



JULY 2023

Message from the Chair

By Ray Wickenheiser, FSSB Chair



Ray Wickenheiser, FSSB Chair

It is my pleasure to serve as the Chair of the Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB) to provide this message and an update on our OSAC activities. Thank you to our dedicated OSAC volunteers and OSAC Program Office professionals who continue sharing their passion, experience, and skills to generate proposed standards, populate the OSAC Registry, and support our activities. As of July, the OSAC Registry contains over 150 forensic science standards, with the

first standards available for the forensic document examination and speaker recognition disciplines! That is great progress!

Our focus has shifted to also include implementation of standards on the OSAC Registry. OSAC shared the results of its second Registry Implementation Survey in March 2023. This survey assessed the state of implementation of 95 standards that were posted on the Registry through June 2022. Of the 177 responses, 128 forensic science service providers (FSSPs) reported that their organization had fully or partially implemented at least one standard on the OSAC Registry. Instead of a survey, OSAC will be taking a different approach for gathering implementation statuses. This summer, we'll be inviting FSSPs to update an existing declaration form or complete and submit a new declaration form during our new "open enrollment" season.

Continuing our support for implementation, the FSSB has also recently established a new Implementer Cohort Task Group to help mentor other FSSPs with implementation efforts. This core group will be instrumental in developing ideas and creating additional teams of subject matter experts to provide our colleagues in other organizations with guidance, answer their questions, and create potential tools to support implementation. The group kicked off an initial meeting after a Fireside Chat held at the 2023

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ASCLD Symposium in Austin, where several OSAC implementers had an opportunity to share their experiences and lessons learned. This proved to be a valuable session as it also provided a chance for dialog with others in the community to hear their concerns and questions.

This spring, OSAC members and affiliates came together to continue their work on developing standards for the forensic science community. Members of OSAC's Chemistry: Trace Evidence, Physics/Pattern Interpretation, and Scene Examination SACs and subcommittees met in April in Houston, while members of the Biology, Chemistry: Seized Drugs & Toxicology, Digital/Multimedia, and Medicine SACs and subcommittees met in May in Indianapolis.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, the FSSB wants to hear from our stakeholders. In March and June, we hosted our first public feedback sessions. These sessions will continue to be held during each quarterly FSSB meeting and are intended to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to share feedback related to FSSB agenda items or matters within the FSSB's authority. The next public feedback session will be held on September 14. We encourage you to visit the [FSSB Meeting webpage](#) for more information and to participate.

Thank you again for your dedication to the development and implementation of standards on the OSAC Registry! Together we are making huge progress in improving our field of forensic science!

Respectfully,
Ray Wickenheiser
FSSB Chair

OSAC Registry Implementation Updates

OSAC Registry Implementation Open Enrollment Initiative

Many employers allow staff to update their health insurance or benefit information during an open enrollment period that typically occurs at the same time each year and operates in a predictable fashion. This provides employees with a consistent approach to an important annual activity.

OSAC is taking a similar approach and providing a focused "open enrollment" period during which forensic science service providers (FSSPs) are encouraged to update or initiate their implementation activities. The OSAC Registry Implementation Open Enrollment period will occur during the summer season each year. OSAC will continue to accept *OSAC Registry – Standards Implementation Declaration Forms* throughout the year but is designating this open enrollment period as an opportunity for FSSPs to standardize their annual voluntary declaration submissions or updates.

Learn more about [OSAC's Registry Implementation Open Enrollment](#) initiative, why we are doing it, and how your organization can participate.

The 2023 [open enrollment](#) period is July 18 - September 1, 2023.

Helping Agencies Improve the Implementation of Standards on the OSAC Registry



OSAC has posted more than 150 standards in 22 disciplines on the [Registry](#). More than 130 national and international government, private, and university FSSPs have submitted declaration forms identifying which standards they have either partially or fully implemented. Those FSSPs have each been awarded OSAC Registry Standards Implementer Certificates in recognition of embracing standards implementation. Of the [OSAC Registry Implementers](#) which have received recognition certificates, 64 have published news releases announcing their achievement.

Despite the accelerating rate of certificates being awarded, there still exists a surprising level of hesitation on the part of many FSSPs to initiate standards implementation or to share communication with OSAC about their progress.

In response to the 2021 and 2022 [OSAC Registry Implementation Surveys](#), we have received many responses to the questions related to the challenges FSSPs are facing in deciding whether to complete and submit an *OSAC Registry - Standards Implementation Declaration Form*. We have learned from the surveys and from members of OSAC who help write and evaluate standards that some of their colleagues share common misconceptions about standards implementation.

To read more about these common misconceptions and their solutions in the context of actual OSAC Registry Implementers, please visit the [Overcoming Implementation Misconceptions](#) page on the OSAC website.

OSAC Registry Implementation: Expanding Our Outreach to Non-Traditional FSSPs

As we approach the final quarter of the federal fiscal year (FY 23), it's important to keep the OSAC membership apprised of the continuing standards implementation effort. In this [article](#) by Steve Johnson (former FSSB chair and current Implementation Ambassador), read about OSAC's implementation journey and the efforts we've taken to expand our outreach to non-traditional FSSPs.



OSAC News

Call for Nominations: 2023 Sharon B. Nakich Award

OSAC is seeking nominations for the 2023 Sharon B. Nakich Award.

In honor of our colleague, Sharon Nakich, this OSAC peer-to-peer award acknowledges a helpful attitude, kindness, teamwork, or behind-the-scenes contributions to support the goals of OSAC. It recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions to promote OSAC's mission through their support of OSAC. This nominee works diligently and tirelessly as a champion for OSAC, at times without recognition.



Sharon B. Nakich

Eligibility:

- All OSAC members and affiliates.
- Any non-OSAC member who has contributed significantly to furthering the mission of OSAC.

To submit your nomination, please provide two or more narrative statements from two or more different individuals addressing the criteria mentioned above. Nomination justifications should include, but are not limited to, a description of:

- Specific activities the nominee was involved in that had a positive effect in supporting OSAC's mission.
- How the individual's action helped the organization further its goals.
- Describe the nominee's willingness to go the extra mile.

Please send your nomination and supporting documentation to crystal.degrange@nist.gov by Wednesday August 16, 2023.

OSAC Holds Fourth Stakeholder Outreach Meeting: OSAC Implementers

Every year OSAC hosts a Stakeholder Outreach Meeting for specific groups within the forensic science communities that have a vested interest in the success of industry standards to advance the science. These meetings are held to increase engagement with key groups involved with furthering OSAC's mission. Thus far, Stakeholder Outreach Meetings were convened for standards development organizations (SDOs), proficiency test providers, accreditation and certification bodies, laboratory leaders, and forensic science professional organizations.

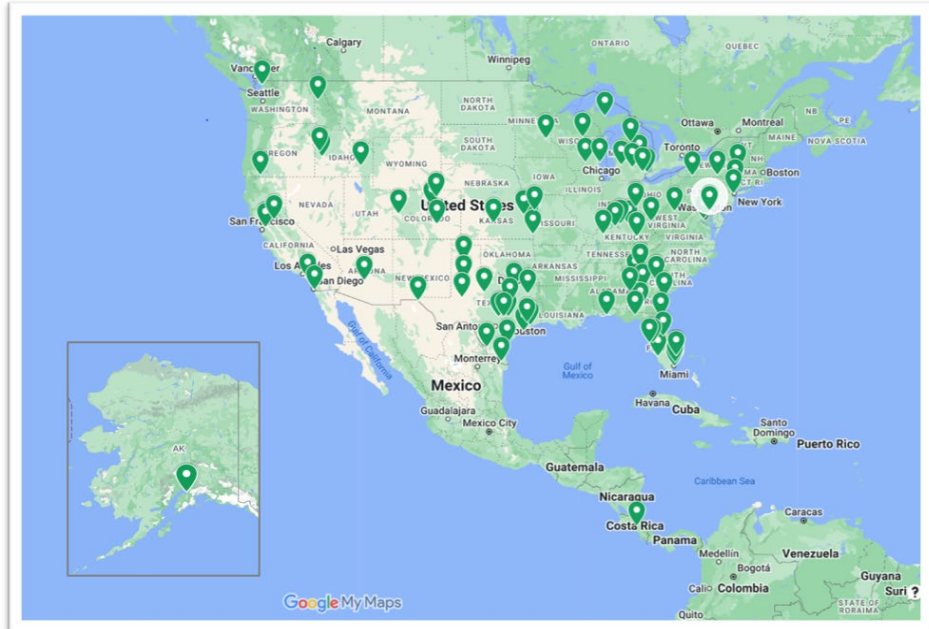
To date, more than 130 organizations have completed an *OSAC Registry – Standards Implementation Declaration Form* in support of active standards implementation within their organization with 64 of these organizations having issued press releases publicly indicating their goals and successes with respect to adoption of these standards.

As incredible as these numbers are, there is still a great distance to go on the implementation pathway. To this end, the most recent Stakeholder Outreach Meeting was organized to bring together FSSPs who have implemented standards on the OSAC Registry (i.e., OSAC Registry Implementers).

OSAC's Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB) established the Outreach and Communications and the Implementer Cohort Task Groups (TGs) to support engagement and implementation efforts. On June 15, 2023, these FSSB TGs and the OSAC Program Office hosted a virtual forum during which a substantial number of OSAC Registry Implementers provided feedback and experiences regarding the promulgation and implementation of forensic standards from their various points of view. The goal of this event was to gather information and experiences from implementation leaders to further support the development of quality benchmarks, enhance consistency across the forensic science community with respect to standards development, and further encourage implementation of standards throughout a broader sector of the field.

During the meeting, OSAC's ongoing standards implementation initiatives were discussed, OSAC's new "Open Enrollment" period was presented, and the implementer attendees engaged in discussion regarding some of the benefits and challenges faced by their agencies with respect to their individual implementation efforts. During the discussion period, several implementers shared their experiences and provided suggestions for tools and resources OSAC might develop to assist other FSSPs with further implementation efforts. The hope is that this open dialog and sharing of ideas will enable OSAC and other organizations to better support the forensic science community and potentially identify common goals to work towards.

To learn more, visit the [OSAC Registry Implementation webpage](#).



Map of OSAC Registry Implementers permitting posting on the OSAC website

2023 OSAC Meetings

Over 400+ members and affiliates met in-person this April and May to participate in the OSAC Meetings in Houston and Indianapolis! The OSAC subcommittees and task groups were hard at work drafting standards during this time. You can expect to see the results of these diligent efforts in the form of numerous additional standards moving through the standards development and Registry approval processes soon!



Images from the 2023 spring OSAC Meetings in Houston and Indianapolis

Do you want to help strengthen forensic science through standards? Then join us! Learn more about membership opportunities and how you can [apply to join OSAC](#).

In Memoriam: Chris Cieri



Chris Cieri

In March, OSAC lost Chris Cieri, a valuable member of the Speaker Recognition Subcommittee. Chris was a long-time partner and collaborator in the digital community, specifically in the speech and linguistic disciplines. He always provided thoughtful input from his decades of experience. In addition to his service to OSAC, Chris was also the Executive Director of the Linguistic Data Consortium (LDC). Please take some time to read more about Chris and his important legacy on the [LDC's remembrance page](#).

OSAC in the News

[An Update from the Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science](#)

The May 2023 issue of the *ISHI Report* shared updates about the validation standard (ANSI/ASB 038) that was added to the [Registry](#) this May, and the efforts OSAC's [Human Forensic Biology Subcommittee](#) is taking to identify current research, standards, and training needs for the forensic biology community.

OSAC & Other Forensic Science News & Events

Upcoming Events

August 20 – 26	International Association of Identification (IAI) Education Conference National Harbor, MD. There will be many OSAC and standards-related presentations at this year's IAI conference!
August 16	OSAC FSSB Monthly Meeting virtual
August 30	OSAC Leadership Strategy Session (OLSS)
September 13 – 14	OSAC FSSB Quarterly Meeting Kansas
September 18 – 21	International Symposium on Human Identification (ISHI) Denver, CO
September 18 – 21	Scientific Working Group on Digital Evidence (SWGDE) Meeting Bedford, MA
October 17 – 20	Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers (AFQAM) Training Conference Dallas, TX
October 23 – 27	Law Enforcement & Emergency Services Video Association International (LEVA) Portland, ME
October 29 – Nov 3	Society of Forensic Toxicologist (SOFT) Annual Meeting Denver, CO

NOW AVAILABLE: 2023 AAFS Workshop “Seven Habits for Highly Effective Standards Development”

The workshop, “Seven Habits for Highly Effective Standards Development” was presented at the 2023 AAFS Scientific Symposium in Orlando.

This workshop is now available on AAFS Connect, free of charge!

To access it:

- Please go to AAFS Connect: accounts.aafs.org/aafs/AAFS-Connect
- On the left-hand navigation block, click on **STANDARDS VIDEOS**, from there you should see AAFS 2023 Workshop 7, The Seven Habits for Highly Effective Standards Development.
- NOTE: You will have to create an AAFS account if you don't have one. But when you add the video to your cart, it will be at no cost.

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION: Questionnaires on Use of Geophysical Methods to Assist in Law Enforcement Investigations

Courtesy of the FBI

Geophysical methods, such as ground penetrating radar, may be used along with canine deployment and line searches when law enforcement seeks to find buried or obscured targets. The capability of geophysical methods to detect targets of interest in law enforcement searches is dependent on case-specific conditions including, but not limited to: the target's composition and size, the material enclosing the target, vegetation cover, burial depth, the size of the search area, and the technology applied.

Very few cases are published which describe the application of geophysical methods in law enforcement searches, and those published cases are usually successful searches. Recently, the FBI Laboratory has created a set of questionnaires to document how law enforcement has used metal detectors and geophysical methods to include investigations where the application of these methods was deemed effective or ineffective in detection of a target.

The goal of these surveys is to gather details on real world applications of geophysical methods in law enforcement searches, including metal detectors and advanced geophysical methods (such as ground penetrating radar (GPR), magnetometry and electrical resistivity) to search for hidden or buried targets (clandestine graves, weapons, etc.) in criminal investigations.

Two of the three questionnaires are aimed toward law enforcement personnel, and the third requests the perspective of those providing geophysical expertise and/or equipment to a law enforcement search. The intent of these questionnaires is to better understand how geophysical methods are deployed for law enforcement investigations and how effective the method was under case specific conditions.

- Survey 1- Target participants: Law enforcement personnel or organizations who have used hand-held metal detectors in criminal investigations. Metal Detectors use in Crime Scene Investigations: <https://govsurvey.us/survey/809910645015576577>
- Survey 2- Target participants: Law enforcement personnel or organizations who have engaged with external experts (including geotechnical firms, academic or government scientists) to conduct geophysical surveys for one or more criminal investigations. Law Enforcement use of Geophysical Methods: <https://govsurvey.us/survey/806500985499025409>
- Survey 3- Target participants: Persons (such as academic or government scientists, private contractors and/or law enforcement personnel) who have conducted one or more geophysical surveys for criminal investigations. Geophysical Service Providers in Support of Law Enforcement: <https://govsurvey.us/survey/808748715106959361>

Please participate in any of these three questionnaires and share these web links with any associates with relevant experience. If you have any concerns or to clarify the purpose of this study, reach out to geophysics@fbi.gov. All surveys can be completed anonymously.

NIST Research Activities

[Researchers Analyze THC in Breath of Cannabis Smokers](#)

NIST researchers are taking steps to develop protocols for breath measurements of cannabis smokers.

[Animal Tranquilizer Floods Illicit Drug Markets in Maryland](#)

An animal tranquilizer has flooded the illicit drug market in Maryland, according to a new study by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the Maryland Department of Health. When injected, the tranquilizer, xylazine, causes wounds at the injection site, in some cases so severe that people need to have their arms or legs amputated.