



**COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS GOVERNING
COMBINED DNA INDEX SYSTEM ACTIVITIES AT THE
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FORENSIC SCIENCE DIVISION
MISSOULA, MONTANA**

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of the Inspector General
Audit Division

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Audit Division, has completed an audit of compliance with standards governing Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) activities at the Montana Department of Justice Forensic Science Division Laboratory (Laboratory). The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) CODIS program blends forensic science and computer technology to provide an investigative tool to federal, state, and local crime laboratories in the United States, as well as those from select international law enforcement agencies. The CODIS program allows laboratories to compare and match DNA profiles electronically to assist law enforcement in solving crimes and identifying missing or unidentified persons.¹ The FBI's CODIS Unit manages CODIS, as well as develops, supports, and provides the program to crime laboratories to foster the exchange and comparison of forensic DNA evidence.

The FBI implemented CODIS as a distributed database with hierarchical levels that enable federal, state, and local crime laboratories to compare DNA profiles electronically. The hierarchy consists of three distinct levels that flow upward from the local level to the state level and then, if allowable, the national level. National DNA Index System (NDIS), the highest level in the hierarchy, is managed by the FBI as the nation's DNA database containing DNA profiles uploaded by law enforcement agencies across the United States. NDIS enables the laboratories participating in the CODIS program to electronically compare DNA profiles on a national level. The State DNA Index System (SDIS) is used at the state level to serve as a state's DNA database containing DNA profiles from local laboratories and state offenders. The Local DNA Index System (LDIS) is used by local laboratories.

¹ DNA, or deoxyribonucleic acid, is genetic material found in almost all living cells that contains encoded information necessary for building and maintaining life. Approximately 99.9-percent of human DNA is the same for all people. The differences found in the remaining 0.1-percent allow scientists to develop a unique set of DNA identification characteristics (a DNA profile) for an individual by analyzing a specimen containing DNA.

The objectives of our audit were to determine if the: (1) Laboratory was in compliance with the NDIS participation requirements; (2) Laboratory was in compliance with the Quality Assurance Standards (QAS) issued by the FBI; and (3) Laboratory's forensic DNA profiles in CODIS databases were complete, accurate, and allowable for inclusion in NDIS. The results of our review are below.

- The Laboratory was in compliance with the NDIS participation requirements. Specifically, we found that CODIS access is properly safeguarded, Laboratory personnel requirements are being fulfilled, and policies and procedures related to NDIS are available and followed by Laboratory staff.
- We reviewed the most recent internal and external audits and Laboratory policies and procedures related to sample security, sample processing, sample retention, and subcontracts. We found the Laboratory to be in compliance with the QAS.
- The Laboratory's 80 forensic DNA profiles that we reviewed were complete, accurate, and allowable for inclusion in NDIS.

The results of our audit are discussed in detail in the Findings section of the report. Our audit objectives, scope, and methodology are detailed in Appendix I of the report and the audit criteria are detailed in Appendix II.

We discussed the results of our audit with Laboratory officials and have included their comments in the report as applicable. Since we make no formal recommendations for corrective action the FBI did not provide a response to the draft report.