



## Criminalistics Section - 2016

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### **B25 Breaking Forensic Boundaries: Developing International Standards**

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The goal of this presentation is to provide information about global initiatives whose purposes are to develop international standards for both forensic science providers and for the manufacturing of forensic products.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by educating attendees on the purpose and objectives of the International Organization for Standardization Technical Committee (ISO/TC) 272. This presentation will include background information on ISO/TC 272, recent achievements, and future projects.

ISO/TC 272 has been established to develop internationally accepted standards relating to the delivery of forensic science services. Such standards primarily apply to organizations that analyze and/or interpret physical evidence for the purposes of presenting conclusions to a court of law. The standards are designed to preserve the features of evidence subject to observation and to maintain the integrity of that evidence through each stage of testing. They are also designed to facilitate information sharing between international jurisdictions.

The quality and nature of the materials, reagents, and consumables used by forensic service providers during testing can negatively impact the features of the physical evidence under examination. As such, the committee also develops standards directed toward manufacturers. These standards are meant to control the production of such materials to ensure they are fit for forensic purposes. The committee recently produced the Final Draft International Standard (FDIS) 18385, "Minimizing the risk of human DNA contamination in products used to collect and analyze biological material for forensic purposes."

In 2009, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Report, *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States – A Path Forward*, highlighted the lack of forensic standards and the potential impact this was having on the administration of justice. These criticisms are applicable worldwide. A number of countries are now in the process of developing national forensic standards. Standards Australia has published AS5388 Forensic Analysis. Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN) is currently developing a draft standard for the collection of forensic evidence. There are also a number of American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards in existence. The continuation of standards being developed in each country without cross-border coordination and collaboration may limit the exchange of forensic evidence and intelligence across international borders. This lack of communication could also negatively impact the investigation of global crime including terrorism, fraud, and child exploitation. This is also creating duplication of effort by ISO member bodies.

The objectives of the TC are to develop standards that: (1) enhance the reliability of forensic evidence; (2) establish consistent work practices that facilitate forensic laboratories/agencies from different jurisdictions to work collaboratively in response to cross-border investigations; (3) enable agencies from different jurisdictions to support one another in the event of a catastrophic event that exhausts a jurisdiction's capabilities; and, (4) allow for the exchange of forensic results, information, and intelligence, including the sharing of databases.

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#### **Standards, International, Technical Committee**