

# Missouri Association of Prosecuting Attorneys

## Forensics Best Practices Subcommittee (Communicating With Crime Labs) (Approved August 2014)

Note: A best practices recommendation of the Missouri Association of Prosecuting Attorneys is the product of careful consideration by experienced prosecuting attorneys. However, it is only a recommendation. A best practices recommendation may or may not be feasible or desirable to implement in every jurisdiction. There may be other methods in local jurisdictions to reach the same or similar objectives.

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** Prosecutors, law enforcement agencies and crime laboratory personnel should conduct quarterly meetings to discuss policy issues relating to evidence collection, retention and testing, and any other issues affecting the working relationship of these agencies. Attendees at these meetings should be high-level administrators with broad authority. In order to make the meetings manageable and productive, prosecutors, sheriffs and police departments should select representatives from their Associations within Highway Patrol Troop jurisdictions to represent their respective disciplines. For example, the prosecutors within a particular Highway Patrol Troop should select at least one prosecutor to represent them at these meetings.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** Prosecutors, law enforcement agencies and crime laboratory analysts who will conduct the testing should meet in person or via telephone conference as soon as practicable in any cases involving serious violent or sexual offenses where significant forensic evidence may exist to discuss the facts of the case and make evidence selection and testing decisions.

*Commentary: The timing of these meetings may vary depending on the size and resources of various jurisdictions, and whether or not charges have been filed. Individual jurisdictions should communicate internally to determine what works best on an ad hoc basis.*