

*A Current  
Educational  
Bulletin For  
Submitting Law  
Enforcement  
Agencies*

*A Closer Examination From The Benchtop ...*

# UNDER the SCOPE



MISSOURI STATE HIGHWAY PATROL • CRIME LABORATORY

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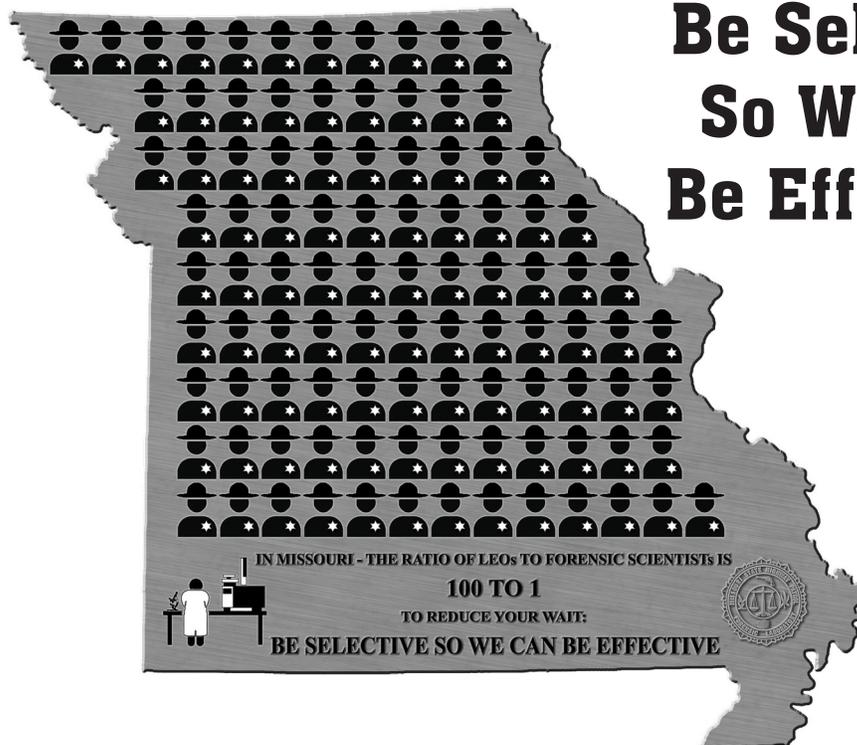
To improve efficiency, please notify the lab if analysis of your evidence is no longer required.

To noticeably decrease case turnaround time, only submit those items that require analysis.

Nonprobative items offer little value from a forensic analysis standpoint, and their submission will only cause delays.



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## Be Selective So We Can Be Effective!

Now more than ever, the judicial system leans heavily on the ability of crime laboratories to provide a service while managing their limited resources.

The phrase "Garbage Truck Forensics"\* is sometimes used to describe the collection of excessive material and submitting it to the laboratory with the expectation, "They'll know what to test - I'll just let them sort it out."

The reality is that there are nearly 100 sworn law enforcement officers to every forensic scientist in the State of Missouri. For this reason, we request that agencies only submit carefully selected items for forensic testing that will directly assist in their investigation. Found property or items submitted only to satisfy curiosity stresses the laboratory's resources and delays other examinations. To those dedicated agencies who submit only items needed to support judicial action

and keep everything else at their agency, WE THANK YOU!

Many times, there are very good reasons for submitting a piece of evidence that may not be immediately apparent to the criminalist assigned to the case. Communication between the agency and the laboratory is essential to ensure we are providing the best service possible. If an item's evidentiary value is in doubt, please contact your laboratory, and we will do everything we can to assist you.

The time spent labeling, transporting, sealing, sorting, inventorying, storing, and testing excess material delays the criminalist from testing evidence in other cases, including those from your own agency.

There are nearly 100 law enforcement officers for every forensic scientist. By working together, we can provide an even better service.

Be selective so we can be effective!

\* Houck, M., Crispino, F., McAdam, T., (2012). *The Science of Crime Scenes*, Waltham, MA: Academic Press, p. 92. Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books>.