



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
A Nationally Accredited Laboratory

NOTICE OF DFS POLICY

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To: All Agencies Serviced by Department of Forensic Science Laboratories
From: Linda C. Jackson, Director 
Date: March 29, 2017
RE: Triaging of Physical Evidence Recovery Kit (PERK) Testing to Expedite Analysis

The Department of Forensic Science (DFS) has supplied victim Physical Evidence Recovery Kits (PERKs) to law enforcement agencies and hospitals for over 25 years to promote the uniform collection, preservation and forensic testing of potential evidence in sexual assault cases. The triaging of PERK contents and testing of items deemed most probative is designed to expedite the analysis in order to provide information on the inclusion or elimination of potential suspects and to allow for Data Bank searching of unidentified DNA profiles in cases involving unknown perpetrators.

Information regarding the type of assault is used to select which PERK sample(s) will be evaluated for analysis. Depending on the type of assault, not all of the samples in the PERK will be subjected to forensic testing, which is consistent with triage methods used by forensic laboratories throughout the United States. For example, in a single perpetrator vaginal rape and oral sodomy case, the oral and vaginal samples would be screened for body fluids (e.g., semen), and the best sample taken forward for DNA analysis. On the other hand, in a case where information about the type of assault is limited or unknown (e.g., unconscious victim, child victim), additional samples will be screened and may be taken forward for DNA analysis.

This triaging allows DFS to more expeditiously report results and search profiles in the Data Bank, particularly in single perpetrator sexual assault cases, but we recognize that, in certain cases, testing of additional samples contained within the PERK may be necessary. **Accordingly, it is important that Certificates of Analysis related to PERK testing be reviewed upon receipt so that, if a determination is made that additional testing may be required, the matter can be discussed with the Forensic Biology Section as soon as possible.** In such cases, or for questions regarding this policy, please contact the Forensic Biology Section Supervisor at the DFS Laboratory that provides service to your agency:

- Central Laboratory – Lisa Schiermeier-Wood (804.588.4083)
- Eastern Laboratory – Anne Pollard (757.355.5983)
- Northern Laboratory – Karen Ambrozy (703.334.9743)
- Western Laboratory – Nicole Harold (540.283.5945)

The mission of DFS is to provide accurate and timely forensic services in criminal matters in the Commonwealth. The triaging of PERK contents is designed to prioritize the most probative samples from each PERK so that results, including potential investigative leads (i.e., Data Bank hits), are provided as quickly as possible.