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Best Practice Recommendations for Technical Review in Friction Ridge Examination

DRAFT

Keywords: quality assurance, friction ridge, fingerprints, conclusions, technical review, verification

Abstract: This document addresses several important topics associated with the technical review of friction ridge examination casework. Recommendations are offered regarding the personnel who may conduct a technical review, as well as the frequency and documentation of these reviews. Examples of documentation forms are included.

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1 Scope

This document describes the best practice recommendations for how to perform the technical review of friction ridge impression examinations. Examples are also provided.

This document does not address administrative review or verification.

2 Introduction

It is essential that friction ridge examiners provide a sound basis for each conclusion drawn. Technical review of an examiner's work product by another competent examiner is a proactive measure to determine if this basis exists. This document provides several recommendations to guide the technical review process.

3 Terms and Definitions

1. **Competency:** possessing and demonstrating the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully perform a specific task. (SWGFAST Document #19)
2. **Examiner (Friction Ridge)/Competent Friction Ridge Examiner:** An individual who has successfully completed their FSP's training program and has demonstrated to the FSP that they possess the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the tasks required of their current position. An individual authorized to conduct friction ridge examinations for the FSP by observing and interpreting data, making decisions, forming conclusions and opinions, issuing reports and/or providing testimony.
3. **Forensic Service Provider (FSP):** A forensic science entity or forensic science practitioner providing forensic science services (Working Draft of OSAC STD for Exam. FR Impress.)
4. **Nonconforming work:** Work that does not comply with FSP policies and procedures.
5. **Technical review:** A qualified second party's evaluation of reports, notes, data, and other documentation to ensure there is appropriate and sufficient support for the actions, results, conclusions, opinions and interpretations.
6. **Verification:** Confirmation, through either re-examination or review of documented data by another examiner, that a conclusion or opinion conforms to specified requirements and is reproducible. NOTE: "Specified requirements" are the FSP's policies and procedures relating to Analysis, Comparison and Evaluation of friction ridge impressions.

7. **Quality assurance measures:** Steps taken by an FSP to detect and correct nonconforming work. This may include, but is not limited to, root cause analysis, additional verification, non-conformity assessment, audits and corrective and/or preventative actions.

4 Recommendations

- a. Technical review of the case record or testimony shall be conducted by a competent friction ridge examiner as defined above.
- b. Technical review of the case record may be conducted concurrently with verification.
- c. From a quality assurance perspective, technical review of the case record should occur in every case. For testimony, technical review should be conducted at least once annually for each examiner. FSPs shall have a written policy defining what is required in technical review.
- d. Technical review shall be documented in the case record. As an example, the requirements for technical review could be satisfied by completing a checklist. (Annex A is for casework; Annexes B and C are for testimony)
- e. The FSP shall have a policy to address nonconforming work.
- f. Nonconforming work shall be documented in the case record. Refer to Annex D for a sample nonconformity assessment form.

5 Bibliography

SWGFAST Document #16: Standard for the Technical Review of Friction Ridge Examinations, Ver. 2.0, 2012

SWGFAST Document #19: Standard Terminology of Friction Ridge Examination (Latent/Tenprint), Ver. 4.1, 2013.

ANAB (ISO 17020-2012) Accreditation Requirement Framework 7.3.1.6

The following references pertain to the sample checklist in Annex A:

OSAC Standard for Friction Ridge Examination Training

OSAC Standard for Examining Friction Ridge Impressions

OSAC Standard for Friction Ridge Examination Conclusions

OSAC Best Practice Recommendations for Analysis

OSAC Best Practice Recommendations for Comparison and Evaluation

OSAC Best Practice Recommendations for Verification

OSAC Best Practice Recommendations for Conflict Resolution

OSAC Standard for Consultation

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Annex A
[Normative]

Sample Technical Review Checklist

The presence of items on this checklist does not imply that they are required. Each agency may create a checklist that addresses its own policies and procedures.

YES NO N/A NOTES

- Are the notes legible and proper?
- Do the notes indicate that a proper inventory was conducted and completely documented?
- Are the notes organized, neat and understandable?
- Are the notes pages consecutively numbered?

YES NO N/A EXAMINATION OF FRICTION RIDGE IMPRESSIONS

- Have the examinations been performed according to OSAC Standard for Examining Friction Ridge Impressions?
- Have the components of best practice recommendations for ACE been met?
- Have the components of best practice recommendations for verification been met?
If the verification was blind, was the verifier shielded from the case examiner's conclusion?
- Were conclusion(s) selected from the OSAC Standard for FR Examination Conclusions document?
- Are the conclusion(s) appropriate based upon the data?

YES NO N/A SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Are all images, printouts and screenshots used to support conclusions in the case file?
- Has all relevant digital evidence been accounted for?
- Are all images, printouts and screenshots properly labeled?
- Have observed details/characteristics been annotated (e.g. GYRO) where appropriate?
- If consultation occurred, has it been clearly documented?
- If conflict resolution occurred, has it been clearly documented?

YES NO N/A EXAMINATION REPORT

- Is the report format and wording, including any limitations of conclusions, in accordance with OSAC Standard for Friction Ridge Examination Reports protocol?
- Have the requested examinations been addressed?
- Are the results properly transcribed and clearly communicated to the reader?
- Have appropriate additional samples/standards/exemplars been requested, if needed?
- Has the evidence submission been inventoried and its disposition included?

NOTES/REMARKS

INSTRUCTIONS: The examiner and reviewer must explain all "NO" responses that were not corrected.

Annex B
[Normative]

Sample Testimony Review Form
Witness Evaluation Form

The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide information that will help FSSP staff present more effective court testimony. An honest, constructive evaluation of court room performance is encouraged.

Name of Witness: _____
 Matter of: _____
 Date of Testimony: _____

Court: _____
 Docket/Case Number: _____

		Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Personal Impressions	Voice (volume, tone, fluency)					
	Eye contact					
	Demeanor					
	Dress					
	Court Etiquette					
	Credibility					
Testimony	Confident					
	Responsiveness to questions					
	Well prepared					
	Conveyance of limitations of opinion					
	Clear and Concise					
	Accurate and Objective					
	Fair and Impartial					
	Technical competence*					

*Did you understand (and do you believe the jury understood if applicable) the technical fingerprint evidence given by the witness?

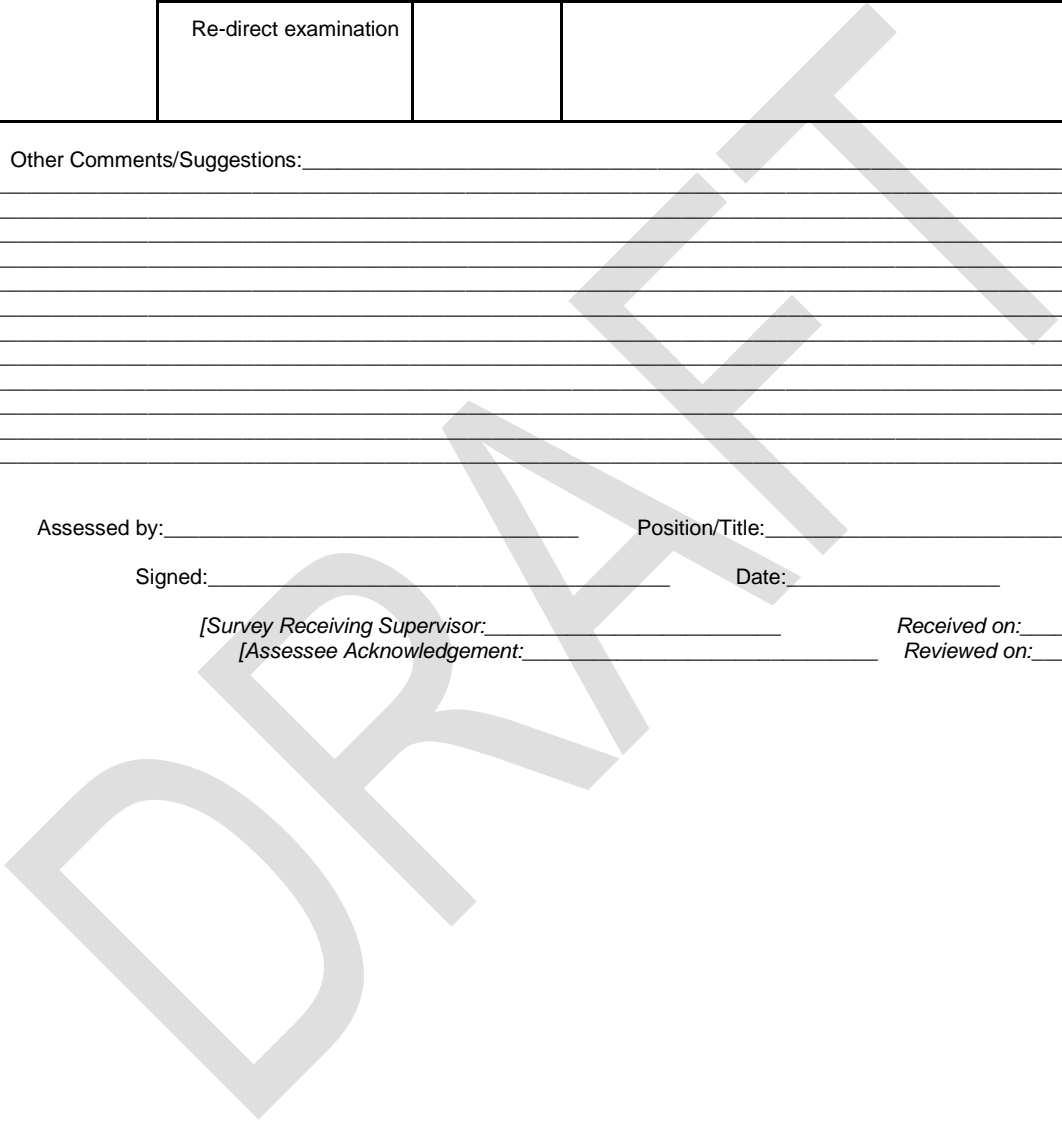
	Type of Evidence	Approx. Time	Comments
Evidence Given:	Direct examination		
	Cross examination		
	Re-direct examination		

Other Comments/Suggestions: _____

Assessed by: _____ Position/Title: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

[Survey Receiving Supervisor: _____ Received on: _____]
 [Assessee Acknowledgement: _____ Reviewed on: _____]



QA – Testimony Technical Review Form (title this as Annex C)

Analyst: _____ Date of Testimony: _____
Discipline: _____ Laboratory Control #: _____
Technical Reviewer: _____ Date case records were reviewed: _____
Judge or Courtroom #: _____

Sub-disciplines/ types or methods of analysis or inspection that was testified to:

Did the analyst have a professional demeanor and appearance? Yes No

Comments: _____

Was the analyst well prepared for their testimony? Yes No

Comments: _____

Did the analyst accurately describe their qualifications and duties? Yes No

Comments: _____

Did the analyst accurately present the evidence? Yes No

Comments: _____

Were the results, opinions, and/or facts presented accurately? Yes No

Comments: _____

Was the testing or inspection methods accurately explained? Yes No

Comments: _____

Was it clearly indicated when information presented was interpretation or opinion and any relevant limitations? Yes No

Comments: _____

Was there any information conveyed that was not accurate? Yes No

If yes, did the inaccuracy fundamentally impact the perception of the information that was presented? Yes No

Comments: _____

Quality Assurance Manager Review:

Are there any indications of Nonconformance? Yes No

If yes, Nonconformance workflow ID # _____

Technical Reviewer: _____ Date: _____

Quality Assurance Manager: _____ Date: _____

Analyst: _____ Date: _____

Annex D
[Normative]

Non-Conformity Assessment Form

Name of Examiner Involved: _____ Date: _____
FSSP Case Number: _____ Agency Case Number: _____
Name of Reviewer: _____

Non-Conformity:

- Incomplete Documentation Clerical Error Erroneous EXC Erroneous ID
- Inaccurate Testimony Failure to correct inaccurate testimony

Reviewer Comments: _____

Suggested Action
(Reviewer): _____

Root-cause analysis:

Corrective/preventive action:

Supervisor / Director:

Assessed by: _____ Position/Title: _____
Supervisor/ Director Determined Action : _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____ Year / No. _____ CPA No: _____

Involved Examiner Acknowledgement: _____ *Date:* _____

Involved Examiner Comments: _____

