

ASB Standard 145, First Edition
2021

**Standard for Consultation during Friction Ridge
Examination**



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ASB Approved Xxxxxx 2021

ANSI Approved Xxxxxxx 2021



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Colorado Springs, CO 80904

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Foreword

This document was revised, prepared, and finalized as a standard by the Friction Ridge Consensus Body of the AAFS Standards Board. The draft of this standard was developed by the Friction Ridge Subcommittee of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science.

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All hyperlinks and web addresses shown in this document are current as of the publication date of this standard.

Keywords: *friction ridge examination, friction ridge comparison, consultation, friction ridge documentation*

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Standard for Consultation during Friction Ridge Examination

1 Scope

This standard sets documentation, quality, and consultant requirements for consultations during friction ridge examinations.

This document does not apply to conflict resolution.

2 Normative References

There are no normative reference documents. See Annex A, Bibliography for informative references.

3 Terms and Definitions

For purposes of this document, the following definitions apply.

3.1

conflict

A condition in which two or more examiners disagree on a suitability decision or source conclusion.

3.2

case record

A type of file (electronic or hard copy) in which all documentation and case relevant information is kept and maintained.

3.3

Forensic Service Provider

FSP

A forensic science entity or forensic science practitioner providing forensic science services.

4 Requirements

4.1 A consultation shall occur only after the examiner has recorded their preliminary observations in the case record. To avoid any potential bias from the examiner, these observations shall not be provided to the consultant until they have completed their observations.

4.2 Consultation consists of varying levels of discussion between examiners. Not all discussions rise to the level of a consultation that requires documentation. At a minimum, the consultation shall be documented when the interaction concerns one or more of the following:

- a) assessment of the utility of the friction ridge impression for comparison value;
- b) assessment of the utility of friction ridge sample for an automated search;
- c) presence or absence of specific friction ridge features during the analysis or comparison;
- d) simultaneity of impressions, per Forensic Service Provider (FSP) policy;

- e) when an examination is complex, per FSP policy (see *Standard for Examining Friction Ridge Impressions*); and
- f) distinctive friction ridge features used for comparison efficiency such as target groups, anchor points, etc.

4.3 If there is doubt whether an interaction has risen to the level requiring documentation, it should be documented. In-depth interactions involving the following should be considered:

- a) assessment of orientation or anatomical position (region of interest);
- b) presence of friction ridge distortion resulting from deposition pressure, substrate, matrix;
- c) automated search parameter selection such as search orientation, pattern type, and demographic filtering;
- d) factors that affect image quality such as contrast, focus, camera angle/position, noise, image artifacts; and
- e) latent print detection and development technique(s).

4.4 A consultant who has viewed both known and unknown friction ridge samples shall not be used as the verifier for that examination.

4.5 Consultations shall be documented in the case record (e.g., analyst bench notes, a laboratory information management system).

4.6 The documentation for a consultation shall include the following:

- a) specific friction ridge impression(s) reviewed;
- b) the topic and result of the consultation;
- c) initials, signature, or equivalent (e.g., unique identifier) for the examiners involved;
- d) date(s) of the consultation.

4.7 Each consultant involved in a consultation shall document their findings independently of the original examiner, including the markups of the friction ridge sample.

4.8 Depending on the nature and extent of the consultation, the consultant may satisfy the above minimum documentation requirements by including the information within the notes of the initial analyst. In consultations involving complex examinations (see *Standard for Examining Friction Ridge Impressions*), a separate set of notes, annotations, or images (e.g., screenshots) generated by the consultant shall be included.

Annex A
(informative)

Bibliography

The following bibliography is not intended to be an all-inclusive list, review, or endorsement of literature on this topic. The goal of the bibliography is to provide examples of publications addressed in the standard.

1. *Standard for Examining Friction Ridge Impressions*¹.

1

https://www.nist.gov/system/files/documents/2020/10/02/OSAC%20FRS%20EXAMINATION%20STANDARD_Final_Sept2020.pdf

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