state, most of which do not go to trial. Therefore, it is necessary to call and request a toxicologist at least two days in advance. This gives us a chance to schedule our commitments and time.

- The difference between "no drugs detected" and "CNS Drugs ND" reflects the difference in testing



Justin Knoy reviews his analytical data.

levels. "CNS Drugs ND" indicates that testing was limited to a qualitative screen for 10 classes of drugs. These drug classes are listed at the bottom of the report. "No drugs detected" indicates that additional testing was performed for compounds included in the screen as well as compounds not included in the screen and none were found.

- The toxicology laboratory has the capacity to identify hundreds of different drugs, but there are some that we do not test for. If there is a specific drug that is suspected, please call before submitting the evidence. We can let you know if we have the capability to test for that drug. If we do not test for it, we can often assist you in finding an outside laboratory that will accept your sample for testing.

ISO—INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION

Forensic laboratory systems all across the world are moving swiftly to accreditation programs that demonstrate the laboratory commitment to meet

*"ISO offers an accreditation program that provides an independent and objective system to measure the quality program of a laboratory system."*

international standards for technical operations and management sys-

tems. ISO has operated since 1947 and offers an accreditation program that provides an independent and objective system to measure the quality program

of a laboratory system. Accreditation using ISO standards offers the

public and our customers the knowledge that we are meeting international standards for quality.

Three sections of the FLSB (Breath Test, Toxicology Division, Crime Lab Division) will undergo ISO assessments in 2009. The Tox Lab and Crime Lab are currently accredited through different programs; with ISO, all divisions will be accredited through the same program.

WSP FLSB CONTACT INFO

Thanks for taking the time to learn more about our Forensic Laboratory Services Bureau. If you have any questions or comments or would like information on specific topics, please feel free to contact us.

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