

DOUGLAS COUNTY
SHERIFF
NEBRASKA

MEDIA RELEASE



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Sheriff's Crime Lab Achieves Dual Accreditation

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office (DCSO) is pleased to announce that the DCSO Forensic Services Division Crime Laboratory, under the direction of R. Justin Aumann, has achieved accreditation to the International Standards ISO/IEC 17025 (Crime Lab) and ISO/IEC 17020 (Crime Scene Investigators and Latent Prints). This prestigious accomplishment of dual accreditation was granted by the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB), a world-wide forensic accrediting body that represents over 2,000 accredited labs.

With dual accreditation, the DCSO Forensic Services Division (FSD) Crime Laboratory becomes only the 6th crime lab in the United States to achieve accreditation to both ISO standards. The DCSO is the first and only law enforcement agency in the state of Nebraska to have an accredited Crime Scene Investigation Unit (CSI).

“Accreditation is critical to operating a respected forensics lab. It promotes confidence in the process for law enforcement, prosecutors and the citizens we serve. Dual accreditation positions the Douglas County Lab as a leader in the field of evidence collection and analysis.”

-Sheriff Tim Dunning

The decision to pursue dual accreditation was based on the generous scope of services provided by the DCSO Crime Lab. The ISO/IEC 17025 standard was designed for laboratories that perform testing and/or calibrations (e.g., Drug Chemistry, Toxicology, etc.). Under this standard, individuals typically use analytical instrumentation to identify unknown substances. In contrast, the ISO/IEC 17020 standard was designed for entities that perform inspections (e.g., CSI, Latent Prints, etc.). Under this standard, individuals typically compare items against a defined criteria or specification and make a conclusion based on professional judgment.

Because the DCSO Crime Lab offers both testing and inspection services, dual accreditation was clearly the best fit. Although adhering to two standards ultimately

requires more work, it has proven to be the appropriate design for our modern and progressive lab. We believe that more labs will pursue this model in the future. As part of the accreditation process, the FSD underwent a rigorous on-site audit by a team of ANAB assessors. This audit entailed, but was not limited to, a thorough examination of the lab's policies and procedures, a facility inspection, a review of case records, and an evaluation of the competence of the FSD staff via interviews and direct observation. The auditors assessed the lab's compliance with the 32 clauses and 221 subsections of the ISO standards and the 124 supplemental requirements of the accrediting body. Overall, the auditors stated they were very impressed with the lab's facilities and commended the personnel on the superb quality of their policy and procedure manuals.

On October 26, 2016, the DCSO was informed by representatives of ANAB that the DCSO Crime Lab had officially been awarded dual accreditation. The DCSO is planning a formal ceremony in early November to honor the FSD personnel for this exceptional achievement. A separate announcement regarding the ceremony will follow.