




COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
A Nationally Accredited Laboratory

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NOTICE OF DFS FIELD TEST APPROVAL

TO: All Agencies Served by DFS
FROM: Linda C. Jackson, Department Director 
DATE: March 16, 2023
RE: Approval of the First Presumptive Mobile Instrument for the Detection of Drugs

Under Virginia Code § 19.2-188.1(A), law enforcement officers may testify to the results of any approved field test in any preliminary hearing on a violation of Chapter 11 (§ 4.1-1100 et seq.) of Title 4.1, Article 1 (§ 18.2-247 et seq.) of Chapter 7 of Title 18.2, or subdivision 6 of § 53.1-203.

Pursuant to 6 VAC 40-30, the Department of Forensic Science (DFS) has approved the first presumptive mobile instrument for the detection of drugs. DFS's approval of the TruNarc™ Handheld Narcotics Analyzer, manufactured by Thermo Scientific, was published on March 13, 2023, in the [Virginia Register of Regulations](#), Volume 39, Issue 15, March 13, 2023, page 2073. The TruNarc™ Handheld Narcotics Analyzer has been approved in addition to the presumptive chemical tests previously approved and published in the [Virginia Register of Regulations](#), Volume 39, Issue 12, January 30, 2023, pages 1519-1523.

The TruNarc™ Handheld Narcotics Analyzer is a Raman spectrometer for preliminary screening of suspected controlled substances. Raman spectroscopy allows users to scan directly through plastic or glass packaging to reduce exposure and minimize contamination. However, Raman spectroscopy is not ideal for the detection of drugs in low concentrations within a mixture. There are many drugs, such as synthetic opioids, that remain dangerous even when present in low concentrations. **Therefore, mobile instrument users should continue to take safety precautions designed to prevent exposure to dangerous substances during the handling, testing, and/or transporting of suspected controlled substances.** The results of any approved field test are considered presumptive, and law enforcement officers should submit any suspected controlled substances to DFS for confirmatory analysis.

Below are two references that provide background information regarding mobile instruments for field testing of seized drugs.

- Forensic Technology Center of Excellence (2018). *Landscape Study of Field Portable Devices for Chemical and Presumptive Drug Testing*. U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences.
(<https://forensiccoe.org/landscape-study-of-field-portable-devices-for-presumptive-drug-testing/>, referenced on 3/15/23)
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2017). *Guidelines on Raman Handheld Field Identification Devices for Seized Material*.
(https://www.unodc.org/documents/scientific/Guidelines_Raman_Handheld_Field_identification_Devices.pdf, referenced on 3/15/2023)

If you have any questions regarding this Notice, please contact Robyn Weimer, the Chemistry Program Manager, at (804) 588-4049.