



Resources and Tools

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Why do toxicology labs matter in determining guilt or innocence in impaired-driving cases?

Laboratory testing provides the definitive evidence needed to prove—or rule out—impairment by drugs or alcohol. Without timely lab results, prosecutors may be forced to drop or reduce charges, while innocent drivers may remain in legal limbo.

2. Can courts rely on field tests or roadside screenings instead of lab confirmation?

No. Roadside breath tests work for alcohol, but most other drugs cannot be detected or accurately quantified without laboratory analysis. Courts generally require toxicology confirmation before proceeding with prosecution—especially in serious injury or repeat-offender cases.

3. What happens when lab results are delayed?

Delayed results weaken cases. Prosecutors may miss filing deadlines, defendants may go months without resolution, and judges may dismiss charges due to procedural delays. Justice delayed can become justice denied—for both victims and defendants.

4. Is this just a criminal justice efficiency issue, or does it affect public safety?

Both. When impaired drivers avoid accountability due to lab backlogs, it undermines deterrence and weakens public trust. Strengthening labs ensures that dangerous drivers are prosecuted swiftly and appropriately—which in turn increases compliance with impaired-driving laws.

5. What specific policy solutions can lawmakers pursue?

Legislature-led investments in forensic staffing, modern testing instruments, regional lab expansion, and mandated reporting on turnaround times can dramatically improve case processing and conviction integrity—without increasing enforcement burdens on officers or courts.

Additional Resources:

- 1) Responsibility.org
 - a) [Critical DUI System Reforms: Toxicology](#)
- 2) US Department of Transportation
 - a) [Drug Testing Laboratories](#)
- 3) Society of Forensic Toxicologists
 - a) [Tox Talk: Three Things You Should Know About Obtaining Toxicology Resources](#)
- 4) The Center for Forensic Science Research & Education
 - a) [Assessing Impaired Driving Through Comprehensive Forensic Toxicology: A Multistate Approach](#)
- 5) National Transportation Safety Board
 - a) [Alcohol, Other Drug, and Multiple Drug Use Among Drivers](#)