

**Washington  
State Patrol**

# FLSB Newsletter

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## Special points of interest:

- Chemistry Functional Area
- Leaf Marihuana Technician Class
- Latent Prints Training
- Physical Evidence Handbook/Forensic Services Guide
- Poisons/Toxins Special Announcement

## Chemistry

### Overview

The WSP Crime Laboratory has 6 laboratories which perform chemical analysis. These laboratories are in Kennewick, Marysville, Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma and Vancouver. There are 26 Forensic Scientists in the chemistry functional area.

The chemistry functional area performs analysis of Controlled Substance, Clandestine Laboratory and Fire Debris evidence. We also have some limited capability to analyze for suspected poisons, toxins and chemical unknowns.

In 2007 the division received approximately 15,000 requests for controlled substance analysis. We strive to complete these cases within 30 days of receipt, however, this can fluctuate with changes in staffing.

## Marihuana

### Leaf Marihuana Identification Technician Program

Scientists from the chemistry functional area provide instruction to law enforcement agencies on the Identification of Leaf Marihuana. This class is held approximately once each year for approximately 20

Our current median turn-around time for controlled substance cases division wide is 40 days. Every effort is made to ensure that these cases are analyzed as needed by the agency making the request. If there is a pending court date or other circumstance dictating a completion date for a specific case, this can be recorded on the RFLE Form or the local laboratory can be contacted.

### Clandestine Laboratory Response

The chemistry section has several scientists trained to respond to Clandestine Drug laboratories. These chemists are available to assist any agency with the processing of suspected clandestine laboratories. The chemists are eager to assist in clandestine labora-

tory response so they can remain informed about current trends in clandestine manufacture of controlled substances. The laboratories can also provide training on this topic. For further information contact your local laboratory.



**Microcrystalline Test for Cocaine**



**Marihuana**



### **Interesting Chemistry Submissions**

Over 300 clear capsules containing green powdery material were submitted to the laboratory. The green material contained delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Other compounds consistent with cannabinoids, glycerin, and vitamin E were also detected in the capsules.

The Kennewick lab recently had an interesting case. The scientist analyzed several items of evidence and in one item, 3 small pieces of paper, he detected lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) in one piece of paper. This is only the second time that it has been submitted to the Kennewick Crime Laboratory in the last five years.

Approximately 1 gram of white powdery material was submitted to the laboratory for analysis with a charge of possession with intent to deliver. The scientist analyzed the substance and found benzocaine and cocaine. The point of interest is the large amount of benzocaine. According to scientific literature, ingestion of benzocaine can result in methemoglobinemia, which subsequently can lead to death. Several months ago, drugs in a death investigation case were identified as a mixture of cocaine and benzocaine.

Two air-dry bags containing over 600 grams of dried green vegetable material were submitted for analysis. The plant material was part of a suspected grow operation that was sent to the lab to test for the possible presence of marijuana. Analysis of several samples revealed that it was tetrachloroisophthalonitrile (TCPN), a fungicide used on houseplants and large crops.



Sixteen plastic food containers containing green semi-solid pastes were received for analysis. The material consisted primarily of fat and was found also to contain marijuana. Although found on some occasions in desserts such as cake and cookies, this is the first time that the Seattle Laboratory has encountered marijuana in this form.



### **Leaf Marijuana Identification Class**

The Crime Lab Division is sponsoring its next Leaf Marijuana Identification at the WSP Training Academy, from July 7-10, 2008. This training is offered to our user agencies on a yearly basis, to enable the agencies to examine and analyze marijuana cases for their own agencies. The cost to the agency is only to cover the room/board at the WSP academy. We encourage agencies to participate in the program, which then allows the crime lab to focus on other types of cases, which may require more complex analysis.

For more information on the July class or to obtain an application, please contact Ms. Rebecca Cortez at CLD Headquarters, (206) 262-6002 or email her at [Rebecca.Cortez@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Cortez@wsp.wa.gov).

### **Marijuana Technician Refresher Classes**

The CLD offers refresher training for all current marijuana technicians every three years. The next refresher classes have been set for spring of 2008. This training provides updated instruction on the marijuana program and is a mechanism for the LCD to offer continued support for the current marijuana technicians. Your local laboratory coordinator should have already been in contact with each of the agency technicians. If you are a marijuana technician and you have yet to be contacted, please contact your local laboratory.

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The **Latent Prints Laboratory** continues to offer training in latent print processing in your area. If you are interested, please contact the latent prints laboratory at (360) 705-5988.

For training in **Questioned Documents**, please contact the Seattle Lab at (206) 262-6020.

**Important Announcement:** The Crime Lab Division is not now in the position to accept many of the suspected poison/toxin cases submitted to the Crime Labs. The enormous number of possibilities for suspected poisons/toxins to be submitted makes it apparent that we lack the capabilities to examine and identify many of these substances. When cases are received with specific suspected contaminants that we cannot examine using our experience and expertise, the supervisors will provide a list of laboratories that the submitting agencies can contact for further assistance.

## **ARSON**

**Fire Debris Analysis** The Crime lab offers analysis of fire debris evidence. Laboratory analysis of this evidence can identify the presence and nature of a flammable liquid residue evidence should **not** be stored in plastic containers or containers with plastic lids. Nylon and some polyester bags are an exception when properly sealed and have been shown to be free of contamination.

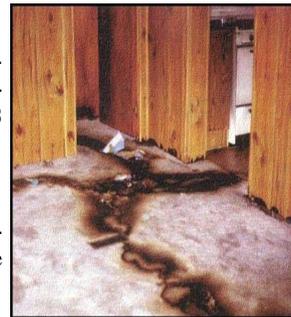
**Packaging** It is important that the correct container is used to package the evidence. It is best to keep a variety of containers in several sizes on hand. Flammable liquid residue evidence should **not** be stored in plastic containers or containers with plastic lids. Nylon and some polyester bags are an exception when properly sealed and have been shown to be free of contamination.

### **For packaging:**

**Screw top vials** with Teflon caps for small amounts of liquids. Keep them upright.

Clean, unused **metal cans** (paint) are preferable for storing liquid residues. Seal completely and never fill more than 1/3 and 2/3 full. Never fill the can completely.

**Kapak polyester bags** and nylon bags designed specifically for fire debris evidence are acceptable.



## **Frequently Asked Questions/Comments**

- The new version of the Request for Laboratory Examination (RFLE) has a space for the email address of the primary investigator. We need the email address so that we can communicate more effectively with the investigator. With investigators working many different work shifts, sometimes phone messages are not the most productive methods to communicate. Email allows the forensic scientist to contact the investigator with questions and provides written documentation which can eliminate confusion and helps us to answer your questions and address your needs in the investigation.
- Drug evidence, especially residual amounts, should be sent to the crime lab for drug testing before it is processed for latent prints. Cross contamination from powder brushes could raise enough reasonable doubt in court to cause problems for the identification of the controlled substances. If the package containing the drug evidence needs to be processed for fingerprints, please make a note of the lab request (RFLE) that the evidence needs to be processed for fingerprints or call your local laboratory.
- Our Physical Evidence Handbook is being revised and renamed to the Forensic Services Guide. We feel the change better describes the services we offer in the Forensic Laboratory Services Bureau. The new version should be online at the WSP website by the end of March. You can get to the new manual through the WSP website at [www.wsp.wa.gov](http://www.wsp.wa.gov).

Thank you very much for your questions and comments and your suggestions for the newsletter. If there is an area of the lab that you would like to know more about, please feel free to contact us at any time.