

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
 - 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. Magazine Capacity Count
 - a. A verification of magazine capacity count will be conducted for anything over 10+1. A second examiner will verify the capacity count and add their initials and the date to the worksheet/notes page. A magazine capacity count is not conducted on law enforcement duty weapons.
5. The verifier's documentation will be kept in the case jacket.

D. Conflict Resolution

1. If during the verification process, if the analyst conducting the verification has a difference of conclusion with a comparison, the primary analyst will first be consulted on the matter. The primary analyst will review the comparison in question to determine if there is additional documentation necessary and if the conclusion needs to be updated. This additional analysis will be recorded, and the appropriate documentation will be placed in the case file. The verifier and analyst will make every effort to consult and resolve the difference in conclusion.
2. The Unit Supervisor and Assistant Director/Deputy Director will be notified when the consultation does not resolve the matter. The case file will be reviewed by the Unit Supervisor and Assistant Director/Deputy Director for appropriateness of the difference of conclusions. Once this review is completed, the case jacket is returned to the analyst to complete the report.
3. When the difference of conclusions cannot be resolved, the result will be inconclusive for not meeting the laboratory's analysis threshold. The laboratory's threshold is an undifferentiated result after independent analysis. All worksheets pertaining to the differing conclusions will be maintained in the case jacket. If the cause of the issue is the quality of the known test fires; then an attempt to produce new test fires will be made.
4. If a consensus in the conclusion cannot be obtained, the difference of opinions will need to be communicated. The comparison will need to be reported as inconclusive and that the threshold for a definitive conclusion was not able to be met.

E.

F. References:

1. QR FA-5 Verification Worksheet
2. QR FA-13, QR FA-14 Notes Pages
3. QR FA-2 Weapons Worksheet
4. Connecticut General Statute § Sec 53-202w

Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro

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