

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE Crime Lab Request for a Toxicologist

Background

The Toxicology Section of the crime laboratory in Missoula:

- analyzes biological specimens submitted by law enforcement, correctional agencies, county coroners and forensic pathologists
- aids in establishing the cause or circumstances of death in post-mortem investigations
- confirms the presence or absence of alcohol and/or drugs in corrections programs submissions and in cases involving driving under the influence

Workload Increases

Since 1991, the Toxicology section has experienced a **160% increase in case submissions**, with no new staff. In addition, the types of cases it receives are more complex and more time consuming. Many cases involve multiple drugs, each of which usually must be analyzed and quantified. Even though the lab has acquired more instrumentation with robotics, the steadily increasing workload adds to the stress each of the Toxicologists encounters. The continual pressure to produce increases the likelihood of error.

The lab has instituted new quality assurance and quality control measures necessary for accreditation in the forensic science field. These new standards have increased the documentation that is required for each case.

A recent audit team from the American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT) noted that **the lab's four toxicologists are doing the work of eight ABFT toxicologists.**

Expenditure and Funding Summary

	<u>FY 06</u>	<u>FY07</u>
FTE	1.0	1.0
Personal Services	\$60,293	\$60,293
Operating Expenses	<u>3010</u>	<u>3,010</u>
Total General Fund	\$63,303	\$63,303