

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

Sexual Assault Kit (SAK)

A package of items used by medical staff to gather and preserve physical evidence from a person's body following a report of a sexual assault.

Unsubmitted SAK

SAKs that have not been submitted to a forensic laboratory for testing and analysis using CODIS-eligible DNA methodologies.

CODIS

The Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) is a federal, state and local database that contains DNA profiles from known offenders and crime scenes. CODIS is used to generate investigative leads.

CODIS Hit

When a DNA profile is uploaded into CODIS and finds a matching DNA profile from a separate criminal offense or known offender, it is referred to as a "CODIS Hit" and can be used as an investigative lead by law enforcement.

Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Hotline:

888-KIT-LINE
ContactSAKI@doj.mt.gov

Or visit
<https://dojmt.gov/SAKI>

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Division of Criminal Investigation
Children's Justice Bureau
SAKI Program
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This project was supported by Grant No. 2016-AK-BX-KO15 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. 500 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of approximately \$0.44 per copy, for a total cost of \$221.22 which includes \$221.22 for printing and \$0.00 for distribution.

SAKI

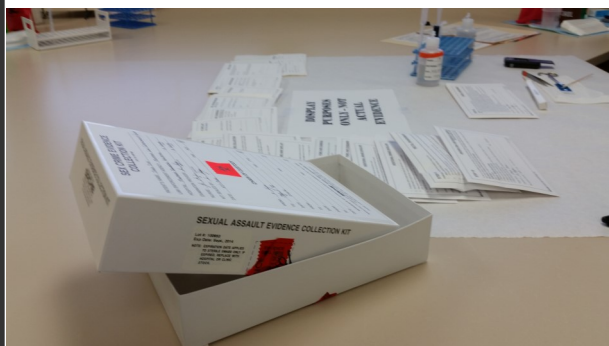
Sexual Assault Kit Initiative



Montana SAKI Project

In 2016, the Montana Department of Justice was chosen as one of twenty recipients in the country for the National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) Grant and received \$2,000,000 from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. This money will be used to test previously unsubmitted sexual assault kits, strengthen victim services, prevent revictimization, and develop recommendations to help prevent future build up of kits.

This project examines the issue of previously unsubmitted sexual assault kits in Montana. The Montana DOJ Division of Criminal Investigation has surveyed the state's law enforcement community to determine how many of these kits exist in Montana. SAKI is testing the kits and tracking them through the system. It is important to all involved in the project that survivors of sexual assault receive appropriate services.



GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Reduce victimization
- Encourage reporting of sexual assault
- Increase survivor services/support
- Use science and technology to prevent crime and bring offenders to trial
- Identify and charge repeat offenders
- Eliminate factors adding to the build up of sexual assault kits
- Create best practice recommendations and standards for sexual assault cases
- Implement standard policies to reduce unnecessary inventory of Sexual Assault Kits
- Improve and increase statewide sexual assault case trainings available for law enforcement and prosecution
- Encourage communication between criminal justice agencies and advocates to ensure support for survivors of sexual assault

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why haven't some sexual assault kits been submitted?

Sexual assault kits are not submitted for many different reasons, and policies regarding submission vary among jurisdictions. Some of the reasons kits were not previously submitted for DNA include: The accused person pled guilty, and no kit was needed to prove the case; law enforcement investigation did not result in charges and/or prosecution was declined; the survivor chose to discontinue their involvement in the case; and often, it is due to a lack of resources and training for all involved to understand the importance of testing sexual assault kits to identify repeat offenders and link cases together.

Why is my sexual assault kit getting tested now?

The Montana Department of Justice recognizes the importance of examining previously unsubmitted sexual assault kits in our state. Research and case experience supports the value of collecting and testing sexual assault evidence. Advances in science and technology can be leveraged to the benefit of these investigations more today than ever before. Cases may be linked and serial offenders identified, which may prevent subsequent assault. For further information regarding your case, we encourage you to contact the SAKI Information Hotline at 888-548-5463.

What is being done to prevent the build up of sexual assault kits in the future?

To address an issue that has evolved over time is a very complex process and it continues to be a work in progress. The SAKI team is working with a multidisciplinary team of subject matter experts to review current practices, identify where change is needed, and develop a path forward. This systemic approach will take time, while continuing to be mindful of the needs the criminal justice community has for forensic laboratory services in the State of Montana.