

FORENSIC SCIENCE DIVISION

Labyrinth – Quarterly Newsletter

June 2022



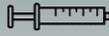
Biology

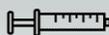
 Y-STR analysis is now online! Please see the next page for more information.

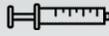
 The Biology section is now fully staffed with 12 employees trained and cross-trained in Serology, Y-screen, Y-STRs, CODIS, and DNA.

 Turnaround times for cases in the Biology section are 4-6 months.

Chemistry

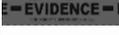
 Reminder that swabs of suspected drug residue are typically not accepted by the laboratory.

 Please do not submit field test kits.

 All evidence submitted to the laboratory must be sealed properly using evidence tape or heat seal, with the sealer's initials and date.

Evidence

 For the Missoula lab, please use the post office box for all mail through the USPS. FedEx and UPS can be mailed to the physical address. Addresses can be found at the bottom of the next page.

 Postage rates have gone up! Please check that enough postage is being applied to mail sent to the lab - we are receiving items with insufficient postage/postage due.

Firearms

 Congratulations to Doug Lançon, the newest member of the Firearms section! Doug transfers after 11 years in the Montana State Crime Lab's Toxicology section. He has 12 years of previous firearms experience at the Acadiana Crime Lab in Louisiana.

 Please submit all items for Firearm/Toolmark analysis at one time. The Firearms section does not have a limit on number of items for submission.

Latent Prints

 The Latent Prints section has a minimal backlog! Turn around times for most evidence is less than 30 days.

 The new Vacuum Metal Deposition (VMD) method is up and running! Please see the next page for additional information.

 The Latent Prints section has recently been working cold cases and has had some success with analysis!

Toxicology

 A new method is online for the analysis of samples for gabapentin and pregabalin! Gabapentin increased 190% in postmortem cases '19-'20, so the new service provides cost savings over outsourcing to a private lab.

 July 1, the new Intoxilyzer 9000 will go live at ~100 locations across the state. The 9000 gathers more data per breath sample. Thanks to the Breath Alcohol section for their numerous hours of hard work in validating the instruments and training LE officers.

Miscellaneous

 The procedures for Discovery request submissions have changed. See the next page for details.

 The DOJ Forensic Science Division was named as a 2022 FORESIGHT Maximus Award winner.

 The 2021 annual reports have been posted on the website.

Labyrinth – continued

Vacuum Metal Deposition (VMD)

The Latent Prints section has added VMD as an additional processing technique. This method can be used to develop prints on otherwise difficult substrates, such as flexible plastics, paper, currency, finished wood, fabrics, unfired cartridges, and cardboard. Gold/zinc and/or silver/zinc powder is deposited onto the substrate and not the actual print, so the process doesn't interfere with DNA analysis. Contact Supervisor Kate Delphy with any questions at (406)329-1119 or kdelphy@mt.gov.



VMD equipment



VMD impression using gold/zinc

Y-STR Analysis

The Biology section is now processing evidence for Y-STRs. This analysis, specific for male DNA, will be provided at no cost to our customers. Should the need for Y-STR analysis be identified, a separate report will be released with those results. This analysis will be an automatic part of our process for new cases; there is no need to specifically request Y-STR testing. For more information about this process or the services offered by the Biology section, contact Supervisor Joe Pasternak at (406)329-1131 or jpasternak@mt.gov.



Andrew Zeigler performs Y-STR analysis

Discovery Requests

An order signed by a judge is required for access to laboratory notes, photos, data, correspondence, and/or the entire case file. The signed order should be emailed to FSDSUBPOENAS@mt.gov. We are now using the Montana State File Transfer service to provide documents requested in the Discovery order. Please be sure to include an accurate email address so that we may complete the request. If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact Quality Assurance Manager Stacey Wilson at (406)329-1182 or swilson@mt.gov.



MONTANA FILE TRANSFER SERVICE

Employee Spotlight



Haley Fallang

Welcome Haley Fallang, the newest employee at the Crime Lab! Haley was born and raised in Absarokee, MT. She has earned a BS in Forensic Science from the University of Providence in Great Falls and an MS in Forensic Science from Towson University in Maryland. Haley enjoys hiking with her fiancée, Jesse, and their cat, Toby. They also enjoy paddleboarding (with the cat) and scuba diving (sans cat). Haley joins the Biology section, where she'll start off performing Y-screening. She brings to the lab great enthusiasm, focus, and a love of tea.



Toby, the avid hiker

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Please take the survey on our website.