Laboratory Services
Triage Unit

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1. Processing/Enhancement

1.1. There are a variety of processing techniques, physical and chemical, used to develop and enhance latent prints. Technicians select processing procedures that are appropriate and acceptable in casework based on their knowledge and training.

1.1.1. Determining how to process an item of evidence is dependent on the type of matrix and its condition.

1.1.2. There are three general substrate types: porous, non-porous, and semi-porous. Determining how an item of evidence will be processed is dependent on the type and condition of the substrate.

1.1.3. It is important to maximize the development of latent prints and minimize the loss of latent print and other discipline evidence. As every situation is unique, technicians should use good judgement to determine what latent print development techniques will be used.

1.1.4. A combination of some, or all, of the following procedures, from *ATF-LS-LP1 Appendix A – Latent Print* Processes, will be used for the substrates encountered:

- *Laser and Alternate Light Source Examination*
- *Cyanoacrylate Ester Fuming*
- *Ninhydrin*
- *Powders*
- *Rhodamine 6G*
- *Sticky-side Powder*

2. Suitability

2.1. Following each applied processing technique, the evidence will be examined for friction ridge detail.

2.2. Technicians will determine if the developed friction ridge detail warrants photographic capture.

2.3. If no suitable friction ridge detail is developed, the technician may continue with subsequent processing techniques.

2.4. When suitable friction ridge detail is observed, it shall be preserved.

3. Preservation

3.1. If suitable friction ridge detail is present, the technician will preserve it through digital capture using the Foster & Freeman Digital Capture System (DCS) hardware and software.

3.1.1. Observed friction ridge detail will be captured in accordance with:

- *ATF-LS-LP2 Documentation, Methodology, and Conclusions*

3.1.2. The set of all captures from each exhibit will be designated as a single sub-exhibit.

4. Swabbing Evidence

4.1. All firearms, firearm accessories, and qualifying ammunition that have a DNA request, whether qualifying or not, will be swabbed for DNA.

4.1.1. Potential DNA will be collected in accordance with:

- *ATF-LS-FB21 Swabbing Evidence for DNA Analysis*, and the
- *DNA Swabbing Guidelines and Examples presentation*

4.1.2. If the Laboratory Exam Request does not clearly and adequately meet DNA processing criteria, the collected swabs will be returned with the evidence.

5. Test Firing

5.1. Technicians will test fire all NIBIN eligible firearms, if safe to do so.

5.1.1. Test-firing will be conducted in accordance with:

- *ATF-LS-FT8 Firearms Safety and Shooting Guidelines*

1. Scope

1.1. Triage reports will include results for evidence that: was processed for friction ridge detail; swabbed for potential DNA; and test fired for NIBIN.

2. Reporting Processing Results

2.1.1. Triage reports will clearly describe which items of evidence were processed for latent prints; the processing and visualization methods used; and the results of the processing. Additionally, the results must address any exhibits that were not examined/processed for latent prints.

2.1.2. Suitable Friction Ridge Detail Developed

2.1.2.1. When an item of evidence has been processed for latent prints, and friction ridge detail suitable for capture is developed, the resulting sub-exhibits will be clearly communicated in the laboratory report.

2.1.3. No Friction Ridge Detail or No Suitable Friction Ridge Detail Developed

2.1.3.1. When an item of evidence has been processed for latent prints, and no friction ridge detail or no friction ridge detail suitable for photographic capture is developed, the result will be clearly communicated in the laboratory report.

2.1.4. Statements regarding friction ridge processing and determination of suitability in triage reports will conform with *Department of Justice Uniform Language for Testimony and Reports for the Forensic Latent Print Discipline*.

3. Reporting on DNA Swabbing

3.1. Triage reports will clearly describe which items of evidence were swabbed for DNA, what sub-exhibits were created, and the results must address any exhibits that were not swabbed.

4. Reporting on Test Fires

4.1. Triage reports will clearly describe which items of evidence were test fired, what sub-exhibits were created, and the results must address any exhibits that were not test fired.

5. Referencing Additional Examinations on Sub-Exhibits

5.1. The report will note which sub-exhibits will be subjects of additional reports, and which sub-exhibits will be returned without further examination.

Abbreviations	Description
ALS	Alternate Light Source
BICP	Bi-chromatic Powder
BP	Black Powder
B/W	Between
BY40 or BY#40	Basic Yellow 40
C:	Containing
CA or CAE	Cyanoacrylate Ester
Cal	Caliber
CB	Cardboard
CBB	Cardboard box
DNP	Did Not Process
ENV	Envelope
ER	Evidence Room
Ex. or Exh.	Exhibit
FB	Forensic Biologist
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FC	Forensic Chemist
FLS	Forensic Light Source
FP	Fingerprint
FRD	Friction Ridge Detail
FTE	Firearm/Toolmark Examiner
H/C	Hand carried
H/F	Hairs and fibers
IN	ATF Investigation number
INV	Inventory
LAS	Light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation – LASER

Abbreviations	Description
LFPS	Latent Fingerprint Section
LPE	Latent Print Examiner
Mag(s)	Magazine(s)
MPB	Magnetic Powder Black
MPG	Magnetic Powder Grey
MPW	Magnetic Powder White
NAP	No Additional Packaging
Neg	Negative
OFTC	Open, found to contain
PB	Paper bag
PSB	Plastic bag
QDE	Questioned Document Examiner
R6G	Rhodamine 6G
RBS	Reddish-brown stain(s)
RD/S	Ridge detail/smudging
Rec'd	Received
SCCNI	Sealed Container(s), Contents not Inventoried
SG	Superglue
S/N or SN	Serial number
SSPB	Sticky-side powder black
SSPW	Sticky-side powder white
STC	Said to contain
STK	Sticky note
TF	Test fires
VIS	Visual exam
VL	Visible light

Abbreviations	Description
W/D	Wet/dry
WL	White light
W/W	Wet/wet
ZL	Ziplock