

OSAC 2023-N-0012 Best Practice Recommendations for the Acceptance of a Request for Friction Ridge Examinations

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





Draft OSAC Proposed Standard

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Prepared by
Friction Ridge Subcommittee
Version: 1.0
June 2023

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Table of Contents

1.	1
2.	1
3.	1
4.	2
5.	3

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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. The purpose of this document is to provide best practices for the acceptance of a case for friction ridge examinations to include latent print processing, friction ridge comparisons, and automated database searching.
- 1.3. Acceptance criteria describes a forensic service provider's (FSP) pre-established conditions that the customer or stakeholder must satisfy in order for a case to be accepted for friction ridge examinations.
- 1.4. Clearly defined acceptance criteria should help facilitate customer expectations and enable a FSP to determine if a request is technically feasible or appropriate.
- 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 addresses criteria for the acceptance of a case under consideration for friction ridge examinations to include latent print processing, friction ridge comparisons and automated database searching.
- 2.2. This document does not address administrative decisions after a case has been accepted.

3. Terms and Definitions

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

- 3.1. Comparison (phase of the Examination methodology): The search for and detection of similarities and differences in the observed data between two potentially corresponding friction ridge impressions.
- 3.2. Customer: Client, authority, organization or person(s) requesting the forensic services.
- 3.3. Examination: The act or process of observing, searching, detecting, recording, prioritizing, collecting, analyzing, measuring, comparing, and/or interpreting.
- 3.4. 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.

42 3.5. Forensic Service Provider (FSP): A forensic science entity or forensic science
43 practitioner providing forensic science services.
44

45 **4. General Requirements / Recommendations**

46 4.1. The FSP shall have a written policy for the review and acceptance of requests for friction
47 ridge examination that includes the following:

48 4.1.1. Clearly defined and documented requirements and capabilities of the FSP.

49 4.1.2. Criteria for the documentation of any changes to the customer's request, if
50 applicable.

51 4.1.3. Communication of the FSP's limited examination policy, if applicable.

52 4.1.4. Criteria for determining case complexity/priority of requests based on pre-defined
53 specifications from the FSP prior to acceptance.

54 4.1.5. Requirements for requests of previously examined evidence.

55 4.1.6. Specifications for how to address missing evidence or evidence that is not
56 properly packaged.

57 4.1.7.

58 4.2. The FSP's policy for the review and acceptance of requests for friction ridge
59 examination should also include the following:

60 4.2.1. The date of collection and initials or personal marking of the individual collecting
61 the item should be clearly documented on the evidence packaging.

62 4.2.2. Documentation should include a description or identifier of the item. Additional
63 information about the orientation or position of any friction ridge impressions on an
64 object through description, diagram(s), or photograph(s) may be beneficial.

65 4.2.3. Digital images submitted in a format and preserved at a resolution that enables the
66 FSP to properly examine the evidence consistent with the type of examination being
67 performed¹.

68 4.2.3.1. Digital images above 1,000 ppi should satisfy the criteria for case
69 acceptance, and those below 1,000 ppi should be reviewed by a friction ridge
70 examiner to determine if an examination can be performed.

¹ Additional considerations related to the examination of digital images of friction ridge impressions can be found in ASTM E3235-21 Standard Practice for Latent Print Evidence Imaging Resolution.

- 71 4.2.4. Determination of what, if any, processing and/or examinations have been
72 performed on the evidence prior to submission and if additional friction ridge
73 processing and/or other forensic examinations would be beneficial.
- 74 4.2.5. Criteria to determine whether victim or elimination print standards are necessary.
- 75 4.2.6. An FSP should consider the risk of processing an item that may be considered
76 potentially hazardous to examiners, the low success of yielding friction ridges, or
77 the benefit of another forensic examination as a factor in case acceptance.
- 78 4.3. If a case is rejected, the reason for rejection, the individual making the rejection and the
79 date should be documented and clearly communicated to the customer.
80
81

82 **5. Appendix A: Change Log**

Version	Date	Change
1.0	DD/MM/YYYY	Original Issue

83