Learning Objectives

By the end of the presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Understand how cases are evaluated for DNA Evidence
2. State the benefits of using accredited forensic DNA Laboratories
3. Recognize the impact of DNA evidence in the Justice System of Belize
4. Understand why the transition from hand delivery to courier service was made
5. Identify the advantages of the courier system

Abstract:

In 2011, a fatal home invasion occurred at a private residence in Belize. The suspects gained entry by breaking a glass door. Exhibits with potential DNA evidence that could provide a link to the suspects were recovered from the scene and submitted to the Belize National Forensic Science Service (BNFSS) for analysis. However, BNFSS lacked the capabilities for in-country DNA Analysis and cases like this one with potential DNA evidence had to be outsourced. In the past, this required items to be hand-delivered to a reference laboratory abroad. Today, more and more cases are being outsourced as there continues to be a demand for the use of DNA evidence by the Justice System in Belize.

This presentation will look at the developments made in outsourcing of DNA cases within the past 10 years, and will discuss the system currently in place by which the BNFSS handles such cases until the time comes when forensic DNA analysis can be done in-country.