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## Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection

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1111 COUNTRY CLUB ROAD, MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457 • (860) 685-8000

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### STATE FORENSIC LAB IS PROCESSING EVIDENCE FASTER, PROVIDING FRESH LEADS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

Connecticut's state forensic lab is dramatically reducing the time it takes to analyze evidence, providing law enforcement with fresh leads to solve crimes faster.

"By strengthening the state's forensic lab with the newest technologies, state and local law enforcement can solve crimes faster and get criminals off the streets before they have an opportunity to reoffend. The quicker this process can be completed, the safer our state can become," **Gov. Ned Lamont** said.

"This is the kind of behind-the-scenes work done every day at this agency that helps to make Connecticut one of the safest states in the nation," **DESPP Commissioner Ronnell A. Higgins** said. "The forensic lab is setting an example for all of DESPP with improved efficiency and excellence."

Improved technology, particularly analysis using Rapid DNA that quickly develops a DNA profile and ballistics evidence submitted through the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network, has provided faster leads for law enforcement. More efficient lab processes and practices, including a system of 24-hour evidence kiosks -- where local police can easily submit crime scene evidence for expedited review -- have led to quicker turnaround time.

"The quicker we get this information to them, the sooner they can use it," said **Dr. Guy Vallaro**, **director of the Division of Scientific Services** for DESPP. "It might focus their investigation on a suspect that may not have been known to investigators. It can shorten an investigation. It can avoid having the wrong person incarcerated. It saves money because it saves time."

Since 2023, the average turn-around time for a case declined by 31 percent. The number of cases still open at year's end has dropped by nearly 50 percent, while the number of cases open for more than 60 days at year's end has declined by 73 percent.

"For prosecutors, timely access to forensic evidence can make or break a case," **Chief State's Attorney Patrick J. Griffin** said. "The significant reduction in turnaround time at the state forensic lab is a game changer because it strengthens our ability to build solid cases, deliver justice more swiftly and potentially identify both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence as soon as possible so we can better serve victims and communities across the state. The Division of Criminal Justice is incredibly grateful to the scientists and staff of the Connecticut Department of

Emergency Services and Public Protection's Division of Scientific Services, whose dedication and extra effort are making this progress possible.”

A few recent cases where leads were provided in less than day illustrate the faster results:

- Following a Waterbury homicide in September, the forensic lab provided Rapid DNA leads from four pieces of evidence that lead to arrests.
- In a Stamford home invasion case in early October, the lab provided a lead after blood from the scene was analyzed, leading to arrests.
- After the discovery of an unidentified body in Waterbury in October, the lab provided leads that led to identification of the body.

“The advent of DNA analysis through the crime lab, and through the Rapid DNA equipment, it’s changed how we work,” **Waterbury Police Chief Fernando C. Spagnolo** said. “We are not shy about using this. We’ve solved burglaries. We’ve solved homicides. We’ve used this in a number of shooting cases.”

“This happens in real time. If there’s a shooting at 2 a.m. in the city, within an hour they can be entering information into the Rapid DNA system. In other cases, we can learn how a firearm is connected to other crimes.” Chief Spagnolo said.

For more information, contact Rick Green at [richard.green@ct.gov](mailto:richard.green@ct.gov), 860-539-0159.