

Josh Kaul
Wisconsin Attorney General



P.O. Box 7857
Madison, WI 53707-7857

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 13, 2024

Attorney General Kaul Releases 2023 Annual Crime Lab Report *Need for Additional Staff Remains Clear*

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul today released the 2023 Annual Report for the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Division of Forensic Sciences (DFS) crime laboratories.

“The work of our state crime labs is essential to protecting public safety and ensuring that criminal investigations and prosecutions lead to justice,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul. “The upcoming state budget must make the investment needed to adequately staff the labs.”

2023 annual report:

- Progress was made in enhancing the infrastructure and technology for the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories. The implementation of a new Laboratory Information Management System will significantly improve the way cases are tracked and improve processes, with the first phase of the system to be fully implemented in 2025. In addition, the groundbreaking for the new Southeast Regional Crime Laboratory took place in 2023, with occupancy scheduled for 2026.
- In 2023, DFS continued to track significant drug trends, including an increase in cases involving fentanyl or a fentanyl analogue, with 765 of these cases. Xylazine was identified in 64 cases. And of the cases sent to the Controlled Substances Unit, more than one in four involved mixtures.
- A Legislative Audit Bureau report regarding the timeliness of WSCL analyses did not include any recommendations that would meaningfully reduce

turnaround times, providing further evidence of the need for the state legislature to invest in and authorize more staff for the crime labs.

About DFS

The Division of Forensic Sciences (DFS) was established as an independent division of Wisconsin DOJ in 2019, though the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory (WSCL) was originally established in 1947. DFS employs over 190 people—including forensic scientists, technicians, evidence specialists, and crime scene response professionals—and offers impartial forensic analysis in the following areas: toxicology, drug identification, biology/DNA analysis, DNA database, trace evidence analysis, firearms examination, toolmark examination, latent print examination, footwear analysis, ten print comparison, forensic imaging, and video analysis. DFS also staffs on-call Crime Scene Response Units, located at each laboratory, to assist law enforcement at major crime scenes by processing the crime scene and maintaining evidence integrity.

The Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory is the only full-service forensic science laboratory system in Wisconsin. WSCL is not a diagnostic laboratory system; the circumstances of each case submitted to DFS are unique.

DFS continues to demonstrate unwavering commitment to quality and excellence in forensic science. DFS's highly skilled scientists and professionals work diligently to provide critical support in solving crimes, to process lawfully owed samples and add them to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Combined DNA Information System (CODIS), to provide testimony, and to offer technical assistance to law enforcement in the field.