

ASB Standard 143, First Edition  
2022

**Standard for Technical Review in Friction Ridge  
Examination**

DRAFT



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## Standard for Technical Review in Friction Ridge Examination

ASB Approved Xxxxx 2022

ANSI Approved Xxxxxx 2022



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## Foreword

This document has been developed with the objective of improving the quality and consistency of friction ridge examination practices.

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 specifies minimum requirements for the technical review process.

The American Academy of Forensic Sciences established the Academy Standards Board (ASB) in 2015 with a vision of safeguarding Justice, Integrity and Fairness through Consensus Based American National Standards. To that end, the ASB develops consensus based forensic standards within a framework accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), and provides training to support those standards. ASB values integrity, scientific rigor, openness, due process, collaboration, excellence, diversity and inclusion. ASB is dedicated to developing and making freely accessible the highest quality documentary forensic science consensus Standards, Guidelines, Best Practices, and Technical Reports in a wide range of forensic science disciplines as a service to forensic practitioners and the legal system.

This document was revised, prepared, and finalized as a standard by the Friction Ridge Consensus Body of the AAFS Standards Board. The draft of this standard was developed by the Friction Ridge Subcommittee of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science.

Questions, comments, and suggestions for the improvement of this document can be sent to AAFS-ASB Secretariat, [asb@aafs.org](mailto:asb@aafs.org) or 401 N 21<sup>st</sup> Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904.

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## Keywords:

**Table of Contents** *(to be updated when the document is finalized)*

- 1 Scope.....
- 2 Normative References.....
- 3 Terms and Definitions.....
- 4 Requirements.....
- Annex A (informative) Sample Technical Review Checklist.....

DRAFT

# Standard for Technical Review in Friction Ridge Examination

## 1 Scope

This document specifies minimum requirements for technical review of friction ridge impression examinations.

This document does not address administrative review, verification, or testimony monitoring.

## 2 Normative References

There are no normative reference documents.

## 3 Terms and Definitions

For purposes of this document, the following definitions apply.

### 3.1

#### **administrative review**

An evaluation of the report and supporting documentation for consistency with organizational policies and for editorial correctness.

OSAC Preferred Term

### 3.2

#### **case record**

A type of file (electronic or hard copy) in which all documentation and case relevant information is kept and maintained.

### 3.3

#### **competent friction ridge examiner (refer to examiner -friction ridge)**

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.

### 3.4

#### **examiner (friction ridge)**

An individual authorized to conduct independent friction ridge examinations for the forensic service provider by observing and interpreting data, making decisions, forming conclusions and opinions, issuing reports and/or providing testimony. Use of the term "*examiner*" in these documents refers to a "*competent friction ridge examiner*" and not a "*trainee*."

### 3.13.5

#### **forensic service provider**

#### **FSP**

Organization or individual that conducts and/or supplies forensic services.

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3.23.6**nonconforming work**

Work that does not comply with FSP policies and procedures.

3.33.7**technical review****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.

*OSAC Preferred Term*

3.43.8**verification (phase of examination ~~method~~process)**

Independent examination by one or more examiners to ascertain if a decision, conclusion, or opinion is reproduced or is in conflict with the decision, conclusion, or opinion of another examiner.

NOTE 1 Verification may be implemented in multiple ways including blind verification, open verification and consensus review. The general term verification is inclusive of these various types.

NOTE 2 Verification is a quality assurance measure for friction ridge examination.

NOTE 3 The use of the term "independent" indicates an autonomous examination but not necessarily one without knowledge of a prior decision, conclusion or opinion.

3.53.9**verification (analytical)**

Performing subsequent testing to ascertain if the results are concordant.

*OSAC Preferred Term*

**4 Requirements**

**4.1** Technical review of the case record shall occur in every case with friction ridge examination conclusions. FSPs shall have a written policy defining what is required in technical review.

**4.2** Technical review of the case record shall be conducted by a competent friction ridge examiner as defined in 3.1.

**4.3** Technical review of the case record may be conducted concurrently with verification and administrative review.

**4.4** Technical review shall be documented in the case record. As an example, the requirements for technical review can be satisfied by completing a checklist (see Annex A).

**4.5** ~~The FSP shall have a policy to address nonconforming work.~~ Nonconforming work detected during technical review shall be documented in the case record.

**4.6** The FSP shall have a policy to address nonconforming work.

## Annex A (informative)

### Sample 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?
- Have the FSP procedures been followed?

YES NO N/A EXAMINATION OF FRICTION RIDGE IMPRESSIONS

- Have the examinations been performed according to the FSP's standard operating procedures?
- Were conclusion(s) selected from the FSP's standard operating procedures?
- 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?
- Have observed details/characteristics been annotated 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

- Have the requested examinations been addressed?
- Have appropriate additional samples/standards/exemplars been requested, if needed?

#### NOTES/REMARKS

INSTRUCTIONS: The examiner and reviewer must explain all "NO" responses that were not corrected.

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