

# Operational Response and Field Assessments

## 1 Scope

This document describes guidelines for field deployments of Anthropology Examiners within the Trace Evidence Unit (TEU) to assist with the detection and recovery of potential human remains. This document also describes the procedures for field analysis and assessments.

## 2 Equipment/Materials/Reagents

- Personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, protective footwear).

## 3 Standards and Controls

Not applicable.

## 4 Sampling

Not applicable.

## 5 Procedure

### 5.1 Operational Deployments

Operational assistance provided by examiners will be coordinated by the Evidence Response Team Unit (ERTU) and will conform to the deployment policies of the Operational Response Section (ORS). Assistance may include advising and/or participating in, for example:

- Detection of buried remains/ clandestine graves
- Excavation/recovery of buried remains
- Location of scattered skeletal remains
- Recovery of scattered skeletal remains
- Recovery of burned skeletal remains
- Recovery of submerged remains
- Field assessments

### 5.2 Field Assessments

Field assessments of recovered material may be performed. The possible conclusions that can be reached based on field assessments may be limited or inconclusive (typically, skeletal versus non-skeletal origin, and/or human versus non-human origin). At the discretion of the examiner, further laboratory analysis may be required to render a conclusion.

### 5.3 Records

**5.3.1** The case notes and FBI *Laboratory Report* (7-1, 7-1 LIMS) will contain, at a minimum, any significant information pertaining to anthropological contributions to the detection, excavation, location, recovery, or assessment of potential human remains.

**5.3.2** If a field assessment is provided, case notes will include observations supporting conclusions, and an indication of whether this material was collected as evidence, left *in situ*, or collected and disposed of in some other manner. Reporting will proceed according to the Determining Skeletal or Non-skeletal Origin procedure, Determining Human or Non-Human Origin procedure, or other applicable procedure.

**5.3.3** When further laboratory analysis of recovered material is deemed necessary based on the examiner's discretion, the material will be submitted to the FBI Laboratory and examinations will be performed according to appropriate SOPs.

## **6 Limitations**

The conclusions that can be reached from an anthropological field assessment are dependent on the condition and completeness of the remains, as well as the environmental conditions of the recovery location. Results based on fragmentary or poorly preserved material may be inconclusive, and laboratory analysis may be required.

## **7 Safety**

**7.1** While working in the field and/or with physical evidence, Laboratory personnel should wear at least the minimum appropriate protective attire (e.g., gloves, footwear appropriate to the environment). It is recognized that appropriate attire will vary depending on the field deployment context.

**7.2** Universal precautions will be followed.

**7.3** Exposure to biological hazards may be associated with operational response and field assessments. Safety procedures related to specific equipment or procedures will be followed. Refer to the FBI Laboratory Safety Manual for guidance.

## **8 References**

- Determining Skeletal or Non-skeletal Origin, Trace Evidence Procedures Manual (current version)
- Determining Human or Non-Human Origin, Trace Evidence Procedures Manual (current version)
- FBI Laboratory Safety Manual (current version)

Rev. #	Issue Date	History
1	02/07/2018	Updated throughout removing references to TEU where appropriate; added forensic anthropologists to the Scope in Section 1 and Section 5.1. Updated Section 2. Removed Section 4 Calibration and renumbered. Added 'or Sample Selection' to Section 4. Clarified in Section 5.2 what field assessments will cover and possible conclusions. Section 5.3 header changed to Records, in subsections 5.3.1, 5.3.2, 5.3.3, added FBI Laboratory Report instead of report, updated title of Anthropology SOP, and clarified when items would be submitted to Laboratory. Provided example in Section 7.1. Updated references in Section 8.
2	02/10/2020	Changed 'forensic anthropologist' to 'Anthropology Examiner' in Scope and 'examiner' throughout. Removed 'Sample Selection' from Section 4 title. Added 'to render a conclusion' to Section 5.2.

**Approval**

Redacted - Signatures on File

Trace Evidence Unit  
Chief

Date: 02/07/2020

Anthropology Technical  
Leader

Date: 02/07/2020