

submission directions, including **Requesting Evidence Examinations** and **Packaging and Shipping Evidence**.

- Pack ink evidence separately from any document or surface with ink marks.

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Latent Print Examinations

Case Acceptance Policy

Because of the increasing casework demands of the FBI's primary mission, protecting the United States from terrorist attacks, the FBI Laboratory will no longer accept routine cases from state and local agencies in which latent print examination services may be obtained from within the submitting agency's system. The future acceptance of any state and local cases generally will be based on the submitting agency's lack of access to the same techniques or services provided by the FBI Laboratory, the unusual technical nature of the case, or the circumstances surrounding the case, e.g., cases of a high-profile nature or cases that also involve FBI field offices.

Developing Latent Prints at Crime Scenes

The Laboratory is the best place to develop latent prints; however, it is sometimes necessary to

develop latent prints at crime scenes. Caution should be taken to prevent destroying latent prints. The following measures ensure that crime scene latent prints are protected:

- Photograph latent prints prior to any processing.
- Examine all evidence visually and with a laser or an alternate light source before using any other latent print development process.
- Photograph latent prints developed with fingerprint powders before lifting them.
- Black, gray, or white powder can be applied to a surface with a variety of style of brushes. The color of the powder should contrast with the color of the surface (e.g., black for light surfaces and gray or white for dark surfaces).
- Use a short-hair brush or cotton to remove excess powder. Use caution when powdering. Avoid overbrushing latent prints and losing clarity.
- Use transparent tape or black-and-white rubber lifts to lift latent prints.

- When transparent tape is used, the color of the backing card should contrast with the color of the powders (e.g., white backing card for black powder).
- When using latent print development processes, refer to the manufacturer's instructions and the Material Safety Data Sheets. Use personal protective equipment (e.g., safety glasses, masks, gloves, smocks).
- The *Processing Guide for Developing Latent Prints* is a comprehensive guide to latent print processes and protocols. Refer to this publication to ensure that proper processes are applied in the recommended order. Following this guide will maximize the potential to develop latent prints and will preserve evidence if other forensic examinations are required. The guide is available at <http://www.fbi.gov/hq/lab/fsc/backissu/jan2001/lpu.pdf>. Law enforcement personnel may request the *Processing Guide for Developing Latent Prints* in field-manual format by faxing a request on agency letterhead to **703-632-8374**.

Photographing Latent Prints

- Use a tripod and cable release when photographing latent prints.

- Use a 35 mm or medium-format camera with a macro lens capable of half-size to full-size reproduction.
- Photograph latent prints at each step in the processing sequence before moving to the next process.
- Photograph latent prints developed with fingerprint powders before lifting them.
- When possible, use ISO 400 film. Set the lens f-stop to the smallest possible aperture while using the camera meter to adjust the camera's shutter speed to obtain proper exposure.
- Take three exposures of each latent print by bracketing:
 - Original exposure.
 - One-stop underexposed image.
 - One-stop overexposed image.
- Photograph latent prints individually. This ensures that the target latent print is in focus.

- For reference purposes, photograph latent prints close to one another in one frame, if possible.
- Fill the frame completely.
- Photograph latent prints with an identification label that includes a scale, reference number, date, collector's initials, and location of the latent prints. The identification label should be placed on the same plane as the latent prints.
- Maintain a photographic log that records each shot, reference number, date, collector's initials, location of prints, and other pertinent information.

Questions concerning latent print evidence should be directed to 703-632-8443. Follow the evidence submission directions, including **Requesting Evidence Examinations** and **Packaging and Shipping Evidence**.

- Stabilize the evidence to avoid movement or friction during shipping.
- Place nonporous evidence (e.g., nonabsorbent, hard surfaces) in separate protective coverings such as thick transparent envelopes

(glassine), or suspend in a container so that there is minimal surface contact. Friction will destroy latent prints on this type of surface.

- Place porous evidence (e.g., paper, cardboard) in separate protective coverings. Friction generally will not destroy latent prints on this type of surface.
- Submit known fingerprints and palm prints of everyone who may have handled the evidence, including suspects, victims, those who had legitimate access, and investigative personnel. All fingerprint cards must include pertinent biographical and/or demographic information.
- Palm prints should be taken on only one side of a separate card, not on the reverse side of a fingerprint card or on the reverse side of a card that has a recorded impression on the other side.
- Fingerprint cards and major-case prints should include, at a minimum, the name of the person printed, the name of the person recording the prints, the date, the case-identification number, and a brief statement of facts relating to the case. The fingerprint card should bear an arrest offense.

- The notation “elimination prints” should be included if the person printed is not a suspect.
- When known prints are submitted separately from evidence, reference previous communications and case-identifying numbers and other pertinent information.

Submitting Latent and Intentionally Recorded Print Images in Digital Format

Digital images, including digital photographs, of latent and intentionally recorded prints should include a scale or other measurable item. If a search of the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) is requested, a scale or other measurable item is mandatory.

Digital images, including digital photographs, must meet the following requirements:

- Documentation of the image source (e.g., window, door frame).
- Documentation of the capture device (e.g., flatbed scanner, digital camera).
- Documentation indicating the image is an original capture.

- File properties for latent images consisting of:
 - A file format without compression or with lossless compression (e.g., RAW, TIFF).
 - A minimum of 8 bits for grayscale images and 24 bits for color images.
 - A resolution that meets or exceeds 1000 pixels per inch (PPI) when calibrated to actual size (1:1).
- File properties for intentionally recorded prints consisting of:
 - A file format without compression, with lossless compression (e.g., RAW, TIFF), or with Wavelet Scalar Quantization (WSQ) compression saved at a maximum of 15:1.
 - A minimum of 8 bits for grayscale images and 24 bits for color images.
 - A resolution that meets or exceeds 500 PPI when calibrated to actual size (1:1).

Latent prints submitted as facsimiles or photocopies will not be examined in the FBI Laboratory.

Intentionally recorded prints submitted as facsimiles will not be examined in the FBI Laboratory, except when the known prints will be searched against IAFIS in order to obtain FBI file prints.

Submitting Hands or Fingers of an Unknown Deceased

- Pack each hand or finger in a separate unbreakable, watertight, and airtight container.
- Label each container (e.g., "RIGHT HAND," "RIGHT THUMB," "RIGHT INDEX").
- Ship the remains in the condition in which they were found (e.g., in water, frozen, dried) by the most expeditious means.
- Provide a complete physical description of the deceased, if possible.
- Label the outer container "KEEP IN A COOL, DRY PLACE," "REFRIGERATE ON ARRIVAL," and "BIOHAZARD."
- All human remains will be returned to the contributor.

- Address the outer container as follows:

**EVIDENCE CONTROL UNIT
LABORATORY DIVISION
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
2501 INVESTIGATION PARKWAY
QUANTICO VA 22135**

Legible, complete ten-print fingerprint cards not related to an ongoing Laboratory investigation should be sent to the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division.

- Address the outer container as follows:

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION
SERVICES DIVISION
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
1000 CUSTER HOLLOW ROAD
CLARKSBURG WV 26306**

- **Questions concerning ten-print fingerprint cards should be directed to 304-625-2360.**

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Lubricant Examinations

Lubricants encompass a range of substances, including petroleum products, natural fatty ester oils, and polyalkylene glycol oils. Automotive fluids (e.g., engine oil, brake fluid), certain cosmetics