

FAS: Physical Plant

Introduction

The Laboratory of Forensic Services is a highly specialized scientific laboratory offering forensic analytical services to the criminal justice community in Sacramento County.

Historical facts

The Laboratory of Forensic Services shared a facility, which was built in 1969, with the Sacramento County Coroner's Office.

Sacramento County began exploring the possibility of building a new forensic facility to house the crime laboratory and Coroner functions in 1987.

The building project began in January 1991, when Sacramento County contracted with the architectural firm of Ehrlich-Rominger to plan and design a combined crime laboratory and Coroner facility.

It took three years to plan and design the 84,000 square foot facility.

The facility was under construction from 1994 through 1996.

The building project cost approximately \$26 million, which included the land acquisition, architectural and consulting fees, and construction costs.

The dedication of the new facility was held on October 17, 1996.

The facility was again under construction beginning in June 2003. Five thousand square feet of undeveloped laboratory space and 2,000 square feet of finished areas underwent renovation to

- expand the DNA Laboratory
- relocate the Arson and Explosives Laboratory
- add two additional evidence examination rooms
- add additional employee office space
- enlarge the SEM/EDS Laboratory
- convert the existing Arson Laboratory to a dedicated ICP/MS Laboratory.

The \$2 million laboratory expansion project was completed on July 2, 2004.

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The current facility

The current facility houses the Sacramento County

- District Attorney Laboratory of Forensic Services,
- Department of Coroner
- General Services Facilities Management

Facilities Management personnel provide maintenance and support to the building operation.

The laboratory occupies 48,000 square feet (57%) of the facility.

Factors influencing the building project

The following factors influenced the decision to build 48,000 square feet of laboratory workspace:

- accommodation of the projected growth of the technical and support staff
 - anticipated increase in criminal case loads as a result of population increases and enforcement efforts
 - increased reliance of the courts, prosecution, and the defense community on complex forensic analyses
 - need to maximize the security and integrity of physical evidence while it is warehoused at the laboratory
 - intent to establish regional forensic services for law enforcement agencies in counties adjacent to Sacramento County.
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Environmental issues

The laboratory addressed critical workplace environmental issues, designing features into the facility that allow the technical staff to conduct analytical work in a safe manner. Some of these features include

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- computer-controlled laboratory ventilation, heating, cooling, and humidity systems
- isolated rooms for PCR/DNA analysis
- isolated evidence examination rooms
- noise containment and protection against lead deposition in the Ballistics Test Firing Laboratory
- isolated storage and ventilation of volatile, flammable, explosive, and hazardous chemicals
- fume hoods and biological safety cabinets throughout the laboratory
- seamless laboratory flooring for spill containment and easy clean-up
- safety showers and eyewash stations throughout the laboratory
- electrical power to meet current and future instrumentation power requirements
- storage space for operational supplies
- analyst's office space separate from laboratory work areas
- fire and smoke detection system.

Janitorial services

The Crime Lab/Coroner Building staffs two full-time janitorial employees to ensure good housekeeping.

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