A. Purpose:

To describe the procedures for documenting and classifying bullet/projectile evidence.

B. Responsibility:

Forensic Science Examiners assigned to the Firearms Unit.

C. Safety:

To avoid exposure to any potential bio-hazardous material, bullet/projectile evidence should be decontaminated.

D. Procedure:

The characteristics and condition of bullet evidence will be documented in the notes, using QR FA-11 Projectile Worksheet, QR FA-13 Notes Page, or QR FA-14 Fillable Blank Notes Page.

1. Caliber determination
   a. Measure the base diameter of the evidence bullet using a measuring device such as calipers. Damage may preclude this measurement.
   b. Caliber may also be determined by the use of the following equation:

$$(L + G)n \approx \pi d$$

(L + G) is the measurement of one land impression plus the measurement of one groove impression in inches

n is the number of lands/grooves

π is approximately 3.14

d is the diameter of the bullet in inches.

   c. Physical characteristics of the evidence bullet, such as weight, bullet shape, composition, nose design, and number and placement of cannelures may aid in caliber determination.
   d. Caliber is written as a numerical term and may be written with or without the decimal point.
2. Other Characteristics
   a. Any trace material (refer to FA SOP-15 Removing Debris and FB SOP-19 Trace.HLF Examination for guidance).

b. Caliber
c. Weight in grains
d. Number of lands and grooves
e. Dimensions of lands and grooves
f. Direction of twist
g. Composition of bullet
h. Type of bullet
i. Base description
j. Possible manufacturer of bullet
k. Cannelures
l. Any other physical description of the bullet's condition

3. Measuring Land and Groove Dimensions
   a. The land and groove dimensions may be measured in two ways on a comparison microscope: live image or by photograph. This data may be used to determine possible suspect weapons with the assistance of a general rifling characteristics database. The NIST-traceable stage micrometers may be used as needed to ensure the measuring tools are measuring accurately.
   b. Measuring should be done on any suitable land and/or groove impressions.
      i. If a bullet is identified as having been fired in specific firearm, L&G measurements are not necessary.
      ii. Some unusual or common rifling characteristics, such as 4R, 5R, 7L, 7R, 9L, etc., do not require measurements to determine possible suspect weapons.
   c. Mount the bullet on a microscope stage.
   d. Adjust the lighting as needed.
   e. Using the imaging software, follow the steps below for the chosen method.

To measure by live image:

1. Click the Measure tab.
2. Choose the Distance Line Tool.

To measure by photograph:

1. Capture an image of the bullet by clicking on the "Acquire" button. Save the image in the appropriate folder.
2. Click Process tab → Annotate tab →

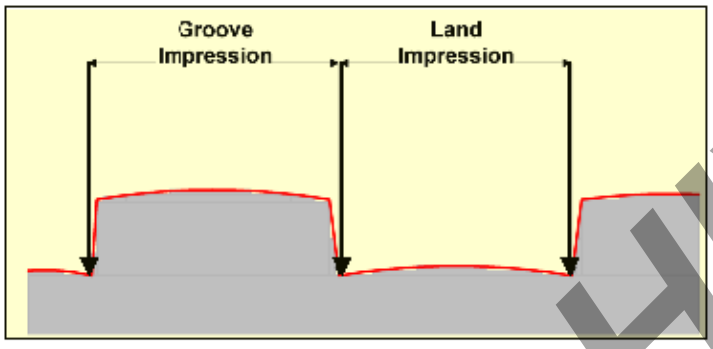
Extended Annotation toolbox.

3. Measure the dimensions of the land or groove impression from shoulder to shoulder (see diagram below).

3. Using the Distance Line Tool, measure the dimensions of the land or groove impression from shoulder to shoulder (see diagram below).

4. Record the data in case notes.

4. Click Merge to add the measurement annotations to the image of the bullet. Save the image in the appropriate folder.



E. References:

1. AFTE Glossary
2. GL 2 Safety Manual
3. FA SOP-15 Removing Debris
4. Forensic Biology SOP-19 Trace.HLF Examination
5. General rifling characteristics databases (FBI and AFTE)