

Assessment of Images

1 Scope

This document describes the procedure for assessing electronic images by Anthropology Examiners within the Trace Evidence Unit (TEU). An image assessment is a review of electronic evidence prior to or instead of receipt of physical evidence, primarily for the purpose of facilitating the expeditious determination of whether the depicted material is probative or relevant to an investigation (typically whether the depicted material is of human skeletal origin).

2 Equipment/Materials/Reagents

- Computer or mobile device
- Human and non-human skeletal reference material (e.g., casts, published literature, or museum collections)

3 Standards and Controls

Not applicable.

4 Sampling

Not applicable.

5 Procedure

5.1 Receipt of Images

Images may be received by email or SMS (text message). Ideally, images include a scale and appropriate considerations for lighting, angle, obstructions, etc. If the examiner believes that additional or different images may help the assessment, they may be requested from the contributor. There are no file size/type requirements for anthropological image assessments.

5.2 Scope of Image Assessments

An image assessment typically includes determining whether the depicted material is skeletal versus non-skeletal in origin (see SOP for Determining Skeletal or Non-skeletal Origin), or human versus non-human in origin (see SOP for Determining Human or Non-human Origin). Such assessments, by their nature, can only be performed visually based on the content of the

image. Results may also be inconclusive due to either image quality or the nature of the depicted item(s). As appropriate, the examiner may also advise the contributor that direct examination of the depicted item may provide additional information.

5.3 Expedited Results

Results of assessments will be provided to the contributor (either verbally or electronically) prior to technical and administrative review, including caveats in accordance with the LOM – Practices for Preparing, Reviewing, and Issuing Laboratory Reports and Retaining Records in Forensic Advantage (FA).

5.4 Administrative Procedures

The contributor will be advised of the procedure for submitting a request letter or Laboratory Examination Request (LER). Once received, the request will be forwarded to the Evidence Management Unit for entry into FA. Alternatively, the electronic request and results can be uploaded into Sentinel as a record email if a request letter or LER is unable to be obtained.

Once an anthropology case record has been created in FA, an entry will be placed in the Case Communication Log documenting the communication of expedited results to the contributor.

The evidence items and descriptions will be added in FA. The evidence naming convention will include that the evidence is electronic, and the original image file name, for example: “Item 1 Electronic Evidence (Photo1.JPG).” Actual image files may be documented in the Case Notes (see Section 5.5.1) and do not need to be separately uploaded to FA.

After the administrative review has been completed, the evidence will be placed into archive.

5.5 Records

5.5.1 Case Notes

The case notes will include the date and method of receipt of the images, as well as a copy of each image submitted.

5.5.2 Reports

The FBI *Laboratory Report* (7-1, 7-1 LIMS) will include the conclusion(s) reached based on the image assessment. The Remarks section will indicate that the evidence was received electronically and is being retained.

6 Calculations

Not applicable

7 Measurement Uncertainty

Not applicable

8 Limitations

The conclusions that can be reached from anthropological examinations to determine skeletal or non-skeletal origin are dependent on the condition and completeness of the submitted material. Results based on fragmentary or poorly preserved material may be inconclusive.

The conclusions that can be reached regarding human or non-human origin are dependent on the condition and completeness of the skeletal remains. Result based on fragmentary or poorly preserved material may be inconclusive.

The conclusions that can be reached based on the examination of images are dependent on the condition and completeness of the depicted skeletal material as well as the quality of the images. Results may be limited or inconclusive.

9 Safety

Not applicable.

10 References

- Forensic Anthropological Examinations, Trace Evidence Procedures Manual (current version)
- 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)

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Approval

Redacted - Signatures on File

Trace Evidence Unit
Chief

Date: 12/13/2019

Anthropology Technical
Leader

Date: 12/13/2019