

Title: Examination Process

Purpose: To perform a comparison of a questioned impression to a known item of evidence.

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:**A. Comparison of Questioned Impression with Known Item of Evidence**

NOTE: The following is the recommended procedure for comparing questioned impressions with known evidence.

1. Comparisons can be performed by several methods:

- Side-by-side – Examining the Questioned imprint/impression and the test impression while they are side-by-side
- Overlays – Placing the test impression over the Questioned imprint/impression
- Like-to-like – Examining a cast to a cast, a lift to a lift, etc.
- Via the Internet/computer – Examining images of the Questioned imprint/impression with images of the test impression on a computer monitor

2. The method in which the comparison is performed remains at the discretion of the imprint examiner.**3. The examiner will take proper and detailed notes at every stage of the examination process. Any discussions with the requesting agency will be documented in the notes.****4. The examiner shall follow ACE-V methodology in all comparative examinations. The ACE-V methodology is the application of the scientific method to identification sciences. The terms ACE-V stands for:**

- Analysis – The initial examination of the Questioned imprint/impression and the Known item and test impression. The Questioned imprint(s)/impression(s) should be analyzed first, prior to the analysis of the Known item(s). The date (and time, if necessary) of analysis, should be recorded on the worksheet and/or in the case notes. The examiner may look at the quality of the imprint/impressions, the class, wear, manufacturing and individual characteristics present and any other information that can assist in the examination.

- Comparison – The process whereby the examiner will compare the characteristics found in the Questioned imprint/impression with the Known item and test impression to determine if there are similarities or differences.
 - Evaluation – The process whereby the examiner will take the information obtained during the analysis and comparison phases of the examination and determine the appropriate conclusion to report.
 - Verification – The technical review of the case file by another imprint examiner. The technical reviewer in the case of an identification or elimination will look at the original or generated evidence (such as lifts) and will verify the findings. The technical reviewer will indicate that they are in agreement with these findings by initialing and dating and writing “OK” in the Evaluation/Conclusion section of the case notes.
5. All imprints cases shall be reviewed prior to a formal report being issued by the laboratory. Two types of reviews will be conducted for each case, the technical review and the administrative review.
- a. Technical Review
 - 1. The technical review shall be performed by second imprint examiner. It will consist of reviewing all case documentation and evidence to determine whether or not the examiner of record has drawn the proper scientific conclusion(s). Both the initials of the technical reviewer and the date of the review will be documented in the case file on QD-IM QR1.
 - 2. An examiner shall not perform the technical review on any case where he/she is the examiner of record.
 - b. Administrative Review
 - 1. The administrative review may be performed by another Forensic Science Examiner or employee in the laboratory. It will consist of reviewing the report for correct grammar, spelling, etc. Both the initials of the administrative reviewer and the date of the review will be documented in the case file on QD-IM QR1.

Sources of Error: N/A

Quality Assurance: N/A

References: See bibliography.