



ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCES

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December 10, 2021

**To: ADFS Submitters of Fire Debris Evidence**  
**Re: Change in Case Acceptance Policy for Fire Debris Evidence**

This letter is being provided to notify you of an upcoming change in the Case Acceptance policy for Fire Debris examinations at the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences (ADFS). With the recent retirement of ADFS' Fire Debris analyst, we no longer possess the in-house capability to examine Fire Debris evidence.

A review of Fire Debris cases submitted to ADFS has revealed that annual requests for Fire Debris examinations have fallen to less than 0.3% of all ADFS case submissions, with ADFS having to provide expert witness testimony in Fire Debris cases – statewide – approximately once every three (3) years.

As an alternative to in-house analyses, ADFS is in the process of establishing a professional services contract with an accredited fee for service laboratory to provide Fire Debris examinations, which will be available on a case by case basis. That service will be limited, however, to case types involving crimes against persons (i.e. involving a fatality), as that is the most cost effective and efficient use of our limited resources.

Therefore, effective February 1, 2022, requests for Fire Debris examinations will only be accepted by ADFS for cases involving crimes against persons (i.e. fatalities). For those cases, ADFS will continue to provide the necessary testing for your office, free of charge, under ADFS' professional services contract with an accredited fee for service laboratory. Fire Debris cases involving crimes against property will no longer be accepted by ADFS after February 1, 2022.

An important factor in this decision was the fact that, over the course of the last decade, the ability of Fire Debris analyses to provide probative scientific information on cases involving crimes against property has become increasingly limited, as petroleum based products and their associated distillate byproducts are routinely being used in the manufacture of many household materials and furnishings.

However, should your office wish to pursue Fire Debris examinations for cases involving crimes against property after February 1, 2022, we will gladly assist you in identifying an accredited laboratory who may be able to fulfill those requests. In researching this issue, ADFS has discovered the current cost for Fire Debris examinations at an accredited fee for service laboratory, per evidence can, is approximately \$150-\$200.

Please feel free to contact me directly at [a.dellamanna@adfs.alabama.gov](mailto:a.dellamanna@adfs.alabama.gov) should you wish to discuss this further and/or if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angelo Della Manna".

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Angelo Della Manna  
Director