

Deadline for comment submission: 18-Jul-22

Title of Document: ASB Standard 135, Scene Detection and Processing in Forensic Anthropology

| #  | Section       | Updated Section # | Type of Comment | Comments   | Proposed Resolution   | Final  |
|----|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|--|---|--|
| 31 | General       |                   | General         | Document title includes "Detection", but no content regarding detection nor the distinguishing between the procedures used for finding a site vs. processing a site after finding it are included.   | Recommend adding an another section regarding this or dealing with it in a separate document. | Reject with modification: Changed 4.2.2 to Scene Detection             |
| 1  | 3.1           |                   | E               | Suggest to change: "human remains and material associations" to "human remains and potentially associated objects", which should clarify the intended meaning ("material association" refers to materials used to make a product)  |   | Reject: This sections is written appropriately as is.                  |
| 2  | 3.2           |                   | E, T            | I believe this is expressed backwards: rather than how the buried body or evidence affects the environment, we are interested in how the natural environment affects the condition and preservation of a (not necessarily buried) body and possible evidence.  |   | Reject: Definition for Geotaphonomic is appropriate as written.        |
| 12 | 3.2 and 4.2.2 |                   | Technical       | "Geotaphonomy" is a non-technical misnomer; taphonomy by definition applies only to biological organisms and their postmortem changes. Geotaphonomy simply refers to site formation processes.   | Remove.   | Reject: Site formation is described in Section 4.2.2                   |
| 3  | 3.3           |                   | E, T            | this wording could be confusing. At first read, I understood it to imply (incorrectly) that small-scale mapping meant a small ratio between the map scale and that of the area being mapped. Small-scale (e.g., 1:100,000) in mapping means a large area is represented (larger ratio between what is being mapped and the map), whereas large scale (e.g., 1:10) means a smaller ration between what is mapped and the map. It helps to think of large scale as "zoomed in" and small as "zoomed out". I am not certain what is meant by the term/explanation and also not sure why the term is not the more general "scale" or "scale mapping", rather than "small scale". |   | Reject with modification. No proposed resolution, Section 3.3 removed. |
| 4  | 3.4           | 3.3               | E, T            | so as not to confuse with the singular for data, suggest "spatial datum" or "map datum"  |   | Reject: Common use of datum  |

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| 5  | 3.5                | 3.4               | Technical       | The text uses "soil" where "sediment" or other terms may be more apt. Soil by definition has horizon development; strata are human-created; and sediments are an ingredient in either.   | Revise wording throughout.   | Reject: according to ASB Procedures "If comments on a recirculation not related to the revised sections of the document are submitted, the comments shall be documented and do not need to be addressed."<br>Section was not part of redline. |
| 6  | 4.1                |                   | E               | "jurisdictional requirements" could be more specific, e.g., Local laws and protocols of the local authorities? A bit clumsy...   |  | Reject: according to ASB Procedures "If comments on a recirculation not related to the revised sections of the document are submitted, the comments shall be documented and do not need to be addressed."<br>Section was not part of redline. |
| 7  | 4.1                |                   | E               | I am always wary of the word complete (e.g., "complete documentation") because it is very subjective (who decides what is "complete"?). I prefer "thorough" (which is also subjective, but more easily agreed upon).   |  | Reject: according to ASB Procedures "If comments on a recirculation not related to the revised sections of the document are submitted, the comments shall be documented and do not need to be addressed."<br>Section was not part of redline. |
| 22 | 4.1 first sentence |                   | E               | remove "and" between methods and practical   | remove "and"   | Accept  |
| 13 | 4,2,1              |                   | E               | "method rationale and limitations shall be considered and communicated"- I recommend adding "documented" to "considered" and "communicated", particularly as this might be in contention during cross exam at trial/an inquest years later. In fact, this is mentioned in the second last point in 4.2.1 |  | Reject: according to ASB Procedures "If comments on a recirculation not related to the revised sections of the document are submitted, the comments shall be documented and do not need to be addressed."<br>Section was not part of redline. |
| 23 | 4.2.1 goals #3     |                   | E               | grammatic changes and conciseness  | Recover and record all evidence that may be relevant to: identification, cause and manner of death, scene reconstruction, deposition of decedent, postmortem interval, and taphonomic processes. | Accept  |
| 24 | 4.2.1 goals #4     |                   | T               | understanding how certain items should be recovered and packaged.  | ....proper handling and packaging of recovered evidence and/reference samples.   | Accept with modification: "and packaging" was added.  |

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| 25 | 4.2.2 paragraph 1 |                   | E               | repetitive - "to the extent possible" x2 search x5   | Search technique shall be designed to adequately visualize the area of interest. To the extent possible, the site and its boundaries will be documented to allow for additional or expanded searches. | Accept  |
| 14 | 4,2,2             |                   | E, T            | "invasive vegetation" might not be the right word (and is better identified by a botanist). Recommend "anomalous" vegetation.  |   | Reject: This is a commonly used term.   |
| 15 | 4,2,2             |                   | T               | To "Scene-specific circumstances and the capabilities and limitations of each aid shall be considered" I would add: "and the competence and experience of staff". Here I am thinking of geophysical instrumentation. Some people have the toys, but haven't read the manual. In these cases, I would recommend not using the instruments. Perhaps this is captured in "limitations of each aid", but the attention is on the instrument, not the operator and both of these are important. |   | Accept with modification: " capabilities and limitations of each aid and operator shall be considered"          |
| 16 | 4,2,3             |                   | E               | " to preserve the context until documentation is complete"- consider replacing "context" with "scene and evidence" (as context can be understood as those things/circumstances around the evidence, but not to include the evidence itself).   |   | Reject: "Context" is the preferred term.  |
| 17 | 4,2,4             |                   | E               | consider adding something like "especially that which is datable - e.g., trash or a coin with a production or expiration date -" to "presence of debris"   |   | Reject: covered above as "potentially informative items"  |
| 18 | 4,2,5             |                   | T               | consider changing "all skeletal elements" to "all human tissue" (or "potentially human tissue")  |   | Accept with modification: "When remains and evidence are scattered, widening the search area may be necessary." |
| 26 | 4.2.5 paragraph 5 |                   | T               | We rarely recover ALL elements in a surface scatter case and it is inappropriate to judge those cases where only a few elements are located. Encourage best efforts, not the numbers.  | Widening the search area may be necessary to recover as many skeletal elements as possible.   | Accept with modification: "When remains and evidence are scattered, widening the search area may be necessary." |
| 19 | 4,2,6             |                   | E               | consider adding "and floor" to "tool marks at pit edges and walls..."  |   | Reject with modification: deleted pit edges and walls   |

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| 27 | 4.2.6             |                   | Technical       | "1/4-in." recommendation is vague.  | Recommend inserting "maximum size of".   | Reject: Vagueness allows use of larger screens when needed                                  |
| 28 | 4.2.6             |                   | Technical       | "Soil" is used; that does not cover all contingencies.  | Change to "incident-sterile soil/sediments" or similar.  | Accept with modification: "matrix" was added.   |
| 20 | 4,2,7             |                   | E               | "destruction of the structure", suggest change to "destruction of a structure" as fires could be in open area (e.g., in a field or wooded area)   |  | Accept  |
| 29 | 4.2.7 paragraph 3 |                   | T               | Encourage the search for missing elements (typically head or limbs) or documenting why those elements have not been recovered.  | Examine, excavate, and secure all debris from above, below, and immediately surrounding the body. Search for all elements, including the head and limbs. Collect small fragments of bone when discovered if they are likely to be lost during additional recovery. Place the small fragments of bone in appropriate containers labeled with a reference to the remains (e.g., "fragments found near right foot"). Document elements that are missing and why they were likely not recovered. | Reject: Too prescriptive  |
| 30 | 4.2.7 paragraph 4 |                   | T               | how the decedent is positioned is just as important as the location   | ...include the position of the remains within the fire scene (e.g., kitchen or driver's seat), anatomic position (prone/supine, extension/flexion of limbs), whether....   | Accept with modification: "location of the remains at the fire scene, anatomical position," |
| 21 | 4,2,8             |                   | T               | "specialist (e.g., botanist, entomologist, soil chemist) should be consulted for analysis of the samples" consider changing to "..should be consulted for collection and analysis of the samples" |  | Reject: Sampling strategy addressed in next sentence  |

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| 8  | 4.3     |                   | E               | The value of the standard would be enhanced if a citation to a statement somewhere in the literature of "appropriate practices" were added. | Add a citation to an authoritative source that presents the "appropriate practices." | Reject: according to ASB Procedures "If comments on a recirculation not related to the revised sections of the document are submitted, the comments shall be documented and do not need to be addressed."<br>Section was not part of redline. |
| 9  | 4.3     |                   | E               | remove comma from "context in which remains, or evidence are found"   |  | Accept  |
| 10 | 4.4     |                   | E               | In "detection and recovery of the scene", change "of" to "at" (or from)   |  | Accept: "at"  |
| 11 | 4.4     |                   | T               | I think that it is very important to add "interpretation" to the list of things to be reported. Description isn't enough.                   |  | Accept with modification: "Scene interpretations and/or opinions should be clearly identified as such." added to the end of this section.   |