

A. Purpose:

To establish guidelines for the processing 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. All equipment which will be handled during the examination process including: writing instruments, cameras, tweezers and magnifying glasses will be wiped down with an appropriate decontamination solution (as determined by the DNA section) prior to latent print analysis of items that will later be swabbed for DNA. The examiner will be mindful of contamination issues.
5. The examination process will be documented (see SOP-LP-01 and QR-LP1a or QR-LP1b). Worksheets will be completed on every case. In instances where a submission is received and documented by an examiner, with the evidence not being examined, the acronym "NEATT" may be written on the worksheet to indicate No Examination At This Time.
6. A thorough visual examination of submitted evidence will be conducted. Visible friction ridge skin impressions of value will be documented (see SOP-LP-01).
7. The examiner will determine the appropriate method of processing to be utilized. Developed friction ridge skin impressions of value will be documented on QR-LP1c. The examiner will determine the next appropriate step(s) when utilizing sequential processing techniques. Each processing step will be documented, including the use of alternate light sources and lasers.
8. The determination to obtain lifts after processing are at the option of the examiner. The lifting of a latent print will only be executed after adequate photographs have been taken. All generated lifts shall contain the laboratory case #, Item#, and the examiner's initials. Laboratory generated lifts will be itemized in LIMS. Laboratory generated lifts will be treated as evidence and tracked in LIMS.

In cases in which the examiner documents the lifts with a digital image, these images are considered as working files and not treated as evidence. Refer to LP SOP-12 for further guidance on digital image management.

- 8.1 Laboratory generated lifts are to be turned over to the submitting agency for safekeeping after they are no longer needed for examiner review; except in those instances where the examiner may find it more appropriate to retain the lifts at the laboratory. If the examiner elects to retain the lifts at the laboratory, then the lifts will be placed in latent file storage for safekeeping.
9. 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.

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