

IM SOP-10 Test Impressions

Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro

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Purpose: To obtain test impressions of patterns present on suspect item(s) for inter-comparison purposes with questioned imprint/impression.

Responsibility: Forensic Science Examiners assigned to the Imprint Unit are responsible to follow the guidance of this procedure.

Safety: All proper personal protection equipment will be used as appropriate.

Procedure:

Materials:

1. Fingerprint or printer's ink
2. Fingerprint powders/brushes/magnetic powder applicator
3. Backing board
4. Large transparent adhesive acetate lifters
5. Large white backed adhesive acetate lifters
6. Large black backed adhesive acetate lifters
7. Large transparent cover sheets
8. Large transparent gelatin lifters
9. Large white backed gelatin lifters
10. Large black backed gelatin lifters
11. BIO-FOAM®
12. MicroSil
13. Bubber
14. Inkless pad

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15. Chart board/foam board
16. Petroleum jelly/clear shoe polish
17. Fixative Spray
18. Other, as needed

Procedure:

1. Conduct preliminary physical and, if necessary, microscopic review of evidence to determine appropriate test impression process to employ.
2. Photograph all items prior to processing.
3. Two-dimensional test impressions may be made by applying a thin layer of ink or fingerprint powder medium on the item (shoe outsole, tire, etc.) and transferring an imprint of that item onto an appropriate receiving medium (adhesive acetate lifter, gel lifter, foam board, etc.). Alternatively, a layer of petroleum jelly, clear shoe polish, etc. can be applied to the item and transferred to an appropriate receiving medium (foam board, paper, etc.). This clear imprint can be enhanced using fingerprint powders to make a test impression. Test impressions of tires should be made with the tire on the vehicle if possible.

Test impressions of evidence that may be processed for DNA or may contain blood or other body fluids can be made using a magnetic powder applicator and magnetic fingerprint powder. The magnetic powder applicator can be cleaned before and after use utilizing a bleach solution in order to prevent contamination.

4. Three-dimensional test impressions can be made by impressing the shoe/tire into BIO-FOAM® or Bubber. This may be photographed using acceptable methods (See SOP-IM-4 Photography). Additionally, a cast may be made of the three-dimensional impression (See SOP-IM-6 Casting Impressions).
5. Other methods for making test impressions may be utilized as necessary.
6. Test impressions may be photographed, scanned, photocopied, or otherwise documented.

Retention:

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Test impressions will be packaged in an appropriate evidence container, sealed, sub-itemized in JusticeTrax, barcoded, and returned to the submitting agency along with the original evidence.

Sources of Error: N/A

Quality Assurance: N/A

References: See Bibliography.

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