

OSAC 2023-N-0012

Best Practice

Recommendations for the Development of Criteria for Acceptance of a Request for Friction Ridge Examinations

Friction Ridge Subcommittee
Physics/Pattern Interpretation Scientific Area Committee (SAC)
Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science



OSAC Proposed Standard

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Prepared by
Friction Ridge Subcommittee
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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Scope	4
3	Terms and Definitions	4
4	General Requirements/Recommendations	5
5	Appendix A: Change Log	6

Best Practice Recommendations for the Development of Criteria for Acceptance of a Request for Friction Ridge Examinations

1 Introduction

1.1 This document has been developed with the objective of improving the quality and consistency of friction ridge examination practices.

1.2 The purpose of this document is to provide best practices for the development of criteria for acceptance of a request for friction ridge examinations to include latent print processing, friction ridge comparisons, and automated database searching.

1.3 Acceptance criteria describes a forensic service provider's (FSP) pre-established conditions that the customer must satisfy, public or private, in order for a request to be accepted for friction ridge examinations.

1.4 Clearly defined acceptance criteria should help facilitate customer expectations and enable a FSP to determine if a request is technically feasible or appropriate.

1.5 In this document, the following verbal forms are used: "*shall*" indicates a requirement, "*should*" indicates a recommendation; "*may*" indicates permission; and "*can*" indicates a possibility or capability.

2 Scope

2.1 This document addresses the development of criteria for the acceptance of a request under consideration for friction ridge examinations to include latent print processing, friction ridge comparisons and automated database searching.

2.2 This document does not address administrative decisions after a request has been accepted.

3 Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1

Comparison (phase of the examination methodology)

The search for and detection of similarities and differences in the observed data between two potentially corresponding friction ridge impressions.

3.2

customer

Client, authority, organization or person(s) requesting the forensic services.

3.3

examination

The act or process of observing, searching, detecting, recording, prioritizing, collecting, analyzing, measuring, comparing, and/or interpreting.

3.4

forensic service provider (FSP)

An organization or individual that provides forensic services.

4 General Requirements/Recommendations

4.1 The FSP shall have a written policy for the review and acceptance of requests for friction ridge examination that includes the following:

4.1.1 Clearly defined and documented requirements and capabilities of the FSP.

4.1.2 Criteria for the documentation of any changes to the customer's request, if applicable.

4.1.3 Communication of the FSP's limited examination policy, if applicable.

4.1.4 Criteria for determining complexity/priority of requests based on pre-defined specifications from the FSP prior to acceptance.

4.1.5 Requirements for requests of previously examined evidence.

4.1.6 Specifications for how to document and communicate to the customer instances of missing evidence or evidence that is not properly packaged.

4.2 The FSP's policy for the review and acceptance of requests for friction ridge examination should also include the following:

4.2.1 The date of collection and initials or personal marking of the individual collecting the item should be clearly documented on the evidence packaging.

4.2.2 Documentation should include a description or identifier of the item. Additional information about the orientation or position of any friction ridge impressions on an object through description, diagram(s), or photograph(s) is usually beneficial.

4.2.3 Digital images submitted in a format and preserved at a resolution that enables the FSP to properly examine the evidence consistent with the type of examination being performed¹.

¹ Additional considerations related to the examination of digital images of friction ridge impressions can be found in ASTM E3235-21 Standard Practice for Latent Print Evidence Imaging Resolution.

4.2.4 Determination of what, if any, processing and/or examinations have been performed on the evidence prior to submission and if additional friction ridge processing and/or other forensic examinations would be beneficial.

4.2.5 Requirements for the submission of victim or elimination print standards, if applicable.

4.2.6 An FSP should consider the risk of processing an item that may be considered potentially hazardous to examiners, the low success of yielding friction ridges, or the benefit of another forensic examination as a factor in request acceptance.

4.3 If a request is rejected, the reason for rejection, the individual making the rejection and the date should be documented and clearly communicated to the customer.

5 Appendix A: Change Log

Version	Date	Change
1.0	DD/MM/YYYY	Original Issue