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**Best Practice Recommendation for the Development of  
Criteria for Acceptance of a Request for Friction Ridge  
Examinations**



## Best Practice Recommendation for the Development of Criteria for Acceptance of a Request for Friction Ridge Examinations

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## Foreword

The purpose of this document is to provide best practices for the development of criteria for acceptance of a request for friction ridge examinations to include latent print processing, friction ridge comparisons, and automated database searching.

Acceptance criteria describes a forensic service provider's (FSP) pre-established conditions that the customer, public or private, must satisfy in order for a request to be accepted for friction ridge examinations.

Clearly defined acceptance criteria helps facilitate customer expectations and enable an FSP to determine if a request is technically feasible.

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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](mailto:asb@aafs.org) or 410 N 21st Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904.

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**Keywords:** *friction ridge, acceptance criteria, latent print processing, friction ridge comparisons, and automated database searching*

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# Best Practice Recommendation for the Development of Criteria for Acceptance of a Request for Friction Ridge Examinations

## 1 Scope

This document provides recommendations for the development of criteria for the acceptance of a request for friction ridge examinations to include latent print processing, friction ridge comparisons, and automated database searching.

This document does not address administrative decisions after a request has been accepted.

## 2 Normative References

There are no normative reference documents.

## 3 Terms and Definitions

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

### 3.1

#### **forensic service provider**

#### **FSP**

organization that performs all or part of the forensic process

NOTE A forensic service provider can be a large or small organization, including an organization consisting of a single examiner.

[ISO 21043-1:2025]

## 4 Recommendations

**4.1** The forensic service provider (FSP) should have an accessible written policy to inform requesters of the requirements and capabilities of the FSP. The policy should include:

a) requirements for

- 1) those who may and may not request services (e.g., law enforcement, by court order, prosecuting attorneys, defense attorneys, the public, etc.);
- 2) cost, if applicable;
- 3) types of cases accepted and not accepted (e.g., criminal, noncriminal, property crimes, civil cases, review or consultation of other FSPs work products, etc.);
- 4) items accepted and not accepted (e.g., no cartridge cases, no unpackaged items, items not conducive for fingerprint evidence, a maximum number of items at one time, etc.);
- 5) case or item rejection (e.g., date of rejection, the reason for the rejection and the individual making the rejection);

- 6) safety (e.g., weapons be unloaded, drugs be removed from packaging, the use of zip ties to prevent discharge of a gun, requirements for processing explosives, etc.);
- 7) packaging (e.g., type of package required, use of zip ties for securing items within a package, weapons be submitted in a box with the direction documented on the outside of the box, individual packaging of items (cartridges), proper sealing, date packaged, initials of the collector, etc.);
- 8) chain of custody documentation (e.g., case numbers, case type, date of collection, name of collector, description of item(s), item identifier, date of request, request type (latent processing, friction ridge comparisons, database searches, etc.), the area and orientation the evidence was located on an object, etc.);
- 9) resolution, file type, and storage media requirements for digital images;
- 10) items needing other forensic processing in addition to fingerprint processing (e.g., DNA processing, document examination, firearms testing or examination);
- 11) previously processed or examined evidence (e.g., determining if additional friction ridge processing or other forensic examinations would be beneficial);
- 12) requirements for change requests and work stoppages (e.g., adding names, halting/holding examinations, cancelling requests, increasing the priority, etc.);

*Example:* all change requests need to be in writing.

- b) criteria for determining the priority of requests (e.g., first in-first out, case type priority, etc.);
- c) capabilities of the FSP (e.g., the ability to swab for DNA prior to latent processing, the ability to use no-touch technology, the ability to chemically process items, the extent of database searches, etc.);
- d) the FSPs limited examination policy, if applicable; and
- e) the estimated turnaround time.

**4.2** The FSP should have a written procedure for the review and acceptance of requests for services which should include:

- a) confirmation that requirements listed in the FSP policy are fulfilled;
- b) requirements for:
  - 1) documenting and communicating to the requester instances of missing, improper packaging of evidence or incorrect descriptions of items; and
  - 2) storage of improperly packaged items.

## **Annex A** (informative)

### **Bibliography**

The following bibliography is not intended to be an all-inclusive list, review, or endorsement of literature on this topic. The goal of the bibliography is to provide references to information in this Best Practice Recommendation.

- 1) ISO 21043-1:2025, *Forensic sciences — Part 1: Terms and definitions*



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