

IMPACT OF RAPID DNA ON CRIMINAL CASEWORK AT NEW CASTLE COUNTY POLICE

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Utilizing advanced technology to increase effective man-hours and improve criminal case resolution is an integral part of law enforcement today. Toward that end, the New Castle County Police Department has implemented a Rapid DNA solution to enable the Evidence Detection Unit (EDU) to provide timely DNA identification. Over the past year, the EDU's utilization of Rapid DNA has demonstrated a statistically significant impact on casework results as well as greatly reducing the time to achieve a DNA ID. Statistics gathered over the past year and specific case studies will be presented.

The New Castle County Police Department (NCCPD) applied for, and was awarded, a Bureau of Justice Assistance, Technology Innovation for Public Safety (TIPS) Program grant to provide a cost-effective and time-effective solution for testing DNA gathered from crime scenes and compare to profiles within the local database. An ANDE Rapid DNA System was procured, using the TIPS funding, through a competitive RFP and has been in use by the New Castle County Police EDU team since June, 2017. The EDU team are trained, experienced crime scene investigators, led by a Supervising Sergeant and gather evidence on priority crime scenes. NCCPD Evidence Specialists assigned to the Patrol Division are also trained to collect DNA samples from their individual crime scenes if the EDU team were not dispatched. Initial training on operation of the ANDE Rapid DNA System and recommendations for successful sample collection were provided by the manufacturer and included hands-on exercises in which mock crime scene samples were collected, documented, and tested. The EDU Supervising Sergeant provides on-going training on the Rapid DNA System for new hires and any solution updates to the entire team. The ANDE System is used to test all sample types collected in association with criminal investigations including buccal swabs, blood, cigarette butts, and touch samples.

The Rapid DNA technology has shown a proven record of success at the NNCPD. The presented charts and statistics show the positive impact of the solution on criminal casework and the effectiveness of the DNA ID profile matching. Utilization will continue to evolve as feedback of individual sample collector statistics are being provided and a greater variety of unique crime scene scenarios are experienced. The success of the solution has substantiated the support for the initiative, from the individual Detectives up through the County Executive, and ensured the continued viability into the future of Rapid DNA at New Castle County Police.