

Michigan's Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System

In 2014, in response to the discovery of thousands of abandoned and untested sexual assault kits in Michigan the legislature passed the Sexual Assault Kit Evidence Submission Act (MCL 752.931-935). The Act was designed to ensure that all sexual assault evidence kits released to law enforcement for forensic testing are transferred and analyzed within a specific time frame. The goal is for kits that have been released to law enforcement to be tracked through the system and not be left untested.

The Michigan legislature created the Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Tracking and Reporting Commission charging it with making recommendations addressing sexual assault kit collections and tracking. The Commission recommended the development and implementation of a statewide electronic tracking system which would track the movement of sexual assault kits and provide secure electronic access for survivors to see the status of their kit within the system.

In response to the Commission's recommendations, Michigan has established a web-based system that tracks the location, movement and testing status of all collected and released sexual assault evidence kits and allows auditing to ensure compliance. Track-Kit™ is Michigan's new tracking system.

Track-Kit™ allows medical facilities, law enforcement, forensic labs, prosecutors, and survivors (anonymously) secure access to check the status of kits they have submitted or processed. It also provides survivors with easy access to resources they may find useful during this difficult time.

A phased rollout of Track-Kit™ is currently underway. The Michigan State Police (MSP) is sending emails and letters to agencies as their region is being phased into the system. Included with the email is a data collection sheet and an instructional guide. Each agency will need to fill out and return the data collection sheet to MSP. Once the completed data collection sheet is returned, the agency will be provided with web-based training sessions on how to use the system. Agencies whose users have participated in one of these training sessions will be authorized to "go live" on Track-Kit™ on the designated date for their region.

Track-Kit™ is easy to use and will allow agencies to receive an electronic notification when a kit is ready for pick-up from a medical facility, other law enforcement agency or the lab. Track-Kit™ will also give each law enforcement agency the ability to monitor its own compliance with the Sexual Assault Kit Evidence Submission Act. However, Track-Kit™ is not meant to replace current chain of custody or evidence handling procedures.

Just as importantly, Track-Kit™ increases a sense of control and justice for sexual assault survivors by allowing them to track the location of their kit and be assured that their evidence has not been forgotten or left untested.

As of January 28, 2019, law enforcement agencies in 57 counties in Michigan have already signed-on. It is important for all agencies to be part of the Track-Kit™ system.