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## San Mateo County Crime Laboratory

### Issue

Has the San Mateo County Crime Laboratory adopted the recommendations of the 2002-2003 Civil Grand Jury?

### Summary Report

The 2002-2003 San Mateo Civil Grand Jury investigated the Crime Laboratory guided, in part, by the standards of The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/ Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB) for accreditation. Sixty-seven changes were recommended. In a 45-page response, the County Sheriff agreed with most of the recommendations. Where he disagreed, appropriate explanations were provided.

Some of the deficiencies mentioned in the report included:

1. quarters were too small and inefficient
2. lacked several items of modern scientific equipment
3. could not always analyze crime scenes
4. was unable to analyze some types of crime scene evidence, including DNA evidence in particular, which it was forced to contract out
5. lacked a professional administrator
6. was not able to serve adequately the District Attorney's Office or the various police agencies in the county who relied on it.
7. did not correctly log-in, maintain, and secure items of evidence necessary for criminal trials
8. was one of only four crime laboratories in the State of California not accredited by ASCLD/LAB.

Most of the recommendations of the 2002-2003 Grand Jury have already been implemented. The laboratory has moved into new, larger, and more modern quarters, and a professional administrator has been appointed as its new director. More importantly, because the laboratory has remedied almost all of the deficiencies listed above, it applied for accreditation by the ASCLD/LAB. The director is quite confident that the laboratory will be accredited after its final inspection scheduled for the middle of June 2005.

Some of the items listed above are not part of the standards of an ASCLD/LAB accreditation. For example, DNA analyses will continue to be contracted out to Santa Clara County until sufficient expertise can be established at the San Mateo laboratory. Crime scene investigations will continue to be conducted by police officers, except in especially high profile cases.

If the County Crime Laboratory obtains accreditation from ASCLD/LAB in June 2005, as currently scheduled, no further action is required.