

Laboratory Management

Efficiency Efforts: An Examiner-Friendly Approach to Improving Laboratory Operations

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Abstract: This presentation will focus on the lab-wide "Efficiency Efforts" that were conducted at the Defense Forensic Science Center. This simple approach was used to understand and optimize case work by identifying and eliminating operational bottlenecks and minimizing unnecessary dwell times. The Efficiency Efforts utilized three straightforward sources of input (time tracking, process mapping and improvement boards) to help recognize and prioritize the best opportunities to save time. This information was used to write white papers that clearly defined the actual issues, potential solutions, and the impacts or benefits to the lab. The white papers were briefed by examiners to leadership so they would have the ability to further explain the issues and their solutions. Once leadership was aware of the examiners' issues they knew how to help and could begin to take action. This process resulted in the decrease of turn-around-times in one branch by more than 50%. Overall, the Efficiency Efforts helped the Defense Forensic Science Center streamline operations and save examiners time, which ultimately helped the lab obtain even faster turn-around times.