

FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Procedures for the Examination of Evidence

1 Scope

These procedures apply to personnel who are involved in answering requests for examination and/or the examination of friction ridge print(s) and/or evidence.

2 Procedures

2.1 Examination Process

2.1.1 The individual assigned to the case will review all relevant case information to determine the appropriate examinations that need to be conducted, if any, and follow the applicable FBI Laboratory practices and discipline procedures. All relevant materials in Forensic Advantage will be reviewed.

2.1.1.1 If personnel identify an additional examination(s) that may be probative, (e.g., possible trace exams on adhesive surfaces), they will follow the appropriate sections in the FBI Laboratory Operations Manual, Practices for Assigning Cases and Conducting Examinations.

2.1.2 An object shot(s) is any image(s) that does not contain evidentiary information relevant to the affected friction ridge print examination(s). Object shots may be submitted by a contributor or taken by the FBI Laboratory for a variety of purposes, such as capturing a crime scene, providing an overview of captured latent prints, or capturing images of a shoeprint. FBI Laboratory Friction Ridge Discipline personnel will determine the relevance of object shots to the requested examinations. Orientation shots are a specific type of object shot that shows the location of a friction ridge print on an item.

2.1.3 To prevent cross-contamination, FBI Laboratory Friction Ridge Discipline personnel will use some or all of the following: blotters, paper, and/or cleaning of work surfaces after each process or examination.

2.1.3.1 FBI Laboratory Friction Ridge Discipline personnel will properly handle evidence to ensure the integrity of the item(s) is maintained.

2.1.4 Processing for latent prints can damage or discolor the item of evidence. FBI Laboratory Friction Ridge Discipline personnel should determine if special handling or considerations will be needed for evidence prior to beginning exams. As necessary, they will discuss any potential issues with the contributor or appropriate unit personnel, prior to conducting possibly detrimental examination(s) and record relevant information in the Communication Log.

2.1.5 Upon completion of the examinations, results will be communicated as appropriate. If the result of an examination would provide a new lead (e.g., an identification as a result of a Next Generation Identification System search), an examiner will contact the affected parties prior to the issuance of the *Laboratory Report* (7-1 or 7-1 LIMS) or final communication. Documentation of the contact will be retained in the case record.

2.1.5.1 For cases where an individual's name and/or personal data must be protected (such as for a confidential human source(s)), the contributor may request that the examiner not use the name and/or personal data in the case record and/or report. The examiner will use a confidential human source(s) number or other unique number or designation provided by or communicated with the contributor or other entity instead of the individual's name and/or personal data. If the case record already contains the individual's name and/or personal data, the examiner will replace that information with the unique number or designation to the best of the examiner's ability; however, it is recognized that the examiner may not be able to completely remove the information from the record. The examiner will record specifically what was modified without referencing the individual's name and/or personal data, and the contributor will be advised of the situation if data is unable to be removed. All communication will be recorded in the Communication Log.

2.1.6 External agency personnel may provide additional information, such as analysis decisions, or specifying prints suitable for automated searches, prior to submitting the case to the FBI Laboratory. When this occurs, the prints will be reanalyzed by the FBI Laboratory Friction Ridge Discipline and a suitability for comparison determination will be made according to the FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Operations Manual, Standard Operating Procedures for Examining Friction Ridge Prints. If automated searches are requested, a FBI Laboratory Friction Ridge Discipline examiner will decide which prints are suitable for the appropriate systems. Differences in opinion between the contributor and the FBI Laboratory may result from any number of factors including:

- Prints damaged or destroyed when evidence is packaged and shipped to the FBI Laboratory.
- Prints faded or obliterated due to chemical processing by the contributor prior to shipment to the FBI Laboratory.
- Agency-specific definitions.
- Differing automated search software requirements.

Any such differences between the contributor and the FBI Laboratory will be recorded in the case record, as appropriate, but will not be considered a disagreement and will not be reported.

2.1.7 Evaluation results reported by another agency will be addressed according to the applicable sections in the FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Quality Assurance Manual, Procedures for Case Acceptance and appropriate sections of the FBI Laboratory Operations Manual and FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual. If a technical disagreement occurs such that FBI Laboratory comparison results (identification, exclusion, latent inconclusive, or known inconclusive) do not agree with those of the external agency, the disagreement will be addressed

according to the FBI Laboratory Operations Manual, Practices for Resolution of Scientific or Technical Disagreement.

2.1.8 All Unsolved Latent File matches by external agencies will be handled as described in the FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Operations Manual, Standard Operating Procedures for the Next Generation Identification System.

2.1.9 The Next Generation Identification System and Known Standard Library are reference collections and meet the requirements listed in the FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual.

2.2 Secondary Evidence

There are three scenarios in which an examiner will produce secondary evidence.

- When the image of a claimed print is not retained in a digital image retention system, and may not be present on the evidence after subsequent processing.
- When lifts or casts are generated by FBI Laboratory Friction Ridge Discipline personnel (as directed by the FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Processing Manual, Preamble).
- When physical recordings of friction ridges from an unknown deceased person(s) (excluding digital printouts or photocopies) are generated by FBI Laboratory Friction Ridge Discipline personnel and returned to the contributor.

Secondary evidence will be unmarked. Once designated, secondary evidence is tracked on the secondary evidence log, and original recordings from unknown deceased will be treated as biohazard. See appropriate sections in FBI Laboratory Operations Manual, Practices for Assigning Cases and Conducting Examinations for further information.

From Item	Quantity	Description
Item 1	5	Photographs
Item 12	2	Lifts
Item 16	1	Prints from Deceased
Item 13, Item 17 through Item 19	1	Disk

Figure 1: Example of FBI Laboratory Friction Ridge Discipline Secondary Evidence Log.

2.3 Initialing and Labeling Evidence

2.3.1 When practicable, every item of evidence will be labeled with the item identifier, initials of the individual processing the evidence, and the FBI Laboratory number. If the item of evidence is too small, the surface condition or type does not lend itself to marking, additional laboratory examinations are requested on the item, or there is a recorded contributor-related reason, the item(s) will not be marked. In addition, Terrorist Explosive Device Analytical Center

cases that may be examined in the future by the Technical Exploitation Unit or where another Government Agency or other organization may request to have the item of evidence returned unmarked will be exempt from marking. In these situations, the required markings will be placed on the proximal evidence container.

2.3.1.1 In cases where the evidence is submitted with a unique contributor number affixed by sticker to the evidence and the unique number is associated to the FBI Laboratory number through the *Laboratory Report* and an internal unit database, the examiner is not required to record the FBI Laboratory number on the item of evidence and will place it on the proximal container.

2.3.1.2 For items attached to a backing (e.g., tape placed on an acetate) where it is not practicable to mark each individual item, FBI Laboratory Friction Ridge Discipline personnel can note the required information on the backing. The backing and items will then be completely heat sealed. Either the backing itself will be heat sealed or a proximal container containing the backing and items will be heat sealed.

2.4 Case Records

2.4.1 Throughout the Laboratory and unit documents, when referring to case records, the term FBI Laboratory Friction Ridge Discipline personnel initials will refer to either handwritten initials or signature or digital equivalent.

Any FBI Laboratory Friction Ridge Discipline personnel conducting work on a submission will acknowledge agreement with their work in the case record. Prior to the issuance of a *Laboratory Report*, the assigned examiner will acknowledge their agreement with the completeness of all case records (e.g., all images, the Next Generation Identification System) by approving the case notes in the Case Record Object Repository in Forensic Advantage and/or initialing each page of the physical case notes.

2.4.2 When standards and controls are specified in a procedure, the examination records or appropriate logbook will reflect that a standard or control was used. Personnel will refer to the appropriate document within the FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Processing Manual for specific information.

2.5 Evidence Storage

2.5.1 Known cards, images, negatives, and secondary evidence, excluding lifts, casts, and original unknown deceased records, may be stored on the office side of the Laboratory.

2.5.2 An examination is considered to be active if some entry of activity in the examination records is made within the past sixty (60) days or any portion of the evidence has been transferred for photography purposes.

2.6 Subdivided Evidence

For Terrorist Explosive Device Analytical Center legacy cases, personnel may subdivide using a character designation (e.g., Q1A). The designation is used to easily distinguish a piece from the full item and each part is further described in the case record. The designation may be used in all case records including communications and reports.

3 References

FBI Laboratory Operations Manual. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division. Latest Revision.

FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division. Latest Revision.

FBI Laboratory Safety Manual. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division. Latest Revision.

FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Operations Manual, Standard Operating Procedures for Examining Friction Ridge Prints. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division. Latest Revision.

FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Operations Manual, Standard Operating Procedures for the Next Generation Identification System. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division. Latest Revision.

FBI Friction Ridge Discipline Processing Manual. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division. Latest Revision.

Rev. #	Issue Date	History
11	08/21/19	Changed unit name to “Scientific and Biometrics Analysis Unit” throughout document. “Conflict” was changed to “disagreement” throughout document. Section 3.1.1.1, removed Biometrics Analysis Section exemption. Section 3.1.10, updated to match new definitions for reference collections and individual characteristic databases. Section 3.2, bullets two and three further clarified. Section 3.3.1.2, reworded for to better reflect expectation.
12	04/01/21	Replace Latent Print Units with Friction Ridge Discipline. Minor wording changes. Removed 7-273 reference throughout. Remove Section 1 and renumbered. Modify Appendix A. Generalized roles throughout document as applicable. Removed original Section 3.1.2. Added Section 2.1.3.1 with information from Section 2.1.3. Section 2.1.4, generalized responsibility. Section 2.1.5.1, added option. Section 2.1.6, generalized system. Section 2.2, removed latent, generalized system and clarified original recordings. Section 2.4.1, added digital equivalent.

Approval

Redacted - Signatures on File

Friction Ridge Discipline
 Technical Leader

Date: 03/31/2021

Acting Latent Print Operations
 Unit Chief

Date: 03/31/2021

Latent Print Support Unit Chief

Date: 03/31/2021

Scientific and Biometrics
 Analysis Unit Chief

Date: 03/31/2021

QA Approval

Quality Manager

Date: 03/31/2021

Appendix A: FBI Laboratory Friction Ridge Discipline Secondary Evidence Log

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