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Organization of Scientific Area Committees  
for Forensic Science

# Newsletter

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### Feature Article:

## OSAC Prepares for Public Presentations at the AAFS 68th Annual Scientific Meeting

Attendees of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC) sessions at the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) meeting will be the first to hear about the OSAC's recent activities and updated priorities. On February 22-23, 2016, the OSAC Subcommittee and Scientific Area Committee (SAC) chairs, covering 24 forensic science disciplines, will describe each unit's latest projects, task groups, and planned outcomes—as well as provide status updates on specific standards or guidelines. All 29 presentations and questions from the audience will be webcast live, and archived for future on-demand viewing. The OSAC invites all to attend and participate. The schedule of events, which includes a SAC introduction for each session, is as follows:

### February 22, 2016 (Monday)

#### Digital/Multimedia SAC (8:00 AM - 10:00 AM)

- Digital Evidence Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Facial Identification Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Video/Imaging Technology and Analysis Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Speaker Recognition Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion

#### Biology/DNA SAC (10:15 AM - 12:00 PM)

- Biological Data Interpretation and Reporting Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Biological Methods Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Wildlife Forensics Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion

#### Crime Scene/Death Investigation SAC (1:00 PM - 5:00 PM)

- Anthropology Subcommittee Presentation Discussion
- Disaster Victim Identification Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Dogs and Sensors Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Fire and Explosion Investigation Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Medicolegal Death Investigation Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Odontology Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion

### February 23, 2016 (Tuesday)

#### Physics/Pattern Interpretation SAC (8:30 AM - 12:00 PM)

- Bloodstain Pattern Analysis Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Firearms and Toolmarks Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Footwear and Tire Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Forensic Document Examination Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Friction Ridge Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion

#### Chemistry/Instrumental Analysis SAC (1:00 PM - 5:00 PM)

- Fire Debris and Explosives Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Geological Materials Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Gunshot Residue Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Materials (Trace) Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Seized Drugs Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion
- Toxicology Subcommittee Presentation/Discussion

## Standards/Guidelines Currently Under Consideration for OSAC Registry

The Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC) Materials (Trace) Subcommittee, the Seized Drugs Subcommittee, and the Fire Debris and Explosives Subcommittee are in the process of reviewing and adjudicating public comments regarding potential inclusion of the following five standards to the *OSAC Registry of Approved Standards*:

**ASTM: E2329-14 Standard Practice for Identification of Seized Drugs**

**ASTM: E2330-12 Standard Test Method for Determination of Concentrations of Elements in Glass Samples Using Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS) for Forensic Comparisons**

**ASTM: E2548-11e1 Standard Guide for Sampling Seized Drugs for Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis**

**ASTM: E2881 - 13e1 Standard Test Method for Extraction and Derivatization of Vegetable Oils and Fats from Fire Debris and Liquid Samples with Analysis by Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry**

**ASTM: E2926-13 Standard Test Method for Forensic Comparison of Glass Using Micro X-ray Fluorescence ( $\mu$ -XRF) Spectrometry**

Following subcommittee comment adjudication and deliberation, the Chemistry/Instrumental Analysis Scientific Area Committee (the SAC, which is the unit that oversees those subcommittees) and the Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB) will further deliberate on whether to post the standards to the registry.

Please contact [forensics@nist.gov](mailto:forensics@nist.gov) with any questions or feedback.

## What is Digital Rights Management? And Why was it so Hard to Access the ASTM Documents up for Registry Approval?

The Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC) and ASTM International recently worked together to provide read-only access to the ASTM documents proposed for addition to the *OSAC Registry of Approved Standards*. This agreement enabled stakeholders to access and view the standards for a limited period of time, and provide public comment on whether they should be included on the registry (public comment period ended in September 2015).

All standards and related documents developed by ASTM committees are copyrighted, including the items that are under consideration for the registry. In order to protect the copyright of these publications, ASTM utilized Digital Rights Management (DRM) to ensure these documents could not be redistributed. DRM is a term referring to various access control technologies—technology such as embedding digital watermarks, and/or software that prevents files from being altered, shared or copied. ASTM required that documents be accessed from the ASTM Compass Portal (separate from the OSAC Public Workspace on Kavi) so that copyright would remain intact.

Stakeholders were first directed to the Kavi Workspace to access instructions, then to the ASTM Compass Portal to access the standard, and then back to Kavi Workspace to provide comments using the comment feature.

Unfortunately, this combination of DRM (which was not “one-click” access) and the requirement that users toggle back and forth between websites to view the standard and provide their feedback caused some frustration. However, OSAC will have to continue to use this mechanism to allow stakeholders to view proposed standards in order to maintain copyright permissions.

To help alleviate frustration during the next public comment period, OSAC requests that users first view the instructions provided on the Kavi public workspace before leaving Kavi to access the standards, and to contact [forensics@nist.gov](mailto:forensics@nist.gov) for assistance if issues are still experienced.

# About OSAC

The Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) is part of an initiative by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to strengthen forensic science in the United States. The organization is a collaborative body of more than 500 forensic science practitioners and other experts who represent local, state, and federal agencies; academia; and industry. OSAC is organized into 33 operating units based on discipline and purpose. The OSAC fosters the coordination, development and promotion of technically sound, consensus-based documentary standards and guidelines that can be used to strengthen the practice of forensic science.

The purpose of OSAC is to strengthen the nation's use of forensic science by:

- providing technical leadership necessary to facilitate the development and promulgation of consensus-based documentary standards and guidelines for forensic science

- promoting standards and guidelines that are fit-for-purpose and based on sound scientific principles
- promoting the use of OSAC standards and guidelines by accreditation and certification bodies
- establishing and maintaining working relationships with other similar organizations.

The aims of the OSAC are to:

- populate the OSAC *Registry of Approved Standards* and the OSAC *Registry of Approved Guidelines*
- compile and update the forensic science catalog of external standards and related documents
- maintain Priority Action Plan documents on intended actions aligned with OSAC strategic goals and objectives
- promote and improve the communication, dissemination and use of forensic science standards, accreditation, and personnel

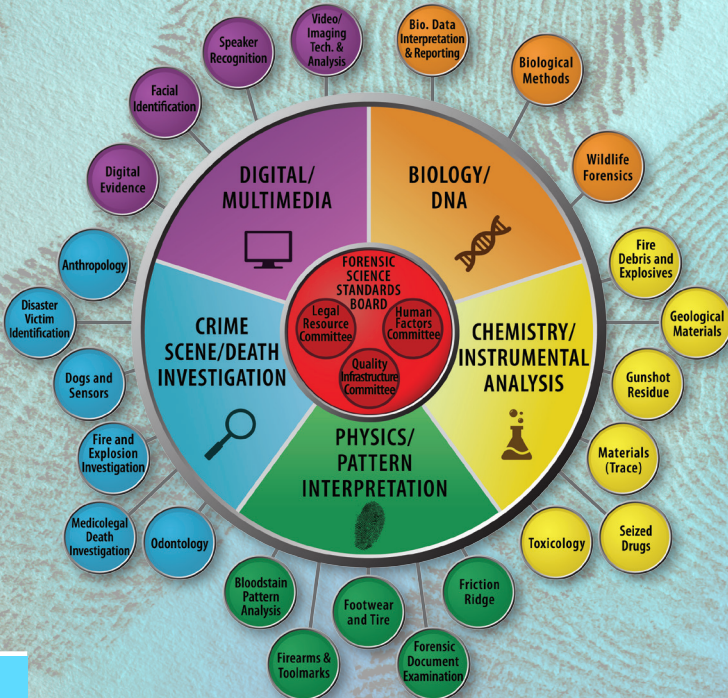
competencies

- encourage forensic science service providers in the United States to implement guidelines and standards (e.g., ISO/IEC 17025, etc.) for quality and competency
- provide insight on each forensic science discipline's research and measurement standard needs
- enlist stakeholder involvement from a broad community to provide public comment on OSAC outputs.

To learn more about OSAC, visit:

<http://www.nist.gov/forensics/osac/index.cfm>

To access OSAC's public workspace and view work products, visit: <https://workspace.forensicosac.org/kws/public>



The OSAC newsletter is produced monthly by OSAC Affairs at NIST with input from the FSSB and other OSAC members.

Any mention of commercial products is for information only; it does not imply recommendation or endorsement by NIST.

Contact [forensics@nist.gov](mailto:forensics@nist.gov) with comments or general inquiries.



## Upcoming OSAC Meetings

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- Biology/DNA Scientific Area Committee (SAC) in Grapevine, TX during International Symposium on Human Identification (ISHI) on October 13th & 15th, 2015
- Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB) at DEA Special Testing Laboratory on December 3-4, 2015
- Full OSAC Meeting at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, VA on January 25-29, 2016
  - January 25th – FSSB Meeting (8:30 AM – 5:00PM)
  - January 26th – 5 SAC and 3 Resource Committee (RC) Meetings (8:30 AM – 5:00PM)
  - January 27th – 24 Subcommittee and 3 RC Meetings (8:30 AM – 5:00PM)
  - January 28th – 24 Subcommittee and 3 RC Meetings (8:30 AM – 5:00PM)
  - January 29th – ½ day 24 Subcommittee Meetings (8:30 AM – approximately 1:00PM)
- OSAC Public Reporting Occurs at American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) in Las Vegas, NV on February 22-23, 2016. (5 SAC Chairs & 24 Subcommittee Chairs or their designee will present)

## Standards Development Organization (SDO) Corner

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The Quality Infrastructure Committee (QIC) and NIST OSAC Affairs are continuing to finalize the *OSAC Working with a Standards Development Organization (SDO) Process* and are gaining input from the Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB). This process will be published by the FSSB in November 2015 for use by the subcommittees—at which time the OSAC will begin development of the Canvass Method.

In the meantime, subcommittees have various projects and work items already queued up to submit to designated SDOs, including the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA), ASTM International, and the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS), who will begin accepting probative standards in February 2016.

OSAC is currently performing outreach to develop the widest range of potential SDOs for the subcommittees to engage with, and will invite relevant and interested SDOs to attend OSAC meetings in January 2016 to answer questions.

For more information, please contact [forensics@nist.gov](mailto:forensics@nist.gov).