


FORENSIC SCIENCE DIVISION


Labyrinth – Quarterly Newsletter

June 2023

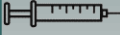


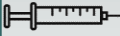
Biology

 We are changing our reporting procedure for the Y-screening process. You will now receive a Serology Report with the results of the screening, whether positive or negative.


 Per our submission policy, we only accept touch-type items as a last resort in crimes against people, not in property crimes.


Chemistry


 The legislature approved the addition of substituted fentanyl and benzodiazepine compounds into Schedule 1 effective Oct. 1st. This will reduce the frequency of the analogue law and allows us to schedule compounds based on structure.

 We welcome questions and are happy to provide tours or training to law enforcement or county attorneys to explain processes or technology.


Evidence


 Please keep us updated with personnel changes, including new officers and when people leave.

 When submitting evidence, please use the officer's full first and last name, not just a badge number.


 Please read and follow the instructions inside tox kit boxes. This includes fully sealing the top of blood tubes.

Firearms


 We are expecting delivery of our Virtual Comparison Microscope in June. It could be used for casework before the end of this summer, after passing validation.


 As a reminder to our law enforcement partners, be vigilant in checking the function and safety features of your firearms. We recently had a rifle with a malfunctioning trigger that fired both when the trigger was pulled **and** released.

Latent Prints


 As a reminder, when submitting an item for both LP and Chemistry analysis, please separate the controlled substance from the packaging so that the items can go to their respective sections separately. Latents will not handle any item with a measurable amount of controlled substance inside the packaging and will send the item back to the agency for it to be removed. This includes any liquid in syringes.


Toxicology

 The Toxicology section has validated a method for the detection of 128 different drugs at once. This test will be standard on DUI submissions that meet the requirements for drug testing, sex assault cases, and some postmortem cases.

 Justin Lyndes (jlyndes@mt.gov) & Ben Vetter (bvetter@mt.gov) are available for any questions regarding the new Intoxilyzer 9000 breath alcohol instruments.

Miscellaneous

 Remember that all kits (blood, tox, UA, & DNA) have expiration dates. Kits are expensive, so please don't let them expire in a drawer or patrol car or on a shelf!

 When requesting autopsies, please include as much information as possible about the decedent and circumstances.

Labyrinth - continued

Awards

- For the 3rd consecutive year, the Montana State Crime Lab has been recognized by the Association of Crime Lab Directors with the Foresight Maximus Award.
- Congratulations to Joel Smith, who won Employee of the Year for JITSD!
- Congratulations to Stephanie Shappee from the Latent Prints Section, who is the Crime Lab's 1st Quarter Employee of the Quarter.
- Congratulations to Lacey van Grinsven from the Biology Section, for receiving a Montana DCI Staff Excellence Award.

ANAB Assessment

ANAB completed the laboratory testing and calibration activities reassessment the first week of May. The assessment consistent of more than 300 standards to include ISO/IEC 17025:2017, ANAB, and QAS requirements. The assessment was successfully complete and we are awaiting the accreditation continuation letter from ANAB.

Additional information about lab accreditation can be found on our website at:

<https://dojmt.gov/crime/accreditation-documents/>

Employee Spotlight



Welcome Sophia Deichmann, the newest member of the Crime Lab! Sophia joins the Biology Section as a DNA analyst. Originally from Albuquerque, she earned a Bachelor's in Biology from the University of New Mexico. She moved to Bavaria, Germany, where she obtained a Master's in Cell and Infection Biology. Sophia then took a DNA Analyst position at the Department of Public Safety Forensic Lab in Santa Fe, before moving to Montana. Her hobbies include biking, hiking, camping, tennis, reading non-fiction, painting outdoor landscapes, cooking, and baking! We're excited to put both her DNA skills and baking skills to good use!



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Please take the survey on our website.

