OSAC PROPOSED STANDARD 2023-S-0026
Technical Report for Task-Relevant Information in Friction Ridge Examination

Friction Ridge Subcommittee
Physics/Pattern Scientific Area Committee (SAC)
Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science



OSAC Proposed Standard

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Prepared by
Friction Ridge Subcommittee
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Version No.	Issue Date	Section	Reason
2.0	Oct 1, 2024	--	Added to the OSAC Registry and publicly announced.
2.1	October 4, 2024	4.2.3	Corrected “examplars” to “exemplars.
2.2	January 23, 2025	4.1.7 And 6	Corrected “Environmental” to “Environment”. Removed a duplicate change log table.
2.3	May 14, 2025	3.1	Corrected “exemplar expression” to “exemplar impression”

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Technical Report for Task-Relevant Information in Friction Ridge Examination

1 Introduction

1.1 This document has been developed with the objective of improving the quality and consistency of friction ridge examination practices.

2 Scope

2.1 This document specifies information that is task-relevant and task-irrelevant to the Analysis, Comparison, and Evaluation phases of friction ridge examinations.

2.2 This document does not address other tasks that friction ridge examiners perform, such as collection, preservation, processing, conducting Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS) searches, conflict resolution, and verification. This document also does not address the relevance of information necessary for administrative tasks, accreditation requirements, or reporting of results.

2.3 This document does not address requirements or recommendations for managing exposure to task-irrelevant information in friction ridge examinations.

3 Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1
exemplar impressions
The deliberately recorded images or impressions from the friction ridge skin of an individual.

NOTE 1 to entry: Examples may include, but are not limited to, inked tenprints, inked palm prints, Livescan prints, powder and lift prints, casted/molded prints, or photographs of friction ridge skin.

3.2
matrix
The substance that is deposited or removed by the friction ridge skin when making an impression, e.g., sweat, oils, blood, dust, etc.

3.3
questioned impression
An impression or image of friction ridge skin whose source or identity is unknown; it can include latent impressions, impressions from an unknown source or a known source.

3.4
substrate

surface or material upon which a substance is deposited.

3.5
task-relevant
Information is task-relevant for analytic tasks if it is necessary for drawing conclusions:

i. About the propositions applicable to the analyst's task,
ii. From the physical evidence that has been designated for examination,
iii. Through the correct application of an accepted analytic method by a competent analyst.

3.6
task-irrelevant
Information is task-irrelevant if it is not necessary for drawing conclusions about the propositions applicable to the analyst's task.

NOTE 1 to entry: Information that is irrelevant for friction ridge examination may well be relevant for other administrative, analytical, or reporting tasks.

4 General Information

4.1 Only the following information is considered task-relevant for the Analysis, Comparison, and Evaluation phases of friction ridge examination.

4.1.1 Questioned impressions

4.1.2 Substrate

4.1.3 Matrix

4.1.4 Processing methods

4.1.5 Collection methods

4.1.6 Orientation and location of impressions

4.1.7 Environment/locality from which questioned impressions were recovered.

4.2 The following information is considered task-relevant for the Comparison and Evaluation phases of friction ridge examination only.

4.2.1 Exemplar impressions

4.2.2 Date of collection

4.2.3 Whether any exemplars were generated by a database search, the size of any databases searched, and any search parameters.

4.3 All information not enumerated in Sections 4.1-4.2 is presumed task-irrelevant for the Analysis, Comparison, and Evaluation phases of friction ridge examination. It is not possible to enumerate an exhaustive list of information that is task-irrelevant for friction ridge examinations. Information that is task-irrelevant for the Analysis, Comparison, and Evaluation phases of friction ridge examination includes, but is not limited to, the following.

4.3.1 Results of other forensic services

4.3.2 Documentation and/or conclusions by other friction ridge examiners

4.3.3 Crime type

4.3.4 Procedural status of each case and/or how the sources of exemplar impressions relate to case (e.g., suspect, victim)

4.3.5 Other evidence or investigative information, whether forensic or not

4.3.6 Any information about the identity, relationship to the investigation, criminal history, or demographic information about the source(s) or exemplar(s)

4.3.7 Identities of personnel involved in the investigation, e.g., submitting officer

4.3.8 Lab and agency case numbers

4.3.9 Item number(s)

4.3.10 Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS) rank and/or score

4.3.11 Any information about the reference population (the population of potential donors of questioned impressions)

5 Informative References

5.1 National Commission on Forensic Science, Ensuring That Forensic Analysis is Based Upon Task-Relevant Information, Technology, (2015), available online: **https://www.justice.gov/ncfs/file/818196/download.**