



Report to Council

Sexual Assault Kit Project

August 2016

Background

In January 2015, the King County Sheriff's Office conducted an audit of the sexual assault kits stored at the Property Management Unit. At that time, it appeared 432 kits had never been sent to the Washington State Patrol Crime Lab (WSPCL) for forensic testing. In July 2015, the Property Management Unit provided an inventory list which showed 378 sexual assault kits were in evidence and had not been sent to the WSPCL. This number has since been reduced to 248 through additional verification and auditing efforts. The discrepancy is also partially attributable to the fact a number of kits were processed as part of ongoing investigations between the January 2015 when the initial audit was conducted and July 2015.

On July 24, 2015, Substitute House Bill 1068 went into effect requiring all sexual assault kits in police custody to be submitted to the WSPCL for testing. This legislation applies to kits received by law enforcement prospectively. The King County Sheriff's Office has implemented new protocols to comply with the new legislation.

The bill also created a task force to address the untested kits already in the custody of law enforcement prior to the July 24 effective date. The task force was required to submit a preliminary report to the Governor by December 1, 2015, with a final report due by September 30, 2016.

In September 2015, the Council appropriated \$200,000 for KCSO to review the case files associated with untested kits, prioritize those cases for testing and investigate any subsequent leads. This report is responsive to King County Ordinance 18110 Section 6, P3 amending the 2015/2016 Biennial Budget Ordinance, Ordinance 17941, Section 20.

Progress Report

With the help of a grant from the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC), eight KCSO detectives began the process of referring paperwork for the untested sexual assault kits to WSPCL in February 2016. To date, every outstanding sexual assault kit has been referred to WSPCL, or an outside lab with the help of the WASPC grant. So far, no new leads have been developed from testing of these kits. It's important to note that just because the kits have been referred to a lab does not necessarily mean that the kits have yet been tested. Labs have their own protocols for prioritization that KCSO has zero control over. Due to the full referral of sexual assault kits to labs, this report will serve as both the second and final reports required by the proviso.