

Best Practice Recommendation for Technical Review in Friction Ridge Examination

*Friction Ridge Subcommittee
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Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science*



OSAC Proposed BPR

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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. 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.
- 1.3. 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 describes the best practice recommendations for how to perform the technical review of friction ridge impression examinations. Examples are also provided.
- 2.2. This document does not address administrative review or verification.

3. Terms and Definitions

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

- 3.1. Competency: Possessing and demonstrating the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully perform a specific task.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. Forensic Service Provider (FSP): A forensic science entity or forensic science practitioner providing forensic science services.
- 3.4. Nonconforming work: Work that does not comply with FSP policies and procedures.
- 3.5. 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.

- 3.6. 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.
- 3.7. 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.

4. General Recommendations

- 4.1. Technical review of the case record or testimony shall be conducted by a competent friction ridge examiner as defined above.
- 4.2. Technical review of the case record may be conducted concurrently with verification.
- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. 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)
- 4.5. The FSP shall have a policy to address nonconforming work.
- 4.6. Nonconforming work shall be documented in the case record. Refer to Annex D for a sample nonconformity assessment form.

5. Appendix A: Sample Technical Review Checklist

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.

6. Appendix B: 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: _____

Court: _____

Matter of: _____

Docket/Case Number: _____

Date of Testimony: _____

		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?



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	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: _____



7. Appendix C: Sample Testimony and Technical Review Form

Testimony Technical Review Form

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: _____

Are there any indications of Nonconformance? Yes No
 If yes, Nonconformance workflow ID # _____

Technical Reviewer: _____ Date: _____

Quality Assurance Manager: _____ Date: _____

Analyst: _____ Date: _____



8. Appendix D: Sample Non-Conformity Assessment Form

Non-Conformity Assessment Form

Name of Examiner Involved: _____ Date: _____
FSP 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: _____ CPA No: _____

Involved Examiner Acknowledgement: _____ *Date:* _____
Involved Examiner Comments: _____

9. Appendix E: Change Log

Version	Date	Change
1.0	9/5/2019	Original Issue