



Blood tube vendor recalls vials, drunk driving tests at risk

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A vendor that manufactures vials used to collect blood from suspected drunk drivers has recalled thousands of items due to an error that could change the results of blood alcohol analysis.

[BD's recall statement](#) involves a lot of about 240,000 vials. The company believes only about 100 of the tubes were improperly manufactured, however, distribution of the lot began in August 2018 and the entire lot is being recalled.

The Houston Forensic Science Center had 6,000 vials from the recalled lot. Since January 1, HFSC has distributed 5,200 vials from that lot to the Houston Police Department and about 3,400 have already been used. Most cases include at least two vials.

BD's recall statement says the manufacturer failed to include a crucial preservative in some vials. The preservative, which is a powder, prevents the blood from clotting and the blood alcohol concentration from changing.

Staff trained to draw blood are supposed to check blood vials before use to ensure the powder is present. However, once the blood is in the vial it is impossible to know whether the preservative was in the tube.

HFSC has notified the Harris County District Attorney's Office of the issue.

"This is a critical problem that will not only require HFSC, HCDAO and HPD to review and disclose information on 1,700 cases dating back to the beginning of the year, it

creates a problem for crime labs across the state and the nation since BD is the primary provider of these blood vials,” said Dr. Peter Stout, HFSC’s CEO and president.

“HFSC has an obligation to share this information with all stakeholders to ensure prosecutors, defendants and all others in the justice system have the information needed to move forward.”

HFSC is a local government corporation that provides forensic services to the City of Houston and other local agencies. HFSC is overseen by a Board of Directors appointed by the Mayor of Houston and confirmed by the Houston City Council. Its management structure is designed to be responsive to a 2009 recommendation by the National Academy of Sciences that called for crime laboratories to be independent of law enforcement and prosecutorial branches of government.

HFSC operates in seven forensic disciplines.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Ramit Plushnick-Masti

Director of Communications/PIO

media@houstonforensicscience.org

<http://www.houstonforensicscience.org/>

713-929-6768 (office)

713-703-4898 (cell)

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