

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Forensic Services Division



Latent Prints Quality Assurance Manual

8.0 Quality Control

8.1 Internal Quality Control

This chapter is a comprehensive overview of quality assurance measures implemented by the Latent Print Unit.

8.2 Safety/Performance Checks

Equipment in the laboratory is periodically checked to ensure proper functioning. If these performance checks indicate improper functioning, modifications are made as needed until equipment is functioning properly. The Technical Leader will be notified if proper functioning cannot be achieved. Equipment is checked by the following schedule:

Daily When in Use:

Alternate Light Source

Weekly:

Eyewash Stations
Humidity Chamber Water Level

Monthly:

Super Glue Heat Source
AFIS/NGI Performance Check

Quarterly:

Hood Velocity
Safety Shower
Humidity Chamber Wick

Before Each Use:

Analytical Balance
Krimesite Imager

8.3 Chemicals and Reagents

Chemicals and reagents prepared in the Latent Print Unit are tested when made and on any dates of use.

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8.4 Analytical Balance

A performance check of the analytical balance will be successfully performed before each use. Documentation will be maintained on a log sheet located in the Latent Print Unit laboratory near the balance.

An external vendor will certify the balance yearly and the documentation will remain on file in the Latent Print Unit laboratory near the balance.

As this balance is not used for any critical measurements, the Latent Print Unit's weight set will not be externally certified, however; a check standard will be performed on the weights annually against another externally certified weight set in use at the TBI Crime Laboratory.

8.5 Verification and Review

A second qualified examiner will verify all comparisons performed by an examiner.

A second qualified examiner will review all evidence for the presence of identifiable latent prints.

Any examiner that performs a verification or evidence review will initial and date the appropriate worksheet for the case file.

If requested by the customer, results may be released following verification.

8.6 Reports

When the examination is complete, the examiner's findings are entered into LIMS. It is the examiner's responsibility to review the case file, checking it for errors. The examiner must then mark the case "Draft Complete" in LIMS.

Another qualified Latent Print Examiner will technically review all laboratory reports and case notes prepared by an examiner. The reviewer must then mark it "Tech Reviewed" in LIMS.



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All reports will be administratively reviewed. Someone other than the author of the test report and the technical reviewer (a third examiner) should perform the Administrative Review. The unit supervisor or designee will perform the Administrative Review and mark it "Admin Reviewed" in LIMS.

8.7 Validation of New Methods

When a new method or procedure is introduced to the Latent Print Unit, a proper validation will be performed prior to its use in casework. The Technical Leader or designee will formulate a planned activity to test the reliability of the method or procedure. The Quality Assurance Manager will approve the planned activity before it is implemented. Once the activity is complete, the information is given to the Unit Supervisor, Quality Assurance Manager, Forensic Scientist Manager, and Crime Laboratory Regional Administrator for review and final approval.

8.8 Proficiency Tests

Latent Print Examiners will successfully complete one proficiency test per calendar year. Successful/Unsuccessful outcomes will be determined by the test provider. The Unit Supervisor, Technical Leader, and the Quality Assurance Manager will review the results. If a discrepancy is detected, remediation may be required.

8.9 Complaints, Non-conformance, and Corrective Actions

The Technical Leader will investigate any complaints or nonconforming testing and take appropriate measures including a root cause analysis to determine if a corrective action is needed.

The Technical Leader will maintain records pertaining to unit investigations and corrective actions.

8.10 Improvement and Preventative Action

In an effort to improve the management system, the Latent Print Unit will provide input to assist the Crime Laboratory Regional Administrator in the preparation of the annual management review. The Unit Supervisor and Technical Leader will describe areas that need improvement as well as any proposed or active measures for improvement. Any preventative action will also be documented.