

A. Purpose:

1. To be used by the examiners of the Firearm and Toolmark Section of the Laboratory as a guideline when reporting out the findings of an examination when it consists of bullet, cartridge case, or toolmark related evidence.

B. Definitions of Identification Established in the AFTE Glossary:

1. Identification

Agreement of a combination of individual characteristics and all discernible class characteristics, where the extent of agreement exceeds that which can occur in the comparison of toolmarks made by different tools, and is consistent with the agreement demonstrated by toolmarks known to have been produced by the same tool.

2. Inconclusive

- a. Some agreement of individual characteristics and all discernible class characteristics, but insufficient for an identification.
- b. Agreement of all discernible class characteristics without agreement or disagreement of individual characteristics due to absence, insufficiency, or lack of reproducibility.
- c. Agreement of all discernible class characteristics and disagreement of individual characteristics, but insufficient for an elimination.

3. Elimination

Significant disagreement of discernible class characteristics and/or individual characteristics.

C. AFTE PROCEDURES MANUAL – RANGE OF CONCLUSIONS:

FIREARMS:

1. Identification

- a. The fired evidence in question was fired with the suspect firearm.
- b. The fired evidence in question was fired from the same firearm, firearm not received.

2. Elimination

- a. The fired evidence in question was not fired with the suspect firearm.
- b. The fired evidence in question was not fired from the same firearm, firearm not received.
- c. The discipline recognizes that an elimination of a firearm by other than class characteristics is possible but that such an elimination is an exceptional situation.
- d. The discipline does not consider the routine comparison of test shots to the open case file to normally constitute an exceptional situation.
- e. If an examiner arrives at an opinion where he/she eliminates a firearm, for any reason, the examiner must substantiate the reasons supporting his/her opinion and incorporate them into his/her work notes.

3. Inconclusive

- a. The fired evidence in question cannot be identified or eliminated as having been fired with the suspect firearm.
- b. The fired evidence in question cannot be identified or eliminated as having been fired with the same firearm, firearm not submitted.

4. Unsuitable

- a. The fired evidence in question is not suitable for comparison purposes.

5. Unidentifiable

- a. The evidence in question cannot be identified as being fired evidence.

TOOLMARKS:

1. Identification

- a. The toolmark evidence in question was made with the suspect tool.
- b. The toolmark evidence in question was made with the same tool, tool not received.

2. Elimination

- a. The toolmark evidence in question was not made with the suspect tool.
- b. The toolmark evidence in question was not made with the same tool, tool not received.
- c. The discipline recognizes that an elimination of a toolmark by other than class characteristics is possible but that such an elimination is an exceptional situation.

3. Inconclusive

- a. The toolmark evidence in question cannot be identified or eliminated as having been made with the suspect tool.
- b. The toolmark evidence in question cannot be identified or eliminated as having been made with the same tool, tool not submitted.

4. Unsuitable

- a. The toolmark evidence in question is not suitable for comparison purposes.

5. Unidentifiable

- a. The evidence in question cannot be identified as being a toolmark.

REFERENCES

- 1. AFTE Procedures Manual
- 2. AFTE Glossary