



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Acting Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 22, 2013

Contact: Bill Reynolds
518.474.1010

NYS INSPECTOR GENERAL'S INVESTIGATION FINDS NO NEGLIGENCE OR MISCONDUCT BY ONONDAGA COUNTY CRIME LAB

An investigation by the office of New York State Acting Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott found no serious negligence or misconduct by the Onondaga County Health Department Center for Forensic Sciences (Crime Lab). The Inspector General launched the investigation upon the request of the New York State Commission on Forensic Science (Forensic Commission), which had been notified that the Syracuse Police Department (Police Department) had made complaints of negligence and misconduct at the Crime Lab.

“Pursuant to federal law, my office has been designated to conduct independent investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct affecting the integrity of crime labs in New York State,” explained Acting Inspector General Scott. “We conducted a comprehensive investigation, recognizing the great importance of public confidence in the operation of the Crime Lab. Upon investigating the complaints we received, however, we found no evidence to support the claims made against the Onondaga County Health Department Center for Forensic Sciences, and now consider the matter closed.”

In October 2012, the Police Department complained about a number of allegedly improper actions by the Crime Lab. Specifically, eight categories of complaints were alleged, including: inappropriate communications between the Crime Lab and the Onondaga District Attorney's Office during open investigations; lack of communication between the Crime Lab and the Police Department; inaccurate test results of an incident involving the Police Department; Crime Lab's termination of its Trace Evidence Section; improper use of police reports; Crime Lab's disregard of the Police Department's testing requests; incomplete examinations; and improper lab procedures. The Inspector General's office conducted an exhaustive investigation into each of the allegations made and found no misconduct.

A common thread of the allegations was that the Crime Lab failed to adequately communicate with the Police Department on case matters. However, the Inspector General found that the Police Department itself often failed to adequately communicate with the Crime Lab, and that the Police Department also appeared to have a lack of understanding of the Crime Lab's procedures and authority. Noting that the Crime Lab routinely provides training to agencies utilizing its services, the Inspector General's Office recommended in its report that the Crime Lab provide specific training to the Police Department, and that the Police Department ensure its command and staff take advantage of that service.

The Crime Lab receives funding as part of the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Justice. To comply with a federal requirement that agencies receiving Coverdell funding certify there is an independent agency in place to conduct

investigations into allegations of serious negligence or misconduct, the Forensic Commission designated the Inspector General's Office to conduct such investigations.

Click [here](#) for a copy of the report.

###

Additional releases available at www.ig.ny.gov

For more information contact (518) 474-1010