

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
Forensic Services Division



Latent Print Standard Operating Procedures
2.3 Wet-Wop

2.3.1 Scope

Wetwop is a trademarked brand name of a chemical used to process adhesive tapes and labels for latent prints, similar to sticky-side powder. It is a one step application with no mixing of reagents required. Wetwop is available in black and white. Effective contrast can be acquired by selecting the appropriate color for the processed surface.

2.3.2 Evidence

Wetwop is used to develop latent prints on the adhesive sides of tape, decals, stamps, and other items. Wetwop can also develop latent prints on the non-sticky side of tape. Wetwop is also effective in processing non-fabric gloves, including latex and Nitrile gloves.

2.3.3 Safety Precautions/Limitations

According to the manufacturer, Wetwop is non-toxic. It is recommended that standard laboratory precautions be taken. The reagent can be very messy and may stain.

After application, Wetwop should not be left on longer than recommended (approximately 15 to 45 seconds) since it may become difficult to rinse off.

Poor results may occur with tape that has dried out adhesive.

2.3.4 Chemicals/Reagents

Wetwop (black)
Wetwop (white)
Water

2.3.5 Instruments/Equipment

Camel hair brush or other type of stiff bristle brush
Shallow dish or pan
Paper to cover and protect counter

2.3.6 Preparation

Wetwop is purchased.

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2.3.6.1 Shelf Life

No expiration date is provided, however a control will be performed prior to use on evidence.

2.3.7 Controls

One or more latent prints are placed on a comparable non-evidence item. Wetwop is then applied to the item. Examine the item for ridge detail development to determine if adequate results are achieved.

A positive result is achieved with the development of grey or black ridge detail for black Wetwop or white ridge detail for white Wetwop.

A negative result occurs when no ridge detail or color change develops after application.

A control must be successfully performed before applying Wetwop to evidence. This control must be documented in the Reagent Logbook as well as the examiner's notes.

If at any time a control test indicates that the product is not working properly, the examiner or technician performing the control will properly dispose of that bottle, open a new bottle, and test a new control. Once the control tests appropriately, the Wetwop may be used.

2.3.8 Procedure

1. Select the color of Wetwop to be used to achieve the most contrast with the item being processed.
2. Shake Wetwop well and pour into shallow pan.
3. Using brush, apply to evidence.
4. Wait 15 – 45 seconds and rinse Wetwop from evidence under a gentle stream of cool tap water.
5. Allow to dry.
6. Examine for latent prints.

Note: Steps 3-4 may be repeated to improve contrast. Avoid the reagent drying on the evidence surface before rinsing.

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2.3.8.1 Deviation from Protocol

A variation in the above procedure may be performed with supervisor approval.

2.3.9 Interpretation of Results

Latent prints of comparable value shall be marked and photographed with a ruler included. The developed latent prints are considered to be fragile and should be photographed as soon as possible. Refer to 2.5.2 and 2.5.5 of the Forensic Imaging Standard Operating Procedures Manual for further instruction.

2.3.10 References

CBDIAI. "Wet Wop Powder/ Wet Wop (black) formula.
<http://www.cbdiai.org/Reagents/wetwop-black.html>

CBDIAI. "Wet Wop Powder/ Wet Wop (white) formula.
<http://www.cbdiai.org/Reagents/wetwop-white.html>

Pleckaitis, J. (2007). Developing Friction Ridge Detail on the Interior of Latex and Nitrile Gloves. *Journal of Forensic Identification*, 57 (2). pp. 230-239.