



# HFSC's Digital and Multimedia Evidence Section Eliminates Backlog

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The Houston Forensic Science Center's Digital and Multimedia Evidence Section has eliminated a longstanding backlog and is now completing nearly all requests in less than 30 days.

"HFSC's Digital and Multimedia Evidence Section has been working toward this milestone for more than a year, and we are especially proud of this achievement because at the same time they were tackling the backlog they also met the requirements for international accreditation," said Dr. Peter Stout, HFSC's CEO and president.

"However, we are not yet satisfied. While evidence in these areas is now being processed in less than 30 days, we know investigators often need the information within hours and we will work to achieve that goal," Stout said.

The Digital and Multimedia Evidence Section analyzes audio and video, as well as cellphones, laptops and other digital devices. The information found in these electronics can at times be crucial at the start of an investigation.

At the moment, audio/video work is being completed on average within 16 days. Digital analysis is being done on average within 24 days. A year ago that work took on average more than 110 days to complete.

At times, HFSC sends an analyst to a crime scene to assist officers with onsite data retrieval, however, a full analysis often requires additional work that can only be done with HFSC lab equipment.

“Our ultimate goal is to provide investigators with quick, accurate, impartial scientific analysis that can be used to help solve a crime,” said Ryan Johnson, manager of the Digital and Multimedia Evidence Section. “We will continue to work with our stakeholders to ensure their needs are met.”

HFSC is a local government corporation that provides forensic services to the City of Houston and other local agencies. HFSC is overseen by a Board of Directors appointed by the Mayor of Houston and confirmed by the Houston City Council. Its management structure is designed to be responsive to a 2009 recommendation by the National Academy of Sciences that called for crime laboratories to be independent of law enforcement and prosecutorial branches of government.

HFSC operates in eight forensic disciplines.

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