

Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro

Purpose: To attempt to find the manufacturer and model of tread design patterns on footwear outsoles and tires found in questioned impressions.

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

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

Procedure:

A. Solemate® FPX

1. The Solemate® FPX database can be searched for footwear outsole designs.
2. The computer containing the Solemate® FPX will be password protected.
3. The Solemate® FPX database is no longer receiving updates, however, the database will be updated if they are received in the future. The imprint examiner will update the database by following the instructions supplied by the vendor. The database will then be checked for proper functioning by entering the coding shapes for a test image into the search options. The test image should be one of the results obtained after the coding steps are entered. The database results are printed (include examiner initials and date on the printout) and added to a binder which is kept in the laboratory near the Solemate® FPX database computer. The results are also recorded in a log book which is kept in the laboratory near the Solemate® FPX database computer.
4. Before a search of the database is conducted, the database is checked for proper functioning by entering the coding shapes for a test image into the search options. The test image should be one of the results obtained after the coding steps are entered. The database results are printed (include examiner initials and date on the printout) and added to a binder which is kept in the laboratory near the Solemate® FPX database computer. The results are also recorded in a log book which is kept in the laboratory near the Solemate® FPX database computer. If the database performed as expected, the results are also recorded on the QR-IM1 worksheet by checking the "Controls OK" box under "SoleMate".
5. If the test image is returned using the coding shape search the database check is successful and the database can be searched for footwear outsole designs. If this does not occur, then the database check has failed, then the test will be re-run. If this second test also fails, and the analyst cannot determine the reason and resolve the issue, the database search program will be taken out of use and clearly marked as such. Foster & Freeman will be contacted to resolve the problem. Once the problem is resolved and the database check is successful, the database search program will be put back in service and will return to normal use.

6. If a potential matching footwear outsole design is located, the agency requesting the examination will be supplied with photographs of the outsole design and uppers as well as any other information on the shoe present in the database.

B. Other References/Online Searches

1. A search may be conducted for the tread design on tires or outsole design on footwear utilizing other databases as available. The Imprints Unit currently has the Tread Assistant Database, from Tire Guides, Inc. This database no longer receives updates.
2. Footwear outsole designs and tire tread designs may be searched utilizing websites containing images of the tread/outsole designs (e.g. Zappos.com, Michelinman.com, etc.).
3. Tire tread designs may also be searched using the Tread Design Guide books available from Tire Guides, Inc.
2. If a potential matching footwear outsole design or tire tread design is located, the agency requesting the examination will be supplied with photographs of the outsole design and uppers or the tire as well as any other information on the shoe/tire and the reference site information. A note should be placed in the report that the information provided was retrieved from a non-forensic database and that the information provided should be verified with the source.

Sources of Error: N/A

Quality Assurance: N/A

References: See bibliography.