

**Purpose:** To provide an overview summary of specific requirements and knowledge needed to perform the function of a latent print examiner.

**Responsibility:** Latent Print Examiners

**Procedure:**

**Introduction:** The following outline will be followed for all persons newly assigned to the Latent Fingerprint Section. The amount of time necessary to achieve proficiency in any area will depend on the previous experience and training of the individual examiner. The new examiner and his supervisor will sign and date each section as completed.

1. **Introduction to the Laboratory:** The examiner will be familiar with the forensic laboratory operation, LIMS system, and individual responsibilities.
  - 1.1 Tasks:
    - a. Orientation to the laboratory facility and personnel.
    - b. Instruction of the organization structure, code of ethics, and chain of command.
    - c. Security and confidentiality requirements.
    - d. Introduction to quality control and quality assurance including required documentation.
  - 1.2 Reading:
    - a. Laboratory Quality Manual (given own copy)
    - b. DPS A&O Manual (given own copy)
    - c. Emergency and Safety Manuals (given own copy)
    - d. Section SOPs (given own copy)
  - 1.3 Assessment:
    - a. Oral and/or written evaluation by supervisors.
    - b. Signed receipts
2. **Evidence Handling:** To handle evidence in a manner appropriate for preservation and analysis. To properly preserve evidence which may be analyzed by other sections of the laboratory.

2.1 Tasks:

- a. Observe and understand the procedures in place for the intake and release of evidence submitted to the laboratory for analysis.
- b. Handles evidence in an appropriate manner to ensure preservation of evidence and chain of custody.

2.2 Team approach to evidence processing.

- a. Understands the team concept of processing evidence in concert with other sections of the laboratory and the importance of communication.

3. **Foundational Scientific Knowledge:** The latent print examiner will demonstrate a firm understand of the following concepts and have completed a minimum of three specialized latent print courses as specified in 3.1.f.3 below.

3.1 Concepts

- a. Understands the basic foundations for friction ridge analysis as a means of identification.
- b. Has an understanding of the formation of friction ridge skin.
- c. Has an understanding of ACE-V and its application in friction ridge analysis.
- d. Has an understanding of early methods of personal identification.
- e. Has an understanding of common terminology and definitions associated with friction ridge analysis.
- f. Has an understanding of friction ridge formations as they relate to recognition, interpretation, and individualization.

Note: latent print examiner's at the laboratory shall have formal education and working knowledge in the fundamentals of latent print analysis. This can be attained by:

1. IAI certification as a latent print examiner and/or
2. Prior latent print experience through another laboratory or law enforcement agency and/or
3. Continuing education, university coursework, or workshops offered by professional organizations such as:
  - Basic Fingerprinting Courses (classification and/or processing)
  - Crime Scene Processing Course
  - Advanced Latent Print Course

- Administrative Latent Print Course
- Palm Print Identification School
- Ridgeology Course

4. **Applied Technical Knowledge:** The latent print examiner will demonstrate specific knowledge related to the field of friction ridge analysis. Proficiency will be shown in the following areas: Latent Print Processing and Friction Ridge Analysis.

4.1 Latent Print Processing

- a. Proper completion of the latent print examiner's work sheet and an understanding of the importance of note taking.
- b. Knowledge of sequential processing methods.
- c. Knowledge of latent print processing protocols.
- d. Basic understanding of photography and how it relates to latent print work.
- e. Knowledge of Alternate Light Sources and their proper use.

4.2 Friction Ridge Analysis

- a. Understanding of the individual friction ridge structures (i.e. continuity, pore and ridge definition) for determining the existence of characteristics.
- b. Ability to evaluate friction ridge detail to determine the value for identification.
- c. Ability to recognize and utilize friction ridge flow, scars, creases, and other features for supporting and examiner's conclusions.
- d. Ability to properly interpret friction ridge impressions which present unusual appearance due to effects such as: tonal reversals, pressure distortion, slippage, and overlays.
- e. Ability to render a proper conclusion as to identity, exclusion, or inconclusive.

4.3 AFIS Database Searches

- a. Ability to properly operate the automated fingerprint identification system (AFIS). This includes: data entry, latent print entry, interpreting results of a search and closing a case.
- b. Demonstrates a basic knowledge of the live-scan fingerprinting system.

5. **Report Writing:** This includes demonstrating proficiency in the LIMS system.

5.1 Writing Skills

- a. Demonstrate the ability to clear and concise reports.

5.2 LIMS & Crystal Reports

- a. Demonstrates the ability to navigate the LIMS program and Crystal Reports, including closing out a request and assigning a technical review.

6. **Courtroom Testimony & Presentation of Evidence:** It is imperative that the latent print examiner be able to provide clear and unbiased testimony regarding analysis he has performed.

6.1 Training & Instructions

- a. Curriculum Vitae
- b. Presenting Qualification
- c. Technical Testimony
- d. Courtroom Attire
- e. Proper Demeanor
- f. Ethical Responsibilities of the Expert Witness
- g. Laboratory Courtroom Monitoring Procedures
- h. Laboratory Court Appearance Forms
- i. Presentation of Evidence
- j. Courtroom Procedures

6.2 Reading

- a. Transcripts from three cases.
- b. Courtroom Testimony for the Fingerprint Expert (Gary W. Jones, Staggs Publishing)
- c. Cross-Examination: The Comprehensive Guide for Experts (Steven Babitsky, SEAK Inc.)

6.3 Assessment

- a. Oral or written questions by unit supervisor or other supervisor.
- b. Moot court or transcripts containing previous expert testimony.
- c. Moot court testimony evaluation forms completed by at least two supervisors.

7. **Completion of Training**

## LP SOP-16 Training Guidelines

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Page 5 of 5

- a. At the end of the training program a memo shall be written to the Quality Manager that all training is complete. The memo will also include the date that the trainee will beginning accepting assigned casework.
- b. In addition to the new examiner's assigned technical reviewer, the latent print supervisor will conduct a third technical review of all newly assigned casework. This will be done to determine if further training is warranted. If there are no issues that need to be addressed after the three months have elapsed then no further action is necessary. If on the other hand weaknesses are evident, then the weaknesses will be identified and documented along with whatever corrective actions that were taken. The third technical review will be extended as necessary until the unit supervisor is satisfied that the examiner is proficient and competent.

### References: