

Sexual Assault Kit Testing Process

Glossary

Combined DNA Index System (CODIS): The Combined DNA Index System, or CODIS, blends forensic science and computer technology into a tool for linking violent crimes. It enables federal, state, and local forensic laboratories to exchange and compare DNA profiles electronically, thereby linking serial violent crimes to each other and to known offenders. (Definition taken from the FBI's Combined DNA Index System website.)

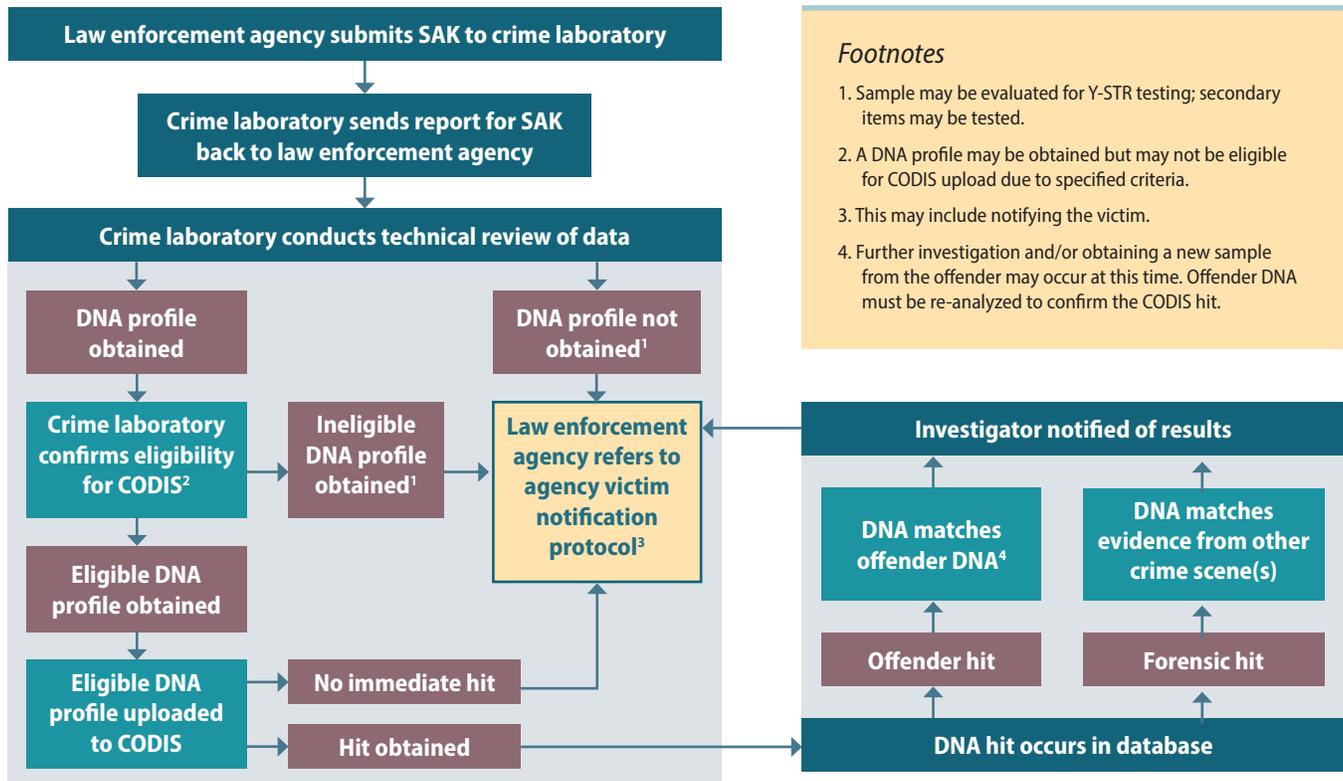
DNA profile: A genetic analysis used to identify an offender or link case evidence together; the DNA profile is generated after biological evidence is collected and analyzed.

Forensic hit: A DNA profile from the SAK/crime scene that matches a DNA profile from another SAK/crime scene, thus linking the two crimes.

Hit: A match between two (or more) DNA profiles that provides law enforcement with an investigative lead.

Offender hit: A known reference sample (offender or arrestee) that matches a DNA profile entered from a SAK/crime scene, thus identifying a possible perpetrator.

Sexual assault kit (SAK): A package of materials used to collect samples (evidence) from the victim's body by a medical professional, often a medical-forensic examiner, such as a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE). The contents of a SAK vary by jurisdiction but generally include swabs and collection envelopes for biological materials, debris, and relevant clothing.



Footnotes

1. Sample may be evaluated for Y-STR testing; secondary items may be tested.
2. A DNA profile may be obtained but may not be eligible for CODIS upload due to specified criteria.
3. This may include notifying the victim.
4. Further investigation and/or obtaining a new sample from the offender may occur at this time. Offender DNA must be re-analyzed to confirm the CODIS hit.