A. Purpose:

To establish guidelines for the examination of latent print evidence.

B. Responsibility:

Latent Print Examiners

C. Procedure:

1. When processing latent print evidence, lab coats, masks and gloves will be worn. Other items such as sleeves or splash protectors will be worn as needed based on case and/or personal protection requirements.
2. Eye protection will be worn whenever there is a possibility of injury to the eyes.
3. Fume Hoods and Down Flow Workstations will be utilized whenever possible during the application of various chemical and powdering techniques.
4. For evidence that has both Latent Print and DNA requests, all equipment which will be handled during the examination process will be wiped down with an appropriate decontamination solution (refer to GL-2). This equipment includes writing instruments, cameras, tweezers and magnifying glasses. The examiner will be mindful of contamination.
5. The examination process will be documented on the appropriate worksheet (i.e. QR-LP1a, QR-LP1c, QR-LP1d, QR-LP-10, QR-LP11, QR-LP12, QR-LP-13, QR-LP-14). Worksheets will be completed on every case which involves an examination. In instances where a submission is received and not examined, the acronym "NEATT" may be written on a photocopy or photograph containing the evidence labeling of such item to indicate "No Examination At This Time". The NEATT document will be kept in the case file.
6. A virtual case folder will be created to store digital files used for analysis. The virtual case folder will incorporate the laboratory case number for identification. This folder is used as the working file and will also be used by the technical reviewer.
7. All examinations will start with a thorough visual examination of the submitted evidence. After the initial visual examination, the examiner will determine the appropriate sequential method(s) of processing to be utilized. Each processing step will be documented on the appropriate worksheet (i.e. QR-LP1c or QR-LP-13), including the use of alternate light sources and lasers. Friction ridge skin impressions of value will also be documented on the worksheet.
8. Any friction ridge skin impressions of value must be captured in a manner that makes them suitable for future analysis, meaning they must be captured in a manner that protects them from being compromised. Developed impressions may fade or be otherwise compromised through other testing techniques (i.e. DNA). Impressions of value may be lifted, digitally photographed, or scanned.

8.1 The determination to obtain lifts after processing is at the option of the examiner. The lifting of a latent impression will only be executed after adequate photographs have been taken. All generated

lifts shall contain the laboratory case number, item number and the examiner's initials. Laboratory generated lifts will be itemized in LIMS and will be treated as evidence, including tracking all transfers in LIMS. Laboratory generated lifts should be transferred to the submitting agency after they are no longer needed for examiner review. If the lifts are being retained in-house, they will be treated as evidence and transferred into a secure storage location.

8.2. Latent impressions of value may be captured using digital imaging, which may include scanning. It is recommended that the images be both in JPEG and RAW format when using a digital camera. If using a scanner, RAW format might not be available, refer to LP SOP-12 for other available formats.

9. After the completion of technical review, the contents of the virtual folder will be write-protected. The virtual folder will be copied to digital media [i.e. disc(s)] which will be finalized and write-protected. All disc(s) containing digital files will be labeled with the case number, item number and the initials of the examiner creating the disc(s). The LIMS description of the disc(s) should indicate the that this is the archive file of the latent print case. An index sheet of the digital files located on the disc(s) will be printed and placed into the case jacket attached to the Case Review Form (QR-LP4). The administrative reviewer will check the printed index sheet to verify that files were transferred onto digital media to be retained.

10. The disc(s) should be transferred to Latent Print File Storage. At a future time, the disc(s) may be transferred to an archive storage area of the laboratory.

11. In cases in which the submitting agency submits lifts and the examiner documents the lifts with a digital image, these images are considered as working/examination files/records. Refer to LP SOP-12 for further guidance on digital image management.

12. When the examination is completed, all evidence should be marked by the examiner for identification at a later time. There will be times when marking evidence is neither realistic or appropriate. This may be more common with some types of evidence than others. When evidence is not marked the examiner will make every effort to assure that it is properly documented for identification at a later time. The examiner will also mark the outer packaging that the evidence is contained in with his/her initials.

13. If further analysis is needed at a later date to images previously saved from the initial examination, the examiner may work on the images contained in the secure virtual folder located on the server or on the archived Latent Print Case File disk.

    a. If the examiner is using images located on the server, it shall be clearly indicated on their worksheet (QR-LP11) the source location of the image being used for their additional analysis (i.e. source is the virtual folder).

    b. If the examiner is planning to use the images located on the Latent Print Case File disk, the examiner will need to transfer this disk into their possession prior to conducting the additional analysis. The worksheet (QR-LP11) will indicate the source of the image being used (i.e. source is the archive disk).