

<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2013/February/13-dag-203.html>

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, February 15, 2013

**Department of Justice and National Institute of Standards and Technology Announce
Launch of National Commission on Forensic Science**

The U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) announced today the establishment of a National Commission on Forensic Science as part of a new initiative to strengthen and enhance the practice of forensic science.

The National Commission on Forensic Science will be composed of approximately 30 members, bringing together forensic science service practitioners, academic researchers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges and other relevant stakeholders to develop policy recommendations for the Attorney General. The commission will consider guidance on practices for federal, state and local forensic science laboratories developed by groups of forensic science practitioners and academic researchers administered by NIST.

"Forensic science is an essential tool in the administration of justice and needs to be continually evaluated as science progresses," said Deputy Attorney General James M. Cole. "Forensic science helps identify perpetrators, convict the guilty, exonerate the innocent, and protect public safety. This initiative is led by the principle that scientifically valid and accurate forensic analysis strengthens all aspects of our justice system."

"The Department of Justice and the National Institute of Standards and Technology have a history of successful collaboration," said Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and NIST Director Patrick Gallagher. "Through this initiative, we will work even more closely with the forensic science community to strengthen the forensic science system."

The commission will have responsibility for developing guidance concerning the intersections between forensic science and the courtroom and developing policy recommendations, including uniform codes for professional responsibility and requirements for training and certification.

The new initiative provides a framework for coordination across forensic disciplines under federal leadership, with state and local participation. The Department of Justice, through its involvement in the commission, will take an active role in developing policy recommendations and coordinating implementation. The NIST-administered guidance groups will develop and

propose discipline-specific practice guidance that will become publicly available and be considered for endorsement by the commission and the Attorney General. This coordinated effort will help to standardize national guidance for forensic science practitioners. Additionally, NIST will continue to develop methods for forensic measurements and validate select existing forensic science standards.

Specific criteria for membership will be announced in an upcoming *Federal Register* notice, and applicants will have 30 days from the publication of the notice to submit their applications.

As a non-regulatory agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, NIST promotes U.S. innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards and technology in ways that enhance economic security and improve our quality of life. To learn more about NIST, visit www.nist.gov .

13-203

Office of the Deputy Attorney General