

A. Purpose:

To describe the process of verifying an analyst's findings. If a comparison of firearm and/or toolmark evidence results in an identification or in an elimination based on individual characteristics, the findings must be verified by a second firearms examiner. He or she will conduct a separate, independent microscopic comparison of the evidence and document their findings. All serial number restorations and distance determination/gunshot residue analyses will also be verified by a second examiner. Legal length measurements that fall below the state and/or federal requirements will be verified by a second examiner.

Guidance is provided for the instances where examiner and verifier have conflicting opinions.

B. Responsibility:

Forensic Science Examiners assigned to the Firearms Unit.

C. Procedure:

1. Firearm and toolmark evidence
 - a. The analyst will transfer the items to be verified to the second analyst via JusticeTrax. Alternatively, the evidence may stay in the custody of the first analyst if the verification is being conducted in their presence. This will be so noted on the QR FA-5 Verification Worksheet.
 - b. The verifier will conduct an independent microscopic comparison of the evidence.
 - i. Their findings will be documented on the QR FA-5 Verification Worksheet.
 - ii. Documentation may be in the form of written notes, photographs, or both.
 - c. If the evidence was transferred via JusticeTrax, the second analyst will transfer the evidence back to the first analyst.
2. Serial number restoration
 - a. The verifier will initial the appropriate area on the Serial Number Restoration Worksheet (QR FA-8) as results are observed.
 - b. Serial number verifications may be conducted in the presence of the initial examiner. The evidence does not need to be transferred between examiners.
3. Legal lengths

Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro

- a. In the event the barrel and/or overall length of a rifle or shotgun is below the state and/or federal requirements, a second examiner will verify the measurements and initial the appropriate area on the Weapons Worksheet (QR FA-2).
4. The verifier's documentation will be kept in the case jacket.

D. Conflict Resolution

1. If, during the verification process, the verifier disagrees with the examiner's findings, the two shall meet to discuss the differences. Additional examination of the evidence may be done if it assists in bringing a resolution to the differences.
2. If additional work is being performed, the appropriate documentation will be kept in the case jacket.
3. If the issue cannot be resolved, it will be brought to the attention of the unit supervisor/lead. The supervisor/lead will determine the appropriate resolution.
4. The supervisor/lead will inform the Deputy Director of Identification of the conflict and the proposed resolution. The Deputy Director will review the proposed resolution and approve or make additional suggestions if needed.
5. In the event the unit supervisor/lead is part of the conflict, the Deputy Director will determine the appropriate resolution and may discuss with other members of Administration.
6. The supervisor/lead who handled the issue will place a memo in the case jacket, indicating that a conflict occurred and was resolved. In the event the unit supervisor/lead is part of the conflict, the Deputy Director will author the memo. The memo shall contain the following:
 - a. Names of examiners involved and each of their findings
 - b. A description of the issue
 - c. Final action
 - d. Name of the supervisor/lead who resolved the conflict

E. References:

1. QR FA-5 Verification Worksheet
2. QR FA-13, QR FA-14 Notes Pages
3. QR FA-2 Weapons Worksheet