

Standard for Reporting Results from Friction Ridge Examinations

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OSAC Proposed Standard

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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. FSP's shall have a written policy detailing the requirements of friction ridge examination reports specific to their stakeholders' needs.
- 1.3. The information provided within a written report should be clearly articulated so that all stakeholders can understand what is being communicated. Often, those needs are standardized through FSP policy and procedure, and are subject to administrative and/or technical review.
- 1.4. Other types of reporting results, such as verbal notification, preliminary results, or investigative leads, may be prepared and delivered by an FSP to suit the specific needs of their stakeholders. The requirements and recommendations outlined below represent what shall and should be included.
- 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 that shall be included in friction ridge examination reports.
- 2.2. This document does not include the requirements for supporting documentation of reported elements (e.g. case notes, custody documents, etc.), or testimony.

3. Terms and Definitions

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

- 3.1. **Administrative Information: Records**—such as evidence receipts, chain of custody, and submission forms (electronic or hard copy)—that do not constitute data or information resulting from examination work.
- 3.2. **Administrative Review:** An evaluation of a report and/or supporting documentation for consistency with laboratory policies and for editorial correctness.
- 3.3. **Amended Report:** A report used to document any subsequent modifications, particularly those that affect or correct an original result or interpretation.
- 3.4. **Customer:** Client, authority, organization or person(s) requesting the forensic services.

- 3.5. Forensic Service Provider: A forensic science entity or forensic science practitioner providing forensic science services.
- 3.6. Stakeholder (interested party): A person or organization that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity.
- 3.7. Supplemental Report: A report used to document additional work performed with subsequent reporting of results.
- 3.8. 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.
- 3.9. 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 Requirements

4.1. Administrative Information

4.1.1. Administrative information that shall be included in the written report:

- 4.1.1.1. Title of report - specific to type of analysis being reported (e.g. Latent Print, Tenprint, Processing Examination Report).
- 4.1.1.2. Reporting FSP and location.
- 4.1.1.3. Date of report.
- 4.1.1.4. Any other FSP that performed any portion of the examination (e.g. contracted laboratories).
- 4.1.1.5. Unique case identifier assigned by the FSP.
- 4.1.1.6. Unique identifier for submitted items (e.g. item number, evidence number, serial number).
- 4.1.1.7. Description of items relevant to the examination. Note: For non-original evidence (e.g. lifts, photographs, or digital images), a statement indicating the reported description of original item.
- 4.1.1.8. Name and unique identifier of exemplars used for comparison (e.g. Date of Birth, Universal Control Number, State Identification Number, local reference).

- 4.1.1.9. Origin of any exemplar used (e.g. provided as an evidence item, obtained from archive, or obtained from digital repository).
 - 4.1.1.10. Means of indicating the end of the report (e.g. signature or the word “END”).
 - 4.1.1.11. Disposition and/or retention of evidence and exemplars (where applicable).
 - 4.1.1.12. Pagination, including the total number of pages.
 - 4.1.1.13. Name and signature of the author(s) of the report. (Note: Digital Signatures are acceptable where controlled).
 - 4.1.1.14. Supplemental reports shall reference previously issued reports.
 - 4.1.1.15. Amended reports shall be issued to customer without delay if technical or administrative inaccuracies are discovered after report has been released. When amended reports are issued, an accompanying statement describing the nature of the change must be included.
- 4.1.2. Recommendations for administrative information that should be included in the written report:
- 4.1.2.1. Any aliases or AKA’s of an individual shown on an exemplar.
 - 4.1.2.2. Glossary and definitions of specific technical terms utilized including any abbreviations used (e.g. this can be achieved as an appendix, provided resource, memo).
 - 4.1.2.3. Statement that additional materials are available upon request where applicable (e.g. case notes, images, standard operating procedures, quality manual, qualifications of the examiners, etc.).
 - 4.1.2.4. Statement indicating the opinions and interpretations are accurate to the best of the author’s knowledge.
 - 4.1.2.5. Statement indicating the opinions and interpretations are within the limitations of the current state and understanding of the science.

4.2. Technical Information

- 4.2.1. Technical information that shall be included in the written report (as applicable):

- 4.2.1.1. Indication of methodologies used to perform the examination, unless formally (i.e. memorandum) previously communicated to stakeholders.
- 4.2.1.2. Any deviation from FSP approved examination methodologies, policy and/or procedure.
- 4.2.1.3. Assumptions and limitations of any methods or procedures utilized to produce the examination results.
- 4.2.1.4. Statement describing the latent print processing that was conducted.
- 4.2.1.5. Statement describing items submitted for examination that were not examined, where applicable (e.g. known exemplars, ridge detail not assessed for utility, evidence items not reviewed for presence of ridge detail, no comparisons conducted).
- 4.2.1.6. Statement describing that analysis was performed and all the resulting utility decisions of friction ridge impressions.
 - 4.2.1.6.1. Any utility decisions which the FSP allows by policy, that were not considered during examination, shall be reported. For example, if considering database utility and the examiner has not considered utility for source conclusions, this must be reported.
- 4.2.1.7. Indication of all friction ridge impressions suitable for source conclusions (e.g. ridge detail annotations or latent designators).
- 4.2.1.8. Statement describing comparisons that were conducted.
- 4.2.1.9. Statement describing biometric database (ABIS) searches that were conducted, and which ABIS databases were searched (e.g. local, state, federal).
- 4.2.1.10. A summary of the search results for ABIS searches conducted. (Note: this is not intended to require or recommend the inclusion of all individual candidates generated as a result of a database search).
- 4.2.1.11. Statement concerning what designated ridge detail was not searched in ABIS databases and why (e.g. friction ridge impressions not suitable for database search, deferred examination).
- 4.2.1.12. Statement indicating unidentified friction ridge impression(s) that are retained in the unsolved latent or tenprint databases.
- 4.2.1.13. If the agency has a policy to report on utility decisions or ABIS candidate list results that are preliminary, or investigative leads only, that

information and limitations of the assessments must be clearly indicated within the report as well as the process to have preliminary results reviewed or verified.

4.2.2. Technical information that should be included in the written report include (as applicable):

4.2.2.1. List with description of each item or unique identifier, indicating friction ridge impressions not suitable for source conclusions, or no friction ridge impressions were detected by the reporting examiner.

4.2.2.2. Statement detailing that the presence of friction ridge detail on an item of evidence does not indicate the significance or time frame in which the print was deposited.

4.3. Examination Conclusions

4.3.1. Conclusions resulting from the examination of friction ridge impressions may be reported utilizing one of the three frameworks listed below:

4.3.1.1. Conclusions expressed as an expert opinion utilizing knowledge, training, and experience.

4.3.1.2. Conclusions expressed as an expert opinion utilizing quantitative support from a probabilistic model.

4.3.1.3. Conclusions derived directly from and entirely dependent upon a probabilistic model.

4.3.2. If reporting Source Conclusions under framework 4.3.1.1 or 4.3.1.2, a clear statement that the opinions and interpretations are based upon professional judgement of the examiner shall be included in the report. Any Source Conclusions based on information not directly related to, or resulting from observations, or facts directly related to the examination must be clearly communicated.

4.3.3. The following information related to examination conclusions shall be included in the written report:

4.3.3.1. Name on exemplar used for the reported conclusion.

4.3.3.2. Only comparisons which have been conducted shall be reported (i.e. a comparison must be completed to render a Source Exclusion or Support for Different Source conclusion).

- 4.3.3.3. All non-verified Source Identifications, Support for Same Source and Source Exclusions included in the written report shall be clearly delineated. The limitations of the assessments shall be clearly indicated, as shall the process to have the conclusions verified.
 - 4.3.3.4. All non-association conclusions reached (i.e. Source Exclusions which have been verified and Support for Different Source conclusions).
 - 4.3.3.5. Where an Inconclusive/Lacking Support conclusion is included, a statement detailing the reasons for this conclusion.
 - 4.3.3.6. Statement indicating that limited comparisons were conducted or comparisons were deferred, where applicable.
 - 4.3.3.7. Clear statement when the conclusion is based upon simultaneous impressions or aggregate of information (impressions that do not stand alone).
 - 4.3.3.8. The definition and range of source conclusions used by the FSP in the body or as an annex/footnote to the written report, unless alternatively formally communicated to stakeholders by notification memorandum or website reference.
 - 4.3.3.9. Statement when a reported conclusion was the result of a conflict resolution process or consensus review and FSP policy (e.g. FSP policy dictates the most conservative conclusion is reported out).
- 4.3.4. Information related to examination conclusions that should be included in the written report:
- 4.3.4.1. The anatomical origin including the specific finger, palm or toe compared (only for Source Identification and Support for Same Source conclusions).
 - 4.3.4.2. Indication describing verification that has been performed.
 - 4.3.4.3. Statement indicating that all evidence is available for inspection and review by an independent examiner upon request.
 - 4.3.4.4. Amended reports should be issued if changes in technology or understanding of underlying scientific principals significantly change the magnitude of examination conclusions. When amended reports are issued, an accompanying statement describing the nature of the change should be included

5. Appendix A: Change Log

Version	Date	Change
1.0	06/22/2020	Original Issue