Standard for Consultation During Friction Ridge Examination

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

OSAC Proposed Standard

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Prepared by
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Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science

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Disclaimer:

This document has been developed by the Friction Ridge Subcommittee of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science through a consensus process and *proposed* for further development through a Standard Developing Organization (SDO). This document is being made available so that the forensic science community and interested parties can consider the recommendations of the OSAC pertaining to applicable forensic science practices. The document was developed with input from experts in a broad array of forensic science disciplines as well as scientific research, measurement science, statistics, law, and policy.

This document has not been published by a SDO. Its contents are subject to change during the standards development process. All stakeholder groups or individuals are strongly encouraged to submit comments on this proposed document during the open comment period administered by the Academy Standards Board (ASB).

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1. Introduction

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

1.2. As in any scientific endeavor, an examiner may need to interact with another analyst regarding an examination. This is generally referred to as a "consultation".

1.3. Consultations are an inherent part of the scientific process. Consultations should be supported as part of normal business practices and shall be documented. Consultations may occur at any stage of the examination process.

1.4. Consultation consists of varying levels of discussion between examiners. While not all discussions rise to the level of a consultation that requires documentation, any discussion that relates to the evidence in a specific case should be documented.

1.5. In this document, the following verbal forms are used: "*shall*" indicates a requirement, "*should*" indicates a recommendation; "*may*" indicates permission; and "*can*" indicates a possibility or capability.

2. Scope

2.1. This document prescribes the minimum requirements for examiners when consulting with one another during the examination of friction ridge impressions, as well as related documentation requirements for examination notes and reports.

2.2. This document does not apply to conflict resolution.

3. Terms and Definitions

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

3.1. Conflict: A condition in which two or more examiners disagree on a suitability decision or source conclusion.

3.2. Case Record: The file (electronic or hard copy) in which all documentation and case relevant information is kept and maintained.

3.3. Forensic Service Provider (FSP): A forensic science entity or forensic science practitioner providing forensic science services.

4. General Requirements

4.1. A consultation can occur after the examiner has recorded their preliminary observations in the case record. To avoid any potential bias from the examiner, these observations shall not be provided to the consultant until they have completed their observations.

4.2. At a minimum, the following examples of situations in which interactions occur, shall be documented:

4.2.1. Assessment of the utility of the friction ridge impression for comparison value.

4.2.2. Assessment of a friction ridge sample for AFIS search.

4.2.3. Presence or absence of specific friction ridge features during the analysis or comparison.

4.2.4. Simultaneity of impressions, per FSP policy.

4.2.5. When an examination is complex, per FSP policy.

4.3. At a minimum, the following are a non-exhaustive list in which interactions occur, that should be documented:

4.3.1. Assessment of orientation or anatomical position (region of interest).

4.3.2. Presence of friction ridge distortion resulting from deposition pressure, substrate, matrix.

4.3.3. AFIS parameter selection such as search orientation, pattern type, and demographic filtering.

4.3.4. Factors that affect image quality such as contrast, focus, camera angle/position, noise, image artifacts.

4.3.5. Distinctive friction ridge features used for comparison efficiency such as target groups, anchor points, etc.

4.3.6. Latent print detection and development technique(s).

4.4. A consultant who has viewed both known and unknown friction ridge samples shall not be used as the verifier for that examination.

4.5. Consultations shall be documented in the case record (e.g., analyst bench notes, a laboratory information management system).

4.6. The documentation for a consultation shall include the following:

4.6.1. Specific friction ridge impression(s) reviewed.

4.6.2. The topic and result of the consultation.

4.6.3. Initials, signature, or equivalent (e.g., unique identifier) for the examiners involved.

4.6.4. Date(s) of the consultation.

4.7. Each consultant involved in a consultation shall document their findings independently of the original examiner, including the markups of the friction ridge sample.

4.8. Depending on the nature and extent of the consultation, the consultant may satisfy the above minimum documentation requirements by including the information within the notes of the initial analyst. In consultations involving complex examinations, a separate set of notes, annotations, or images (e.g. screenshots) generated by the consultant shall be included.

4.9. If there is doubt whether a discussion has risen to the level requiring documentation, it should be documented.

5. Appendix A: Change Log

Version	Date	Change
1.0	01/17/2020	Original Issue