



ATF-LS-QD5 Alteration Obliteration and Ink Examination	Published Online: March 2018
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PRINCIPLE:

To determine, if possible, if a particular entry has been altered or obliterated or to differentiate inks on the document.

SPECIAL HANDLING:

- Evidence containing body fluids that is received in the Document Section should be dried under a hood and then repackaged in a paper box or envelope. Items should be handled in order to prevent examiner exposure and preserve DNA, if requested by the submitter. Contents should be documented on the front of the packaging.
- When handling a contaminated document, the examiner must have on a lab coat and rubber gloves. The evidence should be opened and examined only under a biohazard safety hood. After examination the document should be heat sealed. The work area should be disinfected and the lab coat placed in a biohazard bag and sent to the laundry. The gloves must be placed in a properly labeled biohazard disposal after the examination is concluded.
- Evidence submitted requesting a latent print examination should be placed in a plastic or mylar sheet protector covering the evidence. In this case, item and examiner identifying marks should be placed on the protective sheet.

SPECIMEN(S):

An altered or obliterated text or an altered entry(ies)

SUPPLIES REQUIRED:

Paper, pen

APPARATUS REQUIRED:

Stereoscopic microscope, hand magnifier, transmitted light box, various light sources, colored filters, Video Spectral Comparator, ultraviolet and infrared light sources, photocopier, and ESDA (Electrostatic Detection Apparatus)

CALIBRATION REQUIREMENTS:

Microscope maintained in house. No special calibration beyond routine maintenance is required. Examine a test sheet on the VSC prior to examining any casework. Test sheet is utilized to determine

proper functioning of machine. If not, then a technician is called to check the equipment. Casework is suspended on the equipment until repairs are made.

PROCEDURES:

1. The evidence is marked in ink with the appropriate item number as it appears on the Laboratory transmittal sheet, the case number, and the examiner's initials or other mark. Items on the transmittal sheet may be amended by adding "Q" and "K" identifiers. Such amendments should be notated on a copy of the transmittal placed in the case jacket and the contributor should be notified via phone or email.
2. Visually examine the document with a stereoscopic microscope.
3. Examine obliterated or altered area(s) using oblique light. In a darkened room, use microscope light to illuminate the document.
4. Examine obliterated or altered area(s) or inks using transmitted light. Place the document on a light box so that light is transmitted through the document.
5. Examine obliterated or altered area(s) or inks using ultraviolet light. Examine visually with the aid of the Video Spectral Comparator using colored filters.
6. Examine obliterated or altered area(s) or inks using infrared light. Examine visually with the aid of the Video Spectral Comparator using colored filters.
7. Examine obliterated or altered area(s) or inks using Infrared Luminescence. Examine visually with the aid of the Video Spectral Comparator using colored filters.
8. Examine for indentations using the Electrostatic Detection Apparatus, if necessary.
9. Lifts are generated from all ESDA runs.
Note: If necessary, the obliteration material may be removed through the use of chemicals and/or heat. This is also destructive to the document so it must not be done until all other examinations are completed and permission has been given from the submitting agency to use a destructive method to remove the obliterating material.
10. Copies of all lifts are to be placed into the case jacket, with originals returned with any other evidence to the contributor.
11. Make written notes of similarities and/or dissimilarities. Make note of settings on the Video Spectral Comparator. Make photocopies or photographs (with rulers) of all items for the case jacket.
12. Formulate a conclusion based on all the evidence examined.
13. A complete technical review is conducted by another qualified examiner and documented and initialed on Technical Case File Review Form.
14. Record findings in written form and have the results recorded on formal laboratory report forms.
15. The bases and reasons for the conclusion(s), opinion(s), or finding(s) should be included either on the examiner's worksheet or on photocopies and may be also included in the report.

DOCUMENTATION:

Equipment used. Light sources used. A Questioned Document Worksheet will accompany each case and should include the identifying or eliminating features, and the results of the analysis.

REFERENCES:

Conway, James V. P., *Evidential Documents*, Charles C. Thomas Publisher, Springfield, Illinois, 1959.

Harrison, Wilson R., *Suspect Documents Their Scientific Examination*, Sweet & Maxwell, Ltd, London, England, 1966.

Hilton, Ordway, *Scientific Examination of Questioned Documents*, Elsevier Science Publishing Co., Inc., New York, New York, 1982

Kelly, JS, Lindblom, Brian, *Scientific Examination of Questioned Documents Second Edition*, CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL, 2006.

SWGDOC Standard Guide for the Examination of Altered Documents.

SWGDOC Standard Guide for Test Methods for Forensic Writing In