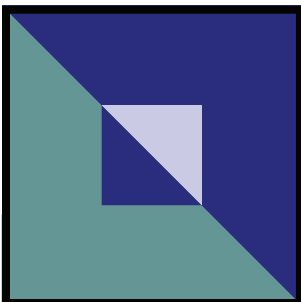




WSP

Forensic Laboratory Services

Bureau Newsletter

March 2010 Volume 3, Issue 1

Washington State Patrol Forensic Laboratory Services Bureau

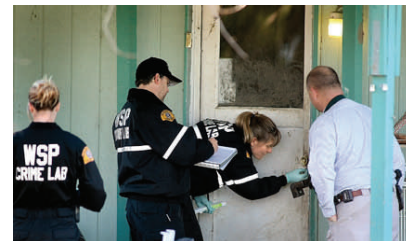
Introduction - Crime Scene Response Team (CSRT)

In 2004 the Washington State Patrol (WSP) Forensic Laboratory Services Bureau (FLSB) reorganized our crime scene response efforts and formed a team of skilled forensic scientists to provide free crime scene processing to any Washington State law enforcement agency. Since 2004, the team has grown and is currently comprised of 23 scientists, which includes five scientists from the latent prints lab in Tumwater. Members of the team are stationed throughout the state to help accommodate the increasing demand for crime scene processing.

The team is made up of scientists experienced in a number of disciplines including Firearms, Microanalysis (trace evidence), DNA, Chemistry and Latent Prints. Standard training for team members includes many hours in crime scene reconstruction and bloodstain pattern analysis. Other training includes crime scene photography, trajectory analysis, and recovery of human remains. Using the training received from within the WSP as well as from outside agencies such as the FBI, the CSRT can reach its goal of providing quality documentation (both written and photographic) of scenes as well as identifying, collecting, and properly packaging items of evidentiary value. The CSRT will assist with a wide scope of scenarios including officer-involved shootings, sexual assaults, body recovery, bloodstain pattern interpretation, latent print analysis, and crime scene reconstruction.

How the CSRT Operates

Our CSRT scientists are on call in one week shifts and are available for call out 24 hours a day. A minimum of two scientists are on-call per week. When a call for assistance comes in it will be directed to the team coordinator. She will contact the requesting agency and obtain background information. It is important for the CSRT to respond (**See Page 2**)



Forensic Scientists examine a door knob for blood

Duties of the CSRT

- Collection
- Interpretation
- Reconstruction
- Training

Karen Green
Coordinator-CSRT

Desk: 260-262-6037
Cell: 253-255-3064

2203 Airport Way S.
Seattle, WA 98134

March 2010 Volume 3, Issue 1

WSP Crime Lab Division
2203 Airport Way S, Suite 250
Seattle WA 98134

Phone: (206) 262-6002
Fax: (206) 262-6091

Contact: George Johnston
Phone: (206) 262-6005
Cell: (206) 310-2834
Fax: (206) 262-6091

E-mail: george.johnston@wsp.wa.gov



(CSRT Operates-Page 1) before the body is removed and the scene becomes altered. If a scene has been too badly compromised it's possible we will be unable to assist you. While we are available 24 hours a day, less urgent scenes (no body, car examinations, etc.), are generally scheduled for normal working hours.

The CSRT works as a team and at least two members will always respond together. One will be assigned the role of "primary". The primary will be responsible for communicating with the law enforcement agency, taking the notes and photos, and writing the final report. The requesting agency will maintain control over the scene, although the CSRT will offer advice and direction if needed. We are there to assist and will do as little or as much as is asked of us. When the processing of the scene is completed, all evidence collected will be left in the custody of the requesting agency. It is then the responsibility of the agency to communicate with the primary responder and lab personnel to determine what will be submitted to the lab.

Please remember that crime scene processing is an intense and detail-oriented activity. Our purpose is to provide you with thorough and proper documentation. That process can take anywhere from 4 hours to 5 days, depending on the scope of the scene.

Experience

Over the past 5 years, the CSRT has had the opportunity to process over 500 crime scenes. In 2009 alone, 102 crime scenes were processed while assisting 48 different police agencies throughout the state. The CSRT averaged 225 hours/month responding to scenes.

One of our biggest challenges to date was the September 2, 2008, shooting death of Skagit County Deputy Anne Jackson. Deputy Jackson responded to a 911 call from a private residence; she and the home owner were found deceased at that residence. As 911 calls continued to come in, the magnitude of the scene became clear. In total, six people were killed and three were injured during a crime spree that spanned several miles. The WSP CSRT sent 13 scientists to Skagit County to assist in one of the most tragic events in Washington state history. Through a multi-agency effort each scene was handled by skilled professionals dedicated to getting the job done correctly.

FAQs for Crime Scene Response

Q: How do I contact the CSRT if I need help?

The easiest way is to contact WSP communications; they will put you in contact with the CSRT coordinator.

Q: Is a warrant necessary before the CSRT will respond?

Yes. We will not respond to the scene until either consent to search has been obtained or a warrant has been signed (or will be shortly).

Q: What type of equipment does my agency need to provide to the crime scene response team?

The CSRT responds to each scene in vans fully equipped with the gear necessary for crime scene processing. Occasionally we may request that the police agency provide other necessities such as a portable toilet, tents or floodlights (for outdoor scenes), or certain power tools.

Q: Is a reconstruction of the scene always provided?

We process and document each scene so that a reconstruction can be provided if necessary. You may receive an initial report documenting what was seen and collected. If a reconstruction is necessary it can be requested and would be the subject of a separate report.



Scientists training in bloodstain pattern analysis

*The FLSB **yearly customer survey** is online and we need your help! Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and return it to us. We need your thoughts and ideas on how we can better meet your needs with our resources. These surveys help us to plan for our future needs. The survey can be found at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2009CLDUserSurvey>. Thank you!*

Q: How much will this cost my agency?

Crime scene processing is a free service provided by the WSP to every law enforcement agency in Washington State.

Q: Will the scientist responding be the one analyzing the evidence collected?

Not likely. On the west side of the state we have four full service crime labs. The primary responder for your scene may not be assigned to the regional lab where you send your evidence. However, the primary will be involved in discussions involving what evidence should be submitted to the lab.

Q: Does the crime lab provide training in crime scene investigation?

We are happy to provide you with training on proper evidence collection and packaging techniques. Please contact your local lab or contact Ms. Green for information.

*The CLD no longer offers testing of **misdemeanor leaf marihuana cases**. We made this decision so that we could focus on analysis of controlled substances that can only be analyzed in the laboratory. To help with this change in policy, the CLD offers Leaf Marihuana Identification classes every year. The next class will be summer of 2010. If you are interested in this program, please contact CLD Headquarters at (206) 262-6002.*



News and Notes from the FLSB

- The **WSP Forensic Services Guide** has been revised and is posted on the WSP website (<http://www.wsp.wa.gov/forensics/flsbhome.htm>). This handbook explains evidence handling and submissions and details the capabilities of the FLSB laboratories. Please feel free to use and share the manual and contact us with any questions or comments.
- The **Kennewick Laboratory** now offers analysis of fire debris evidence. If you have any questions, please contact the Kennewick Lab at (509) 734-7022.
- The CLD Firearms sections, in order to address the loss of personnel and a dramatic increase in casework submissions, has developed a **video for agencies to do their own operability testing of firearms**. This video demonstrates how to test firearms, which will then allow the firearms scientists to focus on the laboratory work on comparisons. For more information, contact any of the firearms laboratories or CLD Headquarters. (<http://www.wsp.wa.gov/forensics/crimlabs.htm>)
- The WSP is redesigning its website, and this will include the FLSB. You can help us by visiting the FLSB (both CLD and Tox) website and letting us know what information is valuable to you. The FLSB website can be found at: **<http://www.wsp.wa.gov/forensics/flsbhome.htm>**. Contact George Johnston at CLD Headquarters through email or phone.
- Part of the reason we had no newsletters in 2009 was that the CLD was preparing for our required audit, which occurs every 5 years. In 2009, we made a switch from our former ASCLD/LAB-Legacy program to the **ASCLD/LAB-ISO** accreditation program. The ISO program is wider in scope than the Legacy program and enables us to continue to offer and improve on the quality of our work and on the services we provide to our customers.
- As part of the ASCLD/LAB ISO accreditation program, the **Toxicology Laboratory Division** of the FLSB recently received accreditation for its **breath alcohol calibration** program. The WSP was only the fourth program in the world to be accredited through the ISO banner. This is a very notable achievement in our goal to continue to offer the very best in high quality service.
- Submitting explosives evidence can be a risky business! To see the best method to submit explosives evidence and provide the lab with the best investigative information, please see the Forensic Services Guide, page 56 (**Submission of Explosive Evidence to the Laboratory**).
 - If you are interested in **forensic training** for your agency (latent prints, DNA evidence collection, handwriting exemplars, etc), please contact your local lab or FLSB Headquarters and we will help in any way we can.
 - Copies of previous CLD Newsletters can be found at the WSP FLSB home-page: **<http://www.wsp.wa.gov/forensics/flsbhome.htm>**. If there are topics you would like to have more information, please let us know.



Thanks for your support!