

## Standard for the Articulation of Footwear and Tire Interpretations



### WHAT IS AN AAFS STANDARD FACTSHEET?

The AAFS produces clear, concise, and easy-to-understand factsheets to summarize the contents of technical and professional forensic science standards on the OSAC Registry. They are not intended to provide an interpretation for any portion of a proposed standard.

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROPOSED STANDARD?

This standard outlines a framework for communicating source opinions in the forensic footwear and tire discipline.

The document describes necessary comparative observations and interpretations for a range of possible results. In addition, the standard provides model articulation statements for communicating these results in reports and testimony.

This standard applies specifically to footwear and tire casework involving comparisons between questioned and known items. It does not necessarily address all possible casework scenarios.

### WHY IS THIS PROPOSED STANDARD IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS?

The framework provided in this standard supports a justifiable, transparent, and understandable means of articulating results in the footwear and tire discipline.

This standard adopts a strength of support approach to the evidence that better represents the process that examiners use when conducting comparisons.

The document also provides qualifications and limitations, including the potential impact of human factors on footwear and tire examination and interpretation.

Adherence to this standard is also expected to improve the consistency of reporting.

This OSAC Proposed Standard has been sent to AAFS Academy Standards Board (ASB) for further development and publication. Get involved as a member or by providing public comment.

### HOW IS THIS PROPOSED STANDARD USED, AND WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS?

This standard is to be used by forensic science service providers that conduct footwear and/or tire evidence comparisons, specifically when reaching source opinions and reporting and testifying to their comparative results. Forensic science practitioners are provided with specific terminology, suitability determination guidance, six specific source opinion categories, and qualifications and limitations for reporting and testifying when articulating the results of a comparison of two (or more) items of evidence.

For each of the following opinion categories, the standard provides information on the observations that would be noted, the strength of the source opinion category, and the requirements for detailing observations, limiting factors encountered, and contextual information or assumptions used.

Opinion categories:

- Source exclusion
- Support for source exclusion
- Indeterminate with respect to source
- Support for inclusion based on class characteristics
- Support for inclusion based on class and distinguishing characteristics
- Strong support for known source

