

ATTORNEY GENERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT DIRECTIVE 2006-1

NEW JERSEY FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION

WHEREAS, it is the public policy of New Jersey, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 52:17B-98, to encourage cooperation among law enforcement officers and to provide for the general supervision of criminal justice by the Attorney General as chief law enforcement officer of the State, in order to secure the benefits of a uniform and efficient enforcement of the criminal law and the administration of criminal justice throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, the Attorney General is further empowered to establish procedures and implement administrative strategies to enhance and assure the integrity of criminal investigations and prosecutions in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, there have been tremendous advances in the area of forensic science, which technological progress has contributed significantly to the efficacy and efficiency of law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, through its criminal justice system, the State of New Jersey has access to an impressive array of forensic science experts who possess a high degree of skill, knowledge and experience in forensic testing and analysis, including state and county forensic and toxicology laboratory personnel, county prosecutor's offices, the State Police, and the medical examiner system;

WHEREAS, New Jersey has made significant strides in its efforts to maximize the utility of these advanced technologies and human resources in the

criminal justice system, as evidenced by the May 17, 2004 opening of the New Jersey Forensic Science Center, a state-of-the-art forensic laboratory that is part of the Department of Law and Public Safety and located in Hamilton Township, which provides critical technology to assist law enforcement in crime scene investigations and crime solving; and

WHEREAS, the extraordinary resources of New Jersey's state-of-the-art forensic science laboratory and county laboratories can be maximized to enable more effective crime solving and criminal prosecutions in all twenty-one (21) counties; and

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest to optimize the efficiency and productivity of New Jersey's forensic science laboratory by establishing and implementing best practices in the provision of forensic science services throughout the State in an ordered and coordinated fashion;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Peter C. Harvey, Attorney General of the State of New Jersey, do hereby **ORDER** and **DIRECT** the following:

1. Establishment of the Forensic Science Commission.

a. There is created in the Department of Law and Public Safety the Forensic Science Commission, which shall consist of thirty-two (32) voting members appointed by the Attorney General, including representatives selected from among state and county forensic experts, forensic pathologists, forensic toxicologists,

prosecutors and crime scene examiners. The Attorney General shall designate the chairperson(s) and vice-chairperson of the Commission. Any vacancy on the Commission shall be filled by appointment of the Attorney General.

b. Each member shall serve for an initial term of two (2) years, and thereafter each member shall serve until that member's successor is appointed.

c. Members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

d. The Commission shall meet no less than four times per year and up to twelve times per year at the direction of the chairperson(s).

e. The Commission shall establish rules and procedures regarding the conduct of its meetings.

2. Duties and Responsibilities of the Forensic Science Commission.

a. The Commission shall promulgate a forensic plan for the State of New Jersey, which shall provide for a clear and consistent state-wide approach to forensic science and crime scene investigation.

b. The Commission shall create an accreditation system for all forensic laboratories in the State of New Jersey, including establishing best practices and recommendations for evidence collection and submission, criminalistic examinations, laboratory protocols and testing procedures in every major forensics area and by establishing training recommendations for staff and creating a "flow-

scheme” for forensic evidence processing.

c. The best practices standards shall be designed to accomplish the following objectives:

(1) establish and maintain the effectiveness, efficiency, reliability and accuracy of forensic laboratories in the State;

(2) ensure that forensic analyses are performed in accordance with the highest scientific standards practicable;

(3) promote increased cooperation and coordination among forensic laboratories and other agencies in the criminal justice system by avoiding duplication of efforts, resources and activities and streamlining procedures;

(4) establish efficient case processing which is clear, concise, direct and uniform in order to achieve the lowest turn-around times to deliver the forensic analysis results for effective prosecution of criminal cases;

(5) ensure that all information relevant to solve crimes is extracted from evidence collected and analyzed;

(6) establish minimum requirements for the quality and maintenance of equipment; and

(7) ensure compatibility with other state and federal forensic laboratories to the extent necessary to share and exchange information, data and results of forensic tests and analyses.

d. The Commission shall report annually to the Attorney General, through

the Division of Criminal Justice, regarding the State Forensic Plan and any recommendations the Commission may make regarding the Plan.

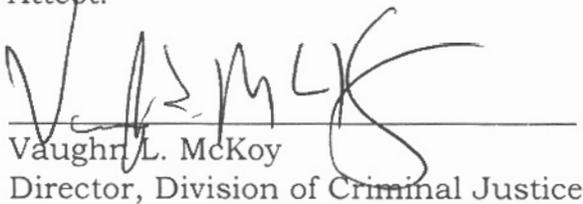
3. Access to Departmental Resources.

The Commission shall be authorized to call upon the expertise and assistance of every division, agency, office, bureau and unit within the Department of Law and Public Safety in order to carry out its mission. Each division, agency, office, bureau and unit within the Department of Law and Public Safety is hereby required, to the extent not inconsistent with law, to cooperate with the Commission and to provide such assistance the Commission may require to accomplish the purposes of this Directive.



PETER C. HARVEY
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attest:



Vaughn L. McKoy
Director, Division of Criminal Justice

DATED: 1/10/06