

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Forensic Services Division



Latent Print Standard Operating Procedures

6.0 Evidence Handling

6.1 Receipt of Evidence

Evidence received by a latent print examiner will be transferred into their possession via electronic chain of custody and documented in LIMS. The chain of custody will show all dates, times, persons, and locations involved in subsequent transfers. The chain of custody will be accessible electronically and may be printed out in hard copy form as needed.

When an examiner receives evidence into his/her possession, it will be received under proper seal and stored in a secure limited access area in the Latent Print Unit. This includes areas inside the unit's evidence vault or in lockable storage in the office area. During the active examination period, the examiner is responsible for the security and integrity of all evidence. Evidence is considered to be in the examiner's custody during the active examination period regardless of the storage location.

The active examination period shall start when the examiner opens the evidence container or packaging and ends when all testing/examination is complete and the evidence has been properly resealed. The active examination period for evidence shall not exceed 120 days.

Note: In Reverse AFIS hit cases, the active examination period shall start on the date the evidence is transferred from Latent Storage Files to the examiner.

6.2 Processing of Evidence

Evidence containers will be opened and the evidence shall be examined within the Latent Print Unit. In certain circumstances, such as multi-section cases, evidence may be opened in another unit.

Large evidence that cannot be transported to or processed in the Latent Print Unit may be processed in the vehicle bays or regional laboratories.

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6.2.1 Typical Processing Techniques/Sequences

Evidence submitted to the Latent Print Unit for processing will be subjected to processes available in the Latent Print Unit for developing latent prints. The typical processing techniques and sequences of available procedures are listed below; however, each item will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and the proper procedure and/or sequence of procedures will be selected at the examiner's discretion.

6.2.1.1 Nonporous Evidence:

1. RUVIS
2. Cyanoacrylate Fuming
3. RUVIS
4. Powder
5. Fluorescent Dye(s)/ALS

6.2.1.2 Porous Evidence:

Paper, cardboard, unfinished wood:

1. 1,2-Indanedione
2. Ninhydrin

Thermal paper:

1. Glacial Acetic Acid
or
2. 1,2-Indanedione

6.2.1.3 Tape:

1. Follow nonporous sequence (non-sticky side)
2. Wetwop (sticky side)

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6.2.1.4

Bloody Evidence:

(Nonporous)

1. RUVIS
2. Amido Black

(Porous)

1. Ninhydrin

6.2.2

Latent Prints of Value for Comparison

When latent prints of value for comparison are developed during the examination/processing phase, they are lifted or digitally photographed. It is not necessary to photograph the same area during subsequent processes if the quality does not improve with that process. Digital images are enhanced and returned to the examiner. Refer to the Forensic Imaging Standard Operating Procedures Manual for procedures. Once returned to the examiner and determined to be of value for comparison, the lifts/digital images are given a collective exhibit number following the laboratory case number (i.e. 131012345-LP1) and the below procedure is followed. Variations in the work flow may be performed at the examiner's discretion (i.e. searching latents in AFIS/NGI prior to performing any comparison).

The below procedure is also followed when latent prints of value for comparison are submitted by an outside agency (i.e. latent lifts or photographs).

1. Latent prints are compared to any available known impressions (victims and subjects). Refer to chapter 4.1 in the Latent Print Unit Standard Operating Procedures Manual.
2. The compared evidence is transferred for verification through the LP AFIS/Verification/Digital Imaging Storage Location or directly to another qualified examiner.
3. The comparison is verified by a second qualified examiner and the evidence is transferred back to the case examiner. Refer to 4.1.4.5 in the Latent Print Unit Standard Operating Procedures Manual.



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4. When any latent prints of value for comparison remain unidentified, those latent prints are entered into the AFIS/NGI database. Refer to chapter 5.1 in the Latent Print Unit Standard Operating Procedures Manual.
5. When known impressions are not available for comparison, the latent prints are entered directly into the AFIS/NGI database.
6. When an AFIS/NGI “hit” occurs, the examiner then obtains the known impressions from the TBI CJIS Division or the FBI, assigns the known impressions an exhibit number, and performs a comparison. Steps 1 through 3 are followed.

6.2.3 Deviation from Protocol

Deviations from this procedure may be performed with Unit Supervisor approval.

6.3 Return of Evidence

6.3.1 Items Processed

When the processing of evidence is complete, the evidence will be placed in the original packaging (when possible), properly sealed, and returned to the Evidence Receiving Unit. In certain circumstances, such as multi-section cases, evidence may be transferred directly to another Special Agent Forensic Scientist. In these cases a convenience seal may be used.

6.3.2 Submitted Latent Prints (latent lifts, photographs, discs, etc.)

Exhibits bearing latent prints of no value for comparison are photocopied for documentation, placed into their original container (when possible), properly sealed, and returned to the Evidence Receiving Unit.

Exhibits bearing latent prints of value for comparison that are not identified to an individual are transferred to the Latent Storage Files.

Exhibits bearing latent prints that are identified with a subject, as well as all other latent prints of value for comparison associated with that exhibit, are digitally scanned for documentation, placed



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into their original containers (when possible), properly sealed, and returned to the Evidence Receiving Unit. This documentation will remain in the Latent Storage Files location. If and when it is needed for a future comparison, the documented latent prints will be given a collective exhibit number (i.e. LP1) to facilitate chain of custody tracking at the time of the future comparison.

Note: If sufficient documentation cannot be achieved due to poor quality of the original latent, then the submitted latent prints may remain on file at the discretion of the examiner.

Exhibits bearing latent prints that are all identified with a victim or known handler, are digitally scanned for documentation, placed into their original containers (when possible), properly sealed, and returned to the Evidence Receiving Unit. The documentation will remain in the Latent Storage Files.

Exhibits bearing latent prints of value for comparison that are identified with a victim or known handler, as well as any latent prints of value for comparison not identified, will be transferred to the Latent Storage Files.

All images received on a disc are stored electronically.

6.3.3 Developed Latent Prints

Developed latent lifts, photographs, and/or digital images are transferred to the Latent Storage Files.

6.3.4 Known Impressions

Known impressions submitted by an outside agency may be returned to that agency via the Evidence Receiving Unit. If the known impressions were used for comparison purposes and an identification was made, they should be digitally scanned (documented) prior to returning them to the Evidence Receiving Unit. This documentation will remain in the Latent Storage Files location. If and when it is needed for a future comparison, the documented known impressions will be given a collective exhibit number (i.e. KI1) to facilitate chain of custody tracking at the time of the future comparison. If no identification was made and additional comparisons are needed at a later date, the known impressions should be re-submitted by the requesting agency at that later date.



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Known impressions obtained from the TBI CJIS Division will be transferred to the Latent Storage Files.

Known impressions obtained directly from the TBI CJIS Division (file copy) shall be returned to that unit.

6.4

Latent Storage Files

The Latent Print Unit stores photographs, latent lifts, and digital images transferred to the Latent Storage Files. These files are located in the Latent Print Unit.

All latent lifts, photographs, and/or digital images will be stored in manila envelopes in a sealed condition (initialed and dated). Each time an envelope is opened, it will be properly resealed (initialed and dated). (Effective October 1, 2004)

All non-capital cases may be purged from the Latent Storage Files after the statute of limitations has expired. All capital cases may be purged from the Latent Storage Files after seventy-five years. (Effective October 1, 2004)