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STANDARD FOR THE TECHNICAL REVIEW OF FRICTION RIDGE EXAMINATIONS (LATENT/TENPRINT)

Preamble

Technical review is an integral part of a quality assurance program. The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB) defines technical review as “A review of notes, documents, and other data that forms the basis for a scientific conclusion” [1].

Other data may include images, charts, annotated images, narratives, worksheets, annotated legible copies, sketches, AFIS or electronic records, or any combination of these. Forensic Quality Services (FQS) defines technical review as “an evaluation of the case record to ensure that there is an appropriate and sufficient basis for the scientific conclusions” [2]. The case record may include digital or physical files of latent lifts, printed photographs, chain of custody forms, exemplars, case notes, requests, and reports [3].

A technical review differs from an administrative review. An administrative review is conducted in order to determine the clerical accuracy of reports and case documentation and to ensure the examiner has followed agency policy and procedure. Administrative review shall be conducted on all cases [4]. Administrative reviewers do not have to be trained to competency in friction ridge examination.

- 1** Technical reviews focus on whether the appropriate tests and examinations have been performed to support the results and conclusions reported, and whether sufficient supporting documentation is present. Technical reviews also focus on whether the conclusions are consistent with the documentation and are within accepted practices [4].
- 2** A technical review will determine if:
 - 2.1** The appropriate examinations have been performed.
 - 2.2** The conclusions are consistent with the documented data and are within accepted practices.
 - 2.3** There is sufficient supporting documentation.
 - 2.4** Verifications have been completely and properly documented.

Standard for Technical Review of Friction Ridge Examinations

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- 2.5 The reported results are clear, concise, accurate, and complete [4].
- 3 Technical review is not synonymous with the verification phase of the ACE-V process, nor does it necessarily include the re-examination of the images in a case.
- 3.1 Verification is a separate process from case review.
- 3.2 Technical review and verification may or may not be completed by the same reviewing examiner.
- 3.3 Technical review and verification may or may not be conducted concurrently.
- 4 Technical reviews should be conducted on all cases. At a minimum, they shall be conducted on a regular basis according to the following:
- 4.1 On certain types of cases as defined by the agency.
- 4.2 On a percentage of cases as defined by the agency or an accrediting body.
- 5 Technical reviews shall be conducted by an examiner trained to competency in the aspects of friction ridge examination being reviewed [5].
- 6 Technical reviews shall be documented in the case record. Some examples of technical review documentation include:
- 6.1 An entry of the reviewer's initials and date in the case record.
- 6.2 A component of a Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) that electronically captures the reviewing user ID and date stamp.
- 6.3 A completed checklist that refers to information required by agency specific policies or procedures (See Appendix A).
- 7 The agency shall have clearly documented procedures to handle discrepancies found during technical review [4].

8 References

- [1] ASCLD/LAB 2008 Manual.
- [2] Forensic Quality Services – International: FRA 4 – Forensic Requirements for Agencies that Perform Latent Print Testing.
- [3] SWGFAST, *Standard for the Documentation of Analysis, Comparison, Evaluation, and Verification (ACE-V) (Latent)*, 2/12/10, ver. 1.0.
- [4] SWGFAST, *Quality Assurance Guidelines for Latent Print Examiners*, 9/28/06, ver. 3.0.
- [5] SWGFAST, *Standards for Minimum Qualifications and Training to Competency for Friction Ridge Examiner Trainees (Latent/Tenprint)*, 2/12/10, ver. 1.0.

Appendix A

The presence of items on this check list does not imply that they are required. Each agency may create a checklist that addresses its own policies and procedures.

YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the notes legible and proper?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do the notes indicate that a proper inventory was conducted and completely documented?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the notes organized, neat and understandable?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the notes pages numbered consecutively?
YES	NO	N/A	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are all charts, photographs or photocopies, used to support conclusions in the case file?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Has all relevant digital evidence been accounted for?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are all charts, photographs or photocopies numbered and labeled properly?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have appropriate reagent checks been conducted and documentation included in the case file?
YES	NO	N/A	EXAMINATION PROCESS
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have appropriate tests/exams been performed according to the agency's protocols?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have evidence processing techniques been conducted in the proper sequence?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the verification process been properly documented?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the conclusions fully supported by the data?
YES	NO	N/A	DRAFT REPORT
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the report format and wording in accordance with Operating Manual and standard protocol?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have the requested examinations been addressed?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the results properly transcribed and clearly communicated to the reader?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are appropriate additional samples/standards/exemplars being requested, if needed?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the evidence submission inventoried and is disposition included?

NOTES/REMARKS

INSTRUCTIONS: The examiner and reviewer must explain all "NO" responses that were not corrected.