

# Checkwriter Examinations

## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>SCOPE .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>EQUIPMENT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>PROCEDURE .....</b>	<b>2</b>
4.1	Analysis .....	2
4.1.1	Analysis of Checkwriter Impression(s)/Document(s) .....	2
4.1.2	Analysis of a Machine .....	3
4.1.3	Creating Known Checkwriter Impressions .....	3
4.2	Comparison .....	3
4.3	Evaluation.....	4
4.3.1	Conclusions .....	4
4.4	Records.....	6
<b>5</b>	<b>LIMITATIONS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>SAFETY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>REVISION HISTORY .....</b>	<b>6</b>

# Checkwriter Examinations

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This procedure is intended to be utilized by trained personnel to ensure consistency and transparency of methods employed during the examination of checkwriter evidence received in the Questioned Documents Unit (QDU).

This document aligns with ANSI/ASB Standard 172 Standard for Examination of Mechanical Checkwriter Impressions and Machines.

## 2 SCOPE

These procedures will be used by a forensic document examiner to conduct examinations and comparisons of impressions from traditional mechanical checkwriters for purposes of classification or determination of origin.

## 3 EQUIPMENT

- 150-watt tungsten halogen light, or comparable equipment
- Hand magnifier (minimum magnification, 4X)
- Stereomicroscope (minimum magnification, 6.3X), or comparable equipment
- Checkwriter standards and reference materials

## 4 PROCEDURE

- All steps in this procedure will be completed using proper lighting and magnification for the examination being conducted.

### 4.1 Analysis

#### 4.1.1 Analysis of Checkwriter Impression(s)/Document(s)

- A. If not previously determined during the initial assessment of the evidence, examine the document(s) to determine if the item(s) contain an original impression(s) or a reproduction/copy of a checkwriter impression(s).
- B. Examine original impression(s) to determine whether the mechanical checkwriter utilizes liquid ink or a ribbon mechanism.
  - Characteristics of liquid ink mechanical checkwriter impressions include:
    - Redacted
  - Characteristics of ribbon mechanical checkwriter impressions include:
    - Redacted

- C. Examine the prefix, printing elements, slugs, payee perforator, and perforations utilized in the production of the checkwriter impression(s).
  1. Redacted
  2. Record observations using photography or drawings, as appropriate.
- D. To classify checkwriter impressions, evaluate the information obtained regarding the machine/slugs that were used to create the impression(s) and compare those characteristics to checkwriter standards and reference materials.

#### 4.1.2 Analysis of a Machine

- A. If a checkwriter machine is submitted for comparison, the condition of the machine Redacted manufacturer, serial number, and the settings (as submitted) should be recorded.
- B. Using proper lighting and magnification, examine the platen, prefix, printing elements, and segments that can be observed without dismantling and record any observations made.
- C. Because the removal of items from a checkwriter machine may impact the impressions created, personnel must do the following:
  1. Create a set of known impressions before dismantling/cleaning any parts of the checkwriter (see section 4.1.3).
- D. Obtain permission from the contributor before removing the cover or any other parts and record that conversation in the communication log.
  1. Record the details of any dismantling/removal of parts in the case notes.

#### 4.1.3 Creating Known Checkwriter Impressions

- A. The first known exemplar(s) will be obtained from the checkwriter with the settings on the machine as it was received.
  - Known checkwriter impressions should be created using paper of a similar weight to the paper which contains the questioned impressions.
  - If the checkwriter machine is hand-powered, exemplars with varying degrees of force should be obtained.
- B. Create a comparable set of known exemplars which include multiple impressions as observed in the questioned impressions, verbatim.
- C. Create a set of exemplar impressions which include complete strike-ups for all settings/numerals for each segment.
- D. If the checkwriter machine is not available to be submitted to the laboratory, the individual obtaining the known exemplars should record the manufacturer, serial number, settings, date, location, and person's name who obtained the exemplar for each page.

## 4.2 Comparison

- A. For comparisons with other impressions (questioned or known) or a known machine, analyze the impression(s) and/or machine components and compare the class characteristics and distinguishing characteristics.

- Examples of class characteristics include:
  - Redacted
- Examples of distinguishing characteristics include:
  - Redacted

### 4.3 Evaluation

- A. Evaluate similarities, differences, limitations, and their significance independently and in combination to determine if the impression(s) are of common origin and/or if the questioned impression(s) was made by the known machine.

#### 4.3.1 Conclusions

- The following conclusion(s), opinion(s), or other findings apply to classifying checkwriters:
  - The manufacturer, make, and/or model information for the checkwriter used to prepare the document, as applicable.
  - Inconclusive
    - No determination could be reached as to the classification of the checkwriter used to produce the item(s) usually due to limiting factors such Redacted  
This conclusion requires an explanation of the limiting factor(s).
- The following conclusion(s), opinion(s), or other findings apply to examinations to determine whether a particular checkwriter prepared a questioned document(s):
  - Source Identification
    - A determination that the questioned impression(s) were prepared by a particular checkwriter, due to agreement in distinguishing characteristics. No differences that would preclude an identification were observed.
  - Support for a Common Source
    - A less than definitive determination that a particular checkwriter may have been used to prepare the questioned impression(s). The comparison between the checkwriter and the questioned impression(s) reveals no significant, reproducible, or inexplicable differences. There is significant agreement in all observable aspects of the results; however, limitations are present. This opinion requires explanation of the limiting factors.
  - Inconclusive

- No determination can be reached whether a particular checkwriter was or was not used to prepare the questioned impression(s). There may be correspondence in class characteristics, however there are factors that significantly limit meaningful examinations. This opinion requires explanation of the limiting factors.
  - Support for Different Sources
    - A less than definitive determination that a particular checkwriter may not have been used to prepare the questioned impression(s). The comparison between the checkwriter and the questioned impression(s) reveals reproducible and inexplicable variations. Inconsistencies are observed, but limitations are present. This opinion requires explanation of the limiting factors.
  - Source Exclusion
    - A determination that a particular checkwriter was not used to prepare the questioned impression(s) due to sufficient disagreement in class and/or distinguishing characteristics. Differences are observed.
- The following conclusion(s), opinion(s), or other findings apply to examinations to determine whether two or more documents containing checkwriter impressions share a common origin:
    - Originated from a Common Source
      - A determination that the items were prepared by the same checkwriter due to agreement in distinguishing characteristics. No differences that would preclude a definite determination were observed.
    - Support for a Common Source
      - A less than definitive determination that two or more checkwriter impressions may have originated from a common source. The comparison of the impressions reveals no significant, reproducible, or inexplicable differences. There is significant agreement in all observable aspects of the results; however, limitations are present. This opinion requires explanation of the limiting factors.
    - Inconclusive
      - No determination can be reached whether the checkwriter impressions did or did not originate from a common source. There may be correspondence in class characteristics between the items; however, there are factors that significantly limit meaningful examinations. This opinion requires explanation of the limiting factors.
    - Support for Different Sources
      - A less than definitive determination that two or more checkwriter impressions may not have originated from a common source. The comparison of the impressions reveals reproducible and inexplicable

variations. Inconsistencies are observed, but limitations are present. This opinion requires explanation of the limiting factors.

- Did Not Originate from a Common Source
  - A determination that the items were not prepared by the same checkwriter due to sufficient disagreement in class and/or distinguishing characteristics. Differences are observed.

#### 4.4 Records

- Examination records must include any reference information, standards, photographs, printouts, drawings, or distinguishing characteristics that support the conclusions rendered.

#### 5 LIMITATIONS

- The following factors could affect the examination process and/or the results rendered:
  - Redacted

#### 6 SAFETY

Standard precautions should be followed for the handling of chemical and biological materials. Chemical and biological materials that are hazardous or potentially hazardous will be maintained and examined in specifically designated areas within QDU space. QDU personnel may refer to the [FBI Laboratory Safety Manual](#) for additional guidance.

#### 7 REVISION HISTORY

Revision	Issued	Changes
05	01/14/2022	Entire document updated for clarity and reformatted into the new template. Added conclusions for checkwriter classification to section <a href="#">4.3.1</a> .
06	01/15/2025	Revised entire document for consistency across other technical procedures and the ANSI/ASB Standard 172.