



Intermountain Forensics

SOP #

ADM-100

Revision #

01

Forensic DNA Technical Leader Approval

Issue Date

4/30/2020

Vision and Mission

1. Purpose

This document describes the overall policy **goals and objectives** of the laboratory.

2. Summary

The policies in this document describe the culture of the laboratory. In the absence of defined procedures for a decision, situation or practical application in the laboratory, laboratory personnel are expected to use their best judgment aligned to these policies.

3. Procedure

Intermountain Forensics (IMF) Vision Statement:

The power of forensic DNA should never allow a victim's justice to go cold.

Intermountain Forensics (IMF) Mission Statement:

We will strive to ensure the full power of Forensic DNA will always be...

Attainable, Affordable, Timely, Transparent and of the Highest Possible Quality

1. Highest Possible Quality – "In any moment of decision, we will choose to do the right thing, the path of highest quality"
 - a. Quality is our absolute primary concern and we will strive to maintain best practices, foster a passionate, competent and integrity-driven team of the best people we can find and search out and implement the best science that we can find to ensure our results are the best technology can offer
 - i. Best Practices
 1. We will obtain and maintain ISO 17025 Accreditation
 2. We will assess and adhere to Federal Bureau of Investigation Quality Assurance Standards (FBIQAS)
 3. We will be directed by guidance documentation and advice of the Scientific Working Group on DNA Analysis Methods (SWGAM)
 4. We will foster a culture of continuous process improvement based on Lean and Six Sigma Methodologies
 - ii. Best People
 1. We will adhere to educational and experience guidelines of ISO 17025 and FBIQAS standards
 2. We will strictly abide by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) Code of Ethics
 3. We will obtain and maintain (if possible) certifications that are applicable to our position roles and responsibilities
 4. We will always strive to avoid bias and remain "neutral observers of the evidence" in our decisions and daily practice
 5. We will search for and hire passionate teammates regardless of physical location within the United States
 6. We will trust our team to make common sense and quality driven decisions
 7. We will have zero tolerance for dishonesty and ethical malfeasance
 - iii. Best Science
 1. We will validate and performance check all of our assays, software and instruments prior to utilizing them in casework as per recommendations (where applicable) by the Scientific Working Group on DNA Analysis Methods
 2. We will embrace "cutting edge" assays, software and technology that will allow us to provide more comprehensive, correct and/or efficient testing



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3. We will share, freely, our validations, software, robotic methods/scripts, procedures, processes and experiences with the forensic community wherever it may be of assistance (provided it is legal, contractually allowed and not subject to confidentiality agreements)
 4. We will not consume the full totality of our evidence and/or DNA extracts to ensure possible further testing
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2. Attainable – “We will make greatness attainable by all who seek justice”
 - a. We will always act as a supplement, not a replacement to our public crime laboratory partners
 - b. We will strive to deliver “cutting edge” technologies that may not be available within the public crime laboratory services
 - c. We will offer Forensic DNA testing to those entities that are unable to obtain services from public crime laboratories (Public Defenders, Innocence Projects, Victim Advocacy Groups, Public Entities)
 - d. We will constantly improve our science and process to provide excellence to our submitters
 3. Affordable – “Justice should be freely given to those in need of it and we will do all in our power to provide it”
 - a. We are and always will be a 501(c)(3) scientific non-profit organization
 - b. Submissions that align to our core vision will be charged a fee of Cost + 15% lab reinvestment surcharge
 - c. All other submissions will be charged a fee of Cost + 30% lab reinvestment surcharge
 - d. We will re-calculate our costs quarterly and adjust our fees as we are able to lower our costs over time
 - e. We will use continuous improvement Lean and Six Sigma methodologies to lower our costs
 - f. We will utilize minimal laboratory space and embrace remote employee interactions for minimal overhead costs
 - g. We will actively supplement our costs with grants, donations and crowdfunding with the intent to offer our services **free of charge**
 4. Timely – “Delay of justice is injustice; we exist only to reduce the delay”
 - a. We will utilize small batch processing to ensure case processing time is minimized
 - b. We will monitor our turn-around time and post it to the laboratory website periodically (biweekly at minimum)
 - c. We will monitor our case backlog and post it to the laboratory website periodically (biweekly at minimum)
 - d. If at any time turn-around time exceeds 90 days, we will suspend submissions
 - e. We will not charge “rush fees” for an abbreviated turn-around time
 - i. In instances where we must wait for a set number of samples to run at a given time (e.g. NGS DNA Signature assay, we will offer submitter the option of an increased cost or a longer turn-around time to ensure maximum affordability to all submitters)
 5. Transparent – “Truth never damages a cause that is just”
 - a. We will maintain STRICT confidentiality of all case details, case submission status and client non-disclosures unless specifically instructed or agreed to (in writing/e-mail) by submitter
 - b. Where confidentiality is not required or waived by submitter (in writing/e-mail), we will always opt for transparency in our documentation, disclosure and processes, provide any requested information and actively seek to distribute our information where available and applicable
 - c. We will include all of our case documentation as well as our report(s) to submitter upon completion of request
 - d. We will post to our website all of our approved and active Policies, Procedures and Documents within 60 days of document approval
 - e. We will post to our website all of our approved validations and performance checks within 60 days of closure and DNA Technical Leader sign off.
 - f. We will post to our website all completed audits and assessments within 60 days of completion
 - g. We will post to our website all completed Corrective Actions
 - h. Our documentation, procedures, policies, robotic methods and processing (Lean/Six Sigma optimized) will be provided, freely for public consumption
 - i. We will perform Case Consultations with our submitters free of charge prior to and at the completion of a case request

4. References

1. ASCLD Code of Ethics <https://www.ascl.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Code-of-Ethics.pdf>
2. Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories”
3. ISO/IEC 17025: 2017 – Forensic Science Testing and Calibration Laboratories

5. Definitions

N/A