



## Questioned Documents Section – 2008

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### J27 Forensic Examination of Pressure Sensitive Adhesive Tape

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After attending this presentation, attendees will learn about the forensic information that can be gleaned from pressure sensitive tape, a new technique for cleaning the tape, and how to conduct tape edge comparisons.

This presentation will impact the document community by helping investigators realize the value of this often overlooked piece of evidence and by enabling forensic examiners to better examine tape and present their findings to investigators and juries.

An explanation of how one type of pressure sensitive tape is manufactured will also be discussed so that attendees can see how identifying characteristics are imparted onto tape.

Pressure sensitive tape is a vital piece of documentary evidence because it is often used by the perpetrator of a crime as a means of sealing envelopes without depositing DNA through saliva. Additionally, since the forensic value of tape is sometimes ignored by the user, there may be less imperative to discard possible comparative tape fragments or tape rolls when investigators collect evidence. Since tape fragments typically have two sides useful for comparison, this enables investigators to collect potential comparative material that were used both prior and following to when the tape fragment was used in a crime. This increases the possibility of finding tape matching the item in question and may make it less likely for the suspect to remember and discard tape fragments of evidentiary value.

This presentation will instruct how tape should properly be removed from a document and prepared for examination. The preparation process will explain how hexane and a sonic cleaner or xylene is used to remove the adhesive from the back of the film and how to mount the material on glass slides for viewing. It will also discuss the characteristics of tapes and explain the manufacturing techniques so attendees can understand why definitive opinions may be rendered when conducting tape examinations.

**Tape, Adhesive, Documents**