



GEORGIA BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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OPERATIONS BULLETIN 2012-01

FEBRUARY 27, 2012

FORENSIC BIOLOGY CONTACT DNA TESTING UPDATE

The purpose of this bulletin is to notify local agencies that contact or 'touch' DNA testing may be utilized as part of the investigation into use of force cases. Contact DNA does not provide useful information in every case as is often portrayed in television dramas. In fact, the likelihood of obtaining DNA results in this type of testing is relatively low unless the individual exerted significant pressure on the item or the individual had repeated contact with the item over an extended period of time. The GBI Crime Lab will conduct testing for contact DNA where there is a significant question in the investigation that has the potential to be answered by the testing and the evidence is suitable for testing. Not every use of force incident will produce evidence suitable for DNA testing. **Discussions with lab personnel must take place prior to evidence submission to determine the appropriateness and feasibility of DNA testing in a specific use of force investigation.**

Every consideration should be given to collecting any weapon that was allegedly used or possessed by the subject on whom force by a law enforcement officer was used. This would include weapons near the person or weapons discarded by the subject during pursuit. Contact DNA testing may also apply to situations where a subject struggles over an officer's weapon that resulted in a use of force incident. Due to the sensitive nature of contact DNA testing, extreme caution should be taken when handling or collecting such items to avoid the investigating officers leaving their DNA on the item(s).

If there are any questions regarding this bulletin please contact Forensic Biology Manager Ted Staples at 404-270-8041, via email at ted.staples@gbi.ga.gov or myself at 404-270-8082, george.herrin@gbi.ga.gov.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Herrin, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

George Herrin, Jr., Ph.D.
GBI-DOFS Deputy Director