



Criminalistics Section – 2007

B118 Case Notes and Documentation in the International Program

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be familiar with observations and procedures that should be documented when opening and working a case in the laboratory. These observations should include packaging, condition of packaging, package labels, shipping numbers, condition of seals, bar-code numbers, description of evidence, and condition of evidence.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by enabling to record case notes in such a way that another competent examiner can evaluate the procedures used, the data accumulated, the interpretation of the data, and the conclusions reached.

Case documentation should include notations regarding each procedure conducted, the conditions if applicable, and the results of the procedure. Notes regarding the photography of evidence would include documenting camera settings, film choice, lighting and filter specifications, exposure time, and film development techniques. Notes regarding chemical enhancement would include the specific reagent used, positive and negative controls, development techniques, and observations of results. Notes regarding the preparation of test impressions would include the media used and the method of recording the impressions.

Case notes should be recorded in sufficient detail that another competent examiner can evaluate the procedures used, the data accumulated, the interpretation of the data, and the conclusions reached. For footwear and tire tread evidence, documentation of a size and design association could include a natural size image of the questioned impression with a transparent test impression overlay affixed to the impression. A positive identification could include enlargements of the questioned and known impressions with identifying characteristics indicated. Any elimination could include natural size or enlarged images of the questioned impression and the known shoe with eliminating features indicated.

Although this presentation is specific to footwear and tire impression evidence, the general procedures are applicable to any type of evidence examined in the laboratory.

Several actual cases will be presented using the suggested documentation procedures.

Documentation, Evidence, Footwear