



ATF-LS-FRL	Published Online:
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1. Purpose: This PPG establishes the standard for the structure of Fire Research Laboratory project file jackets.
2. Scope: These standards are applicable to the ATF Fire Research Laboratory.
3. Policy: A project file will be created for Fire Research Laboratory (FRL) casework related projects involving evidence examination, analysis, testing and field support work. The jacket will contain, or identify the location of, all documentation related to the receipt and disposition of evidence, final reports of analysis, all charts, graphs, photographs and notes created during analysis. Security of the project file jackets will be maintained at all times in accordance with all applicable ATF Orders and other laboratory procedures.

A project file jacket will be created for any physical evidence accepted into an ATF forensic laboratory. The designated Fire Research Laboratory (FRL) staff member will create a project file jacket for all requests where no evidence is submitted.

4. Procedures:

- 4.1 A permanent laboratory project file jacket will be created for all evidence submitted for laboratory examination. A heavy-duty multi section jacket will be used. The project will be assigned a unique laboratory number using an automated database. Upon receipt of the evidence, the evidence control specialist will label the project jacket with this unique number followed by the one letter code for each examination type assigned.

For all other Fire Research Laboratory case support the designated FRL staff member will create a project file jacket.

- 4.2 Where evidence is submitted, the evidence control specialist will be responsible for placing all documentation pertaining to the receipt of evidence and analysis requests in the project jackets.

Where evidence is not submitted, the assigned FRL examiner is responsible for placing all documentation pertaining to the analysis requests in the project jackets.

4.2.1 Fire research engineering work can be contained in one project jacket. Each aspect of fire research engineering work may be treated as a separate submission — field support, engineering analysis, and testing, as appropriate.

4.2.2 All electrical engineering work will have a separate project jacket. Each aspect of electrical work, field support or laboratory examination may be treated as a separate submission, as appropriate.

- 4.3 Where applicable, project jackets will contain the following:

4.3.1 – Submitter’s opening transmittal documents, 7120.5 - Evidence Transmittal Form, hand carried evidence receipts, proper evidence return receipts when the case has been completed, and any other documents submitted with evidence, or request for FRL support, and other documents submitted with the request.

4.3.2 - Original inventory of evidence (if not listed in transmittal)

4.3.3 - Examiners’ notes

4.3.4 - Charts, graphs, instrument data, photographs and/or photocopies, or reference to where the information is stored electronically

4.3.5 - Contact information for the submitting agent.

4.3.6 – Final Report(s) signed by peer and supervisor before release.

4.3.7 -- Evidence Control Cards and return receipt documents (Control Cards are filed in the project jackets as evidence is returned to the submitter).

4.3.9 — Examiner-to-Examiner Evidence Transfer Sheet (Action Sheet)

4.3.10 — Case Activity & Communications Log — This will capture communication with the investigator, and others, concerning the investigation. That communication may be telephonic, personal or written.

4.4 The evidence control specialist or designated FRL staff member will be responsible for setting the initial structure of the project jacket as follows:

4.4.1. - Front inside cover – The “Case Activity & Communications” section sheet is affixed to the inside cover. Behind this sheet the Case Activity and Communications Log, requests for assistance/examination, and communications related to the case are maintained.

4.4.2 - Inside flaps will be labeled as follows:

4.4.2.1 “FRL Reports” section sheet is affixed to the first tab. Behind this sheet all the final reports are stored.

4.4.2.2 “Investigative Reports & Supplemental Information” section sheet is affixed to the second tab. Behind this sheet the Investigative Reports and Supplemental Information Log, investigative information, and photographs/video taken by someone other than Fire Research Laboratory staff is maintained. Shipping and receipt information concerning supplemental information may be maintained here.

4.4.2.3 “Electronic Records” section sheet is affixed to the third tab. This section is for maintaining information about instrumentation used, including video and still photography, the experiments conducted in support of the case. The Experiment Log and Instrumentation Log are stored here. A copy of

data/images associated with this case found in FRL electronic record systems is stored here on appropriate media. If non-digital photographs and/or video are taken, a log of those photographs/video, and the images are stored here.

4.4.2.4 “Analysis & Supporting Documentation” section sheet is affixed to the fourth tab. Behind this sheet the Analysis and Supporting Documentation Log and all handwritten or typed examiner case examination records are maintained.

4.4.3 - Back inside cover: “Evidence Control” section sheet is affixed to the inside back cover. Behind this sheet the Evidence Inventory Form, FRL Evidence Status Form, Examiner-to-Examiner Evidence Transfer Sheet, evidence shipping and receipt documents labeled with the date received, and the evidence control card are maintained. Other documentation related to evidence handling, such as property forms, evidence logs, etc. are also maintained in this location.

- 4.5 Examiners will be responsible for attaching their notes, graphs, photographs, photocopies and reports into the project jacket, or documenting the storage location of the electronic media. A listing with the number of photographs and videos will be stored in the project jacket. Case examination notes may be stored in Fire Research Laboratory electronic data systems and referenced in the project jacket.

A numbering system will be used on all case documentation types outlined in 4.5.1 and 4.5.2. This may be achieved by numbering each page, numbering packages of documents by type, and/or only noting total number of pages on a worksheet or evidence inventory sheet. The requirements below apply to all handwritten or typed information stored in the “Analysis and Supporting Documentation” section of the file. Data stored in the Fire Research Laboratory electronic records systems is only required to be referenced in the file. Page numbering and initials are not needed for these retrievable electronic records.

4.5.1 - Graphs, charts, instrument data and/or photographs/photocopies generated during the examination

- Graphs, charts and instrument data will be labeled with the laboratory number. Each page will be numbered, dated and annotated with the handwritten initials or signature of the examiner. The total number of pages should be noted on page 1 (1 of total # of pages).
- Photographs of evidence will be scaled and labeled with case and exhibit numbers. Photographs should be placed in an envelope or mounted/affixed to paper and attached securely in the project jacket. If envelopes are used, the examiner’s handwritten initials or signature and a note of the number of photographs contained therein will be placed on the outside of the envelope. Photographs affixed to paper will be noted with the project number, numbered and the handwritten initials or signature of the examiner.
- Photographs or video generated to document testing and examination will be stored electronically in keeping with FRL procedures and a copy will be stored on electronic media in the project jacket.
- Notes generated during the examination may be gathered into related groups of

activity and sequentially numbered, initialed, and labeled. For example, all testing notes might be organized separately from notes relating to modeling. The groups of documents will be tracked in accordance with FRL practices on the "Analysis and Supporting Documentation Log".

4.5.2 - Notes of analysis (Includes Worksheets/Forms)

- Each page of notes will be labeled with the project number and will be marked with the examiners handwritten initials or signature. Pages of notes of analysis and worksheets will be dated to reflect the chronological working of the case.
- Notes will be made using permanent media. - Pencil will not be used.
- Corrections will be made by single line strikethrough, all corrections and interlineations will be initialed by the examiner making the correction; no erasures, cover overs or other means of permanent removal will be used.

4.5.3 – No Draft reports are maintained.

4.5.4 - Project File Review Form

- This checklist is an internal Quality Control Document. It should be temporarily attached to the outside of the project jacket by the examiner. The section chief or employee distributing the final report, will forward the checklist to the laboratory files after the final report is signed.

4.5.5 - Examiner-to-Examiner Evidence Transfer Sheet (Action Sheet) (back inside cover of project jacket)

- Examiners will note all transfers of evidence not made through the Evidence Room on the Examiner-to-Examiner Evidence Transfer Sheet.
- The Examiner-to-Examiner Evidence Transfer Sheet will be labeled with the laboratory number and placed in the jacket by the evidence control specialist or the designated FRL staff member at its creation. Where there are more than one Examiner-to-Examiner Evidence Transfer Sheet in a single jacket, pages will be numbered in a way that reflects the total number of Examiner-to-Examiner Evidence Transfer Sheets in the jacket. Each page will be labeled with the laboratory project number.

4.6 When the final report is issued, a copy of the signed report will be placed in the appropriate project jacket section.

4.7 Creation of Additional Jackets. The evidence control specialist or designated FRL staff member will be responsible for creating additional project jackets if required. The original project jacket and all additional project jackets will be labeled consecutively (1 of 2, 2 of 2, etc.).

5. Controls: An administrative review of all project jackets will be made by the appropriate section chief or his/her designee. This review will be documented on the Peer Review Form.

A sampling of project jackets for each examiner will be reviewed for compliance to the above mentioned requirements during the annual Internal Quality Reviews.