



ATF-LS-QD11 Rubber Stamp and Rubber Stamp Impressions Examinations	Published Online: March 2018
Authority: Technical Leader	
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PRINCIPLE:

To determine, if possible, if two or more rubber stamp impressions resulted from the same stamp or if a known stamp produced a questioned impression(s).

SPECIAL HANDLING:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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):

1. A questioned impression and known stamp, or
2. Two or more questioned impressions, or
3. Two or more questioned impressions and known stamp

APPARATUS REQUIRED:

Stereo microscope, hand magnifier, sufficient light source(s)

PROCEDURES:

The method for conducting a rubber stamp examination will generally include the following:

1. The evidence is marked 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. All procedures shall be performed when applicable and noted when appropriate and all examinations performed, relevant observations, and results shall be documented.

3. Procedures should be discontinued or limited should there be a determination that a particular feature is not present or that an item is lacking in quality or comparability and the reasons for such should be documented. A report should then be produced.
 - a. *Note:* Limitations can include over inked impressions or partially or inadequately inked stamps.
4. Determine whether the submitted questioned impression(s) were produced by a rubber stamp. If not a rubber stamp impression (original or copy), discontinue examination and report accordingly.
5. Determine whether the examination is a comparison of questioned impressions; a comparison of questioned impression(s) with a known impression(s); or a comparison of a questioned impression(s) with a rubber stamp(s).
6. Determine whether the submitted questioned impression(s) is suitable for comparison. If it is not suitable for comparison, discontinue the procedure and report accordingly. Factors that affect the suitability include clarity, detail, degree of inking or condition of the document.
7. If no known specimen impressions or rubber stamp(s) submitted, go to 15.
8. If a rubber stamp(s) is submitted, its condition should be noted (e.g., clean, dirty, inked, worn, damaged).
9. Note, when applicable, class characteristics (e.g., typeface design and size).
10. Note any visible features that reproduce on the impression.
11. Take ink sample if required/requested.
12. Prepare appropriate specimens, as needed.
13. Determine if any of the known specimen impressions are suitable for comparison.
14. If none of the known specimen impressions are suitable for comparison and no others are obtained, discontinue these procedures and report accordingly.
15. Conduct a side-by-side comparison of the questioned impressions, or the questioned impression to the known impressions and/or to the rubber stamp(s).

16. Compare class characteristics (e.g., size, type style, text, shape). If different, discontinue and report accordingly.
17. Compare individualizing characteristics in common such as wear and damage defects, reproducible blemishes, impression voids, improper and extraneous inking, or coincidental peripheral printing (use transparency overlays when needed).

18. Evaluate similarities, differences, and limitations. Determine their significance individually and in combination. Consideration should be given to the possibility that a rubber stamp can be manufactured which duplicates the impressions of another stamp, and that various forms of simulations, imitations, and duplicates of rubber stamps or rubber stamp impressions can be generated by computer and other means.

19. Make written notes on photocopies and/or worksheet(s) of a representative sample of the significant characteristics of the evidence documenting similarities and dissimilarities of each item.
20. Formulate a conclusion based on all the evidence examined.
21. A complete technical review is conducted by another qualified examiner and documented and initialed on Technical Case File Review Form.
22. Record findings in written form and have the results recorded on a formal laboratory report.
23. 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.

REFERENCES

ASTM E2289-03 – Standard Guide for Examination of Rubber Stamp Impressions.

Herbertson, G., Rubber Stamp Examination: A Guide for Forensic Document Examiners, WideLine Publishing, Colorado Springs, CO, 1997.

Kelly, Jan S., Forensic Examination of Rubber Stamps, Charles C. Thomas Publishing, Springfield, IL, in press.