

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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SDPD clears Sexual Assault Evidence Kit backlog, now testing faster than ever

San Diego – For the first time since 2019, the San Diego Police Department has zero untested Sexual Assault Evidence Kits (SAEKs) – a major milestone years in the making.

Thanks to investments and improvements in training, technology, workspace upgrades, and improved workflows, the SDPD Crime Lab is now testing SAEKs faster than ever, averaging a 45-day turnaround, well ahead of the 145-day requirement set by California Senate Bill 22 (SB22). These kits play a critical role in identifying sexual assault offenders, supporting prosecutions, and delivering justice to survivors.

When SB22 passed in 2019, law enforcement agencies across California were required to conduct more timely DNA analyses of Sexual Assault Evidence Kits. In August of that year, SDPD had an estimated 1,800 untested kits and in 2020 turned to a contracted lab, Bode Cellmark Forensics, to help meet the mandate. The work was divided into three phases:

- 450 SB 22-mandated kits from 2016-2019. These were tested by December 2021.
- 1,350 “historical” kits from before 2016. These were tested by October 2024.
- 873 kits from 2020-2024. These were tested by November 2024.

While Bode focused on the backlog, SDPD laid the groundwork to bring all future testing in-house. Between 2020 and 2024, the department invested in staffing, lab renovations, new equipment and streamlined procedures to ensure incoming kits could be processed efficiently and thoroughly.

As of November 2024, SDPD’s Forensic Biology Unit officially took over SAEK testing. Since then, the lab has completed 129 kits, averaging 22–23 per month. There is currently no backlog.

SDPD presented this update today at the city’s Public Safety Committee. This progress was made possible by the strong support of City Council and the exceptional work of the SDPD Crime Laboratory team, whose dedication to excellence plays a vital role in keeping our communities safe.

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