

Draft Survey on DNA Preservation Practices

1. Does your department store biological evidence differently from other evidence? Please describe your procedures for handling and storing biological evidence.
2. What is the square footage of your storage space for all evidence? If biological/DNA evidence is segregated from other evidence, how large is the storage space area for biological evidence?
3. How full is your evidence room? (More than 50 percent capacity? 90 percent? Is it over capacity? Please Describe.)
4. Are your policies and procedures for the collection and retention of biological evidence written down? Who developed these guidelines, and when? Please attach a copy of those policies.
5. How long do you preserve DNA evidence for the following offenses? Please explain policies for both open and closed cases. If you do not have a written policy, please note.
 - a. Murder/Homicide – Open; Closed.
 - b. Sex offenses:
 - i. Rape - Open; Closed
 - ii. Other sex offenses – please name (Open; Closed)
 - c. Missing person cases - Open; Closed
 - d. Kidnappings - Open; Closed
 - e. Burglaries - Open; Closed
6. Approximately how many pieces of evidence does your department store?
 - a. Roughly, what percentage of stored evidence is for pre-conviction misdemeanor cases?
 - b. Pre-conviction felonies?
 - c. Post-conviction misdemeanors?
 - d. Post-conviction felonies?
 - e. Cold cases?
7. What is your policy regarding bulk items containing DNA evidence?

8. What is your department's biological evidence disposal process? Is there a different process for cases that resulted in convictions and/or cold cases? What are those processes?
9. When evidence is destroyed, are any parties notified? Are evidence disposal records kept?
10. Do you keep a computerized inventory of specific evidentiary items you store and what you have discarded? Please provide a brief description identifying your system and how it works.
11. When evidence is sent out to another agency for forensic testing, does that agency retain the evidence or is it returned to your agency? Please explain the processes in place for transferring evidence between agencies.
12. Do you regularly audit your evidence room? When was the last time such an audit was performed? Have you calculated an error rate for tracking your evidence inventory – if so, what is it?
13. In this section, please rate the following statements: Strongly agree; Somewhat agree; Somewhat disagree; Strongly disagree.
 - a. My agency's evidence storage facilities are currently adequate
 - b. My agency's evidence storage facilities will continue to be adequate if we are required to store more evidence.
 - c. My agency is running out of room to properly store evidence
 - d. I would like more guidance on evidence preservation and retention.
 - e. I would be in favor of a standardized evidence retention process for the state of Montana.
14. Please identify which steps, if any, you would like to take to re-inventory old evidence:
 - a. Repackage old evidence
 - b. Determine whether certain evidence could be purged
 - c. Swatching or taking a sample from bulk items
 - d. Bar-code evidence
 - e. Create new property sheets
 - f. Entering identifying information into a database
15. What are your biggest problems, concerns or challenges with evidence retention and preservation?