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**Standard for Consultation during Friction Ridge
Examination**

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Standard for Consultation during Friction Ridge Examination

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Foreword

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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 or 401 N 21st Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904.

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Keywords: *friction ridge examination, friction ridge comparison, consultation, friction ridge documentation*

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Standard for Consultation during Friction Ridge Examination

1 Scope

This standard sets documentation, quality, and consultant requirements for consultations during friction ridge examinations.

This document does not apply to conflict resolution.

2 Normative References

There are no normative reference documents.

3 Terms and Definitions

For purposes of this document, the following definitions apply.

3.1

case record

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

3.2

complexity (of a comparison)

A characteristic of a comparison in which the attributes of one or both impressions may require additional consideration and quality assurance measures relating to the evaluation of a source conclusion.

3.3

complexity (of an impression)

A characteristic of an impression whose attributes may require additional consideration and quality assurance measures.

3.4

consultation

A discussion or interaction initiated by an examiner seeking guidance for the purpose of interpreting an image or comparison.

3.5

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*."

3.6

Forensic Service Provider

FSP

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

4 Requirements

4.1 A consultation shall occur only after the examiner has recorded their preliminary observations in the case record. To avoid any potential bias from the examiner, these observations shall not be provided to the consultant until after the consultant has completed their observations.

NOTE Preliminary observations refers to the data being observed not to the conclusions being considered. For example, when considering suitability, preliminary observations include minutia markings and indication of possible anatomical orientation.

4.2 A consultant who has viewed both known and unknown friction ridge impressions shall not be used as the verifier for that examination.

4.3 Consultation consists of varying levels of discussion between examiners. Not all discussions rise to the level of a consultation that requires documentation. At a minimum, the consultation shall be documented when the interaction concerns one or more of the following:

- a) assessment of the utility of the friction ridge impression for comparison value;
- b) assessment of the utility of a friction ridge impression for an automated search;
- c) presence or absence of specific observed data during the analysis or comparison;
- d) simultaneity of impressions;
- e) when there is high complexity, per FSP policy, in an examination; ~~and~~
- f) specific observed data used for comparison and/or searching efficiency such as target groups, anchor points or others; and
- ~~f)g)~~ comparison conclusion(s).

4.4 If there is doubt whether an interaction has risen to the level requiring documentation, it should be documented. Documentation of in-depth interactions involving the following should be considered:

- a) assessment of orientation or anatomical position (region of interest);
- b) friction ridge distortion resulting from deposition pressure, substrate, and matrix;
- c) automated search parameter selection such as search orientation, pattern type, and demographic filtering;
- d) limitations in image quality such as contrast, focus, camera angle/position, noise, image artifacts; and
- e) latent print detection and development technique(s) utilized.

4.5 Documentation of the consultations shall be maintained in the case record (including any additional set of notes, annotations, or images generated by the consultant).

4.6 The documentation for a consultation shall include the following:

- a) specific friction ridge impression(s) reviewed;
- b) the topic and result of the consultation;
- c) personal identifiers for the examiners involved; and
- d) date(s) of the consultation.

4.7 In consultations where there is (per FSP policy) high complexity, the consultant shall generate an additional set of notes, annotations, and/or images (e.g., screenshots, markups).

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