

*Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro***A. Purpose**

- a. To provide a new examiner with the capabilities to conduct competent examinations of firearm and toolmark evidence, to render opinions relating to the examinations, and to provide expert witness testimony in a professional and unbiased manner.
- b. To provide guidance for a new examiner with prior firearms examination experience.
- c. To provide National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) technicians with the appropriate training to conduct acquisitions and correlation review of test fired and evidence cartridge cases.
- d. For current examiners, to stay abreast of new technology, current legal trends, and the latest research developments relevant to the discipline of firearm and toolmark examination.
- e. For examiners who hold certification in a category of testing, to attain the required number of continuing education points to maintain certification.

B. Responsibility

Assigned Unit staff

C. Procedure

- a. New examiners shall follow the Connecticut Division of Scientific Services Firearm and Toolmark Unit Training Manual (QR FA-15).
 - i. This manual may be broken up and followed according to the operational needs of the Division of Scientific Services.
 - ii. This training may be supplemented by the training modules on the National Forensic Science Training Center (NFSTC) website.
 - iii. Acceptance into the ATF's National Firearms Examiner Academy (NFEA) may replace parts of the DSS Firearm and Toolmark Unit Training Manual.
 1. Any new examiner accepted into this program is still responsible for completing DSS-specific modules within the Firearm and Toolmark Unit Training Manual (e.g. Orientation, Safety, Evidence Handling).
 2. Any new examiner accepted into this program is also responsible for reading all DSS standard operating procedures relating to the Firearms Unit and to the laboratory as a whole.
 - iv. Upon completion of training, new examiners shall be competency tested in the appropriate categories of testing prior to beginning independent casework.
 - v. The new examiner's trainer will be his/her verifier/technical reviewer of casework for a period of time. This period is dependent upon the new examiner and is up to the discretion of the trainer and the Unit supervisor. After this period, other examiners in the Unit may perform verifications/technical reviews of the new examiner's work.

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- vi. The new examiner may conduct verifications/technical reviews of others' casework in a category of testing after a period of six (6) months of their own independent casework in that category of testing.
- b. New examiners with prior experience shall review all General Laboratory SOPs and Unit-specific SOPs.
 - i. New examiners with prior experience shall be competency tested in the appropriate categories of testing prior to beginning independent casework.
- c. NIBIN technicians shall be trained in the operation of the Integrated Ballistics Information System (IBIS) equipment by an approved instructor and shall follow the appropriate training modules within the Firearm and Toolmark Unit Training Manual.
- d. New and current examiners shall attend training when possible to stay abreast of new topics within the forensic discipline. This can include conferences, presentations, armorer's schools, webinars, etc.
 - i. Any certificates of attendance attained for training courses shall be kept with the examiner or analyst.
 - ii. Copies shall be furnished to the Quality Assurance Unit for the examiner's professional development file.
- e. Examiners certified by the Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners (AFTE) in Firearms Identification, Toolmark Identification, and/or Gunshot Residue, shall follow the continuing education guidelines as outlined in the organization's certification program.
- f. Remediation and Retraining
 - i. Refer to GL-14 for guidance when a deficiency has been identified.

D. References

- a. QR FA-15: Connecticut Division of Scientific Services Firearm and Toolmark Unit Training Manual
- b. National Forensic Science Training Center website (<http://projects.nfstc.org/firearms/>)
- c. Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners Certification Program
- d. General Laboratory SOP 14, General Training