

**AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT  
LATENT PRINT SECTION  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

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**CHAPTER 1      LATENT PRINT SECTION OVERVIEW**

**1.1    LATENT SECTION OVERVIEW**

No Supplemental Requirements

**1.2    HISTORY OF THE LATENT PRINT SECTION**

No Supplemental Requirements

**1.3    LATENT SECTION MISSION STATEMENT**

No Supplemental Requirements

**1.4    LATENT SECTION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

No Supplemental Requirements

**1.5    CODE OF ETHICS**

**Ethics Related to the Latent Print Discipline**

To maintain certification by the International Association for Identification (IAI), the Latent Print Section (LP Section) has adopted the Code of Ethics for latent print examiners as published by the IAI. This code is intended as a guide to the ethical conduct of latent print examiners.

**1.6    ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING**

No Supplemental Requirements

**1.7    LIST OF LOCATIONS AND PHONE NUMBERS**

No Supplemental Requirements

**1.8    ORGANIZATION CHART**

No Supplemental Requirements

**1.9    SECTION DESCRIPTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

No Supplemental Requirements

**1.10   HOURS OF OPERATION**

- The LP Section does not utilize a callback roster.
- The supervisor approves all call back requests.
- For urgent situations in which latent print work is needed, an analyst assigned to the LP Section will be called back to the office to perform the work.

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#### **1.11 MANUALS**

No Supplemental Requirements

#### **1.12 CUSTOMER SERVICE**

No Supplemental Requirements

#### **1.13 MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

No Supplemental Requirements

#### **1.14 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

As per Department of Public Safety (DPS) guidelines, the State Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) monthly report is uploaded to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) website no later than the tenth day of each month.

#### **1.15 PURCHASING SUPPLIES AND SERVICES**

No critical supplies or services exist in the LP section.

#### **1.16 MANAGEMENT REVIEW SYSTEM**

No Supplemental Requirements

#### **1.17 EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY INVENTORY**

No Supplemental Requirements

### **CHAPTER 2 FACILITY DESIGN AND SECURITY**

#### **2.1 LATENT SECTION PHYSICAL PLANT/SPACE AND DESIGN**

No Supplemental Requirements

#### **2.2 LATENT PRINT SECTION SECURITY**

##### **Practices**

The LP Section and Crime Scene Section share controlled restricted access to each of their respective work areas only during normal working hours (ASCLD/LAB 5.3.4.1c). When the LP Section is unoccupied, the door separating the LP Section and Crime Scene Section will remain closed and locked.

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- **Evidence Storage Areas**

- Bulk storage must be sealed and stored in lockable filing cabinets within the LP Section (ASCLD/LAB 5.8.1.1.2).
  - Bulk storage locations include:
    - a. Death related
    - b. Prints submitted through evidence
    - c. Person crimes
    - d. Property crimes
- In process evidence may be stored unsealed until the request is completed; not to exceed a period of 24 months (ASCLD/LAB 5.8.4.2.).
  - In process storage locations include:
    - a. Lockable desk storage
    - b. Open case file drawer
    - c. AFIS file
    - d. Case review drawer

## **CHAPTER 3    QUALITY ASSURANCE**

### **3.1    PROFICIENCY TESTING**

The Technical Leader will ensure that AFIS Technicians successfully complete an internal proficiency test once per year.

### **3.2    COURT TESTIMONY MONITORING**

No Supplemental Requirements

### **3.3    CASE REVIEWS**

#### **Responsibilities**

- AFIS Notification reports, as with all other reports, must be administratively reviewed prior to release. The reviewer will ensure the following has been done prior to approving the report:
  - Report signed
  - Number of searches entered in the stats panel.
  - Report reflects the correct inquiry results.
- Any required corrections will be made before the report is approved
- The following are the criteria for conducting a technical review of casework:
  - Exemplars properly marked & in LIMS - exemplars are marked with unique case number, initials, date, individual identifiers, and when applicable with the verifier's initials, date and check mark (ISO 5.6.3.2.1).

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- Latent lifts/photos marked - lifts and photos are marked with item numbers, and initials. When appropriate sufficiency letters, AFIS markings as well as markings for identification.
  - Comparison work sheet completed & in LIMS - the latent print work sheet has been completed with all case information, subject information, items, information dealing with location, suitability, and the results examination.
  - Examination documents in LIMS - Digital images from enlargements, photos, and print-outs used in the determination of suitability, or in the comparison of different impression.
  - AFIS documents in LIMS - the AFIS Information and Image printouts from a viable candidate are in LIMS
  - Case notes in LIMS - any e-mails, case events, documented phone calls that have administrative information on a current examination in LIMS by Narrative or Documents when appropriate
  - The conclusions are acceptable to the reviewer.
- Not all criteria listed above is required for every technical review.
  - Any required corrections will be made before the report is approved.
  - Technical reviews will be performed on case assignments designated by the Latent Print Supervisor

### **3.4 LABORATORY AUDITS**

No Supplemental Requirements

### **3.5 VALIDATION OF METHODS**

No Supplemental Requirements

### **3.6 INSTRUMENTS AND EQUIPMENT**

No Supplemental Requirements

### **3.7 REAGENTS**

No critical reagents are used in the LP Section.

### **3.8 DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT**

No Supplemental Requirements

### **3.9 DEVIATION FROM DOCUMENTED PROCEDURES**

No Supplemental Requirements

### **3.10 PREVENTATIVE AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**

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No Supplemental Requirements

### **3.11 SUGGESTIONS/COMPLAINTS**

No Supplemental Requirements

### **3.12 CUSTOMER SURVEY**

No Supplemental Requirements

### **3.13 REFERENCE STANDARDS AND REFERENCE MATERIALS**

No Supplemental Requirements

### **3.14 REFERENCE COLLECTIONS AND DATABASES**

No Supplemental Requirements

### **3.15 EXAMINATION VERIFICATION**

- All latent print identifications will be verified by a second examiner by independent examination. The verifier will be selected by the primary analyst beforehand, and will not have previously consulted with the analyst regarding a conclusion.
- The verifier will complete a verification form signifying the identification has been checked and agreed to, with the verifier's name and the date the verification was completed. The form will be placed in the case record prior to case review.

### **3.16 DNA CONTAMINATION DETECTION AND PREVENTION**

No Supplemental Requirements

## **CHAPTER 4 LABORATORY RECORDS**

### **4.1 CASE RECORD**

#### **Responsibility**

- Conducting and Documenting the Comparison
  - In all cases where a latent print examination is performed, a worksheet will be completed. The names of those identified, along with their identifying numbers, analyst's initials, and date will be placed on the lower front of the latent envelope. When no identification is made, a blue star will be placed on the lower right corner of the envelope.
  - A work sheet will be generated when the analysis is started and will be considered the start date of the examination.
  - Every lift card or photograph captured for analysis shall be given a number regardless of whether it is of value for examination.
  - Finger and palm exemplars used in an examination will be marked with the unique case number, initials of the examiner, and the date of the examination. Verifiers will

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initial the exemplar, write 'check ID' and employee number, and the date the verification was performed. All exemplars will be scanned into the case record.

- Pointers, such as arrows or lines, can be used in tandem with other notes or abbreviations to indicate the item affected by the note or abbreviation, or to indicate directionality or orientation.
- The following are approved for use in documenting information in reports, forms, notes, drawings, images, envelopes, or wherever appropriate in the course of casework. Other abbreviations or marks the meanings of which are generally understood can also be used (etc. for 'etcetera', Mr. for 'mister'). Abbreviations or symbols which are defined or indicated on the worksheet in which they are to be used need not be defined here.

NS	Not Suitable
NC	Not Compared
EXCL	Exclusion
ID	Identification (Not used for verification)
PP, FP	Palm print or Fingerprint
INC	Inconclusive
A, B, (etc.)	Single letters used for designating individual latent prints on lift cards, photos, etc. (Upper case only, surrounded by a circle)
1, 2, (etc.)	Used for numbering of lift cards or photos in connection with LIMS item number
01, 02 (etc.)	Reserved for AFIS-suitable latents that are searched.
#1, #2, (etc.)	Indicates which finger was identified to the latent print, according to the finger number as represented on a standard FBI fingerprint card and can be used in tandem with 'RT, RI', etc.
-L, -S, -F	Tags to be used individually or in combination to indicate the AFIS system used in a latent inquiry (Local, State, or Federal).
RT, LT, RI, LI, RM, LM, RR, LR, RL, LL, RP, LP	Right Thumb, Left Thumb, Right Index, Left Index, Right Middle, Left Middle, Right Ring, Left Ring, Right Little, Left Little, Right Palm, Left Palm (respectively).
✓ ID	Indicates agreement with the identification represented.
-R	With an AFIS inquiry to indicate the latent print was registered in a ULDB.
IMP	Impression (could be from a finger or palm)
+	Indicates more than one orientation

- The LP storage locations are subdivided as follows: ~~(ASCLD/LAB 5-8.4.1)~~
  - AFIS File (pending AFIS Inquiry) (LIMS code: AFIS)
  - Agencies Outside A.P.D. (LIMS code: OSA)
  - Case Review Drawer (LIMS code: REV)
  - Death Related Crime Drawer (LIMS code: DEATH)
  - Prints Submitted Through Evidence (LIMS code: PSEVD)
  - Latent Print Office (LIMS code: LPOFF)



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- Open Case File (temporary storage) (LIMS code: OPEN)
- Person Crimes File (LIMS code: PERS)
- Property Crimes File (LIMS code: PROP)

## **4.2 LABORATORY REPORTS**

### **Practices**

- Assignments will appear as “LP” or “AFIS” under the assignment tab in LIMS.
- The latent print supervisor is responsible for assigning all comparison (LP) casework. APFIS technicians and latent print examiners will self-assign the AFIS assignments.

### **Reporting Format**

- **LP Assignment Reports:** All report headings will be used in the following order, excluding “Note”, which may be placed between any of the headings:
  - Item(s) Submitted
  - Analysis Requested
  - Opinions and Interpretations
  - AFIS Inquiry (when performed by the examiner doing the inquiry at the time of analysis)
  - Disposition (This heading is prefilled and nothing needs to be added to it)
  - Note (information that provides extra explanations).
- **AFIS Notification Reports:** The report auto-generates based on the choices made in the AFIS assignment panel by the user.

### **Report Practices**

- All Direct Entry inquiries of AFIS systems will require an AFIS notification report, except in the instance where an examiner is conducting an inquiry as part of an LP assignment involving analyses.
- A new LP assignment will be created in LIMS when an AFIS assignment results in a tentative association with a viable candidate, or when there is a TLI hit (Tenprint to Latent Inquiry) from a latent print previously registered in an unsolved latent database.
- In all cases where a tentative association is made in AFIS systems, the AFIS documentation will be scanned into the case record.
- All latent print examination reports involving analyses performed will include the following elements:
  - The number of lift cards, photographs, copies, or other latent bearing items used in the examination and description of the item or surface from which the latent print was recovered.
  - The name(s), date(s) of birth, sex, race and a unique identifying number of the individual(s) who the requestor asked to be compared.
  - Status of all latent prints on all enumerated items, whether previously compared, identified, suitable for comparison, etc.

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- If an identification is made, the name of the person identified, which finger, palm, or foot to which the latent was identified, the item number, and the surface from which the latent was recovered.
- The name of the requestor. If the request was generated as the result of an AFIS association, whether from direct entry or through a ten-print-to-latent inquiry (TLI) , the report will indicate the AFIS system, and the name of the person who made the association.
- All conclusions will be clearly stated and, if necessary, explained so as to avoid ambiguity. When an inconclusive or incomplete conclusion is used, a reason will be provided in the report.
- The following conclusions are approved for reporting the results of an examination of friction ridge detail.
  - Not Suitable for Comparison: The print does not have sufficient quality or quantity of detail to compare.
  - Identification or ID: Two prints were determined to have been made by the same area of friction ridge skin.
  - Exclusion: Two prints were not made by the same person.
  - Inconclusive: The examiner is unable to determine whether two prints were made by the same person, due to the quality of the latent print.
  - Incomplete: The exemplars of the person compared with a latent print are not fully recorded or are insufficient to determine identity or exclusion with the latent print.
- When a subject's known finger and/or palm exemplars are not available, the report will indicate these were missing and that certain (or all) latent prints were not compared with this person.

## **Report Types**

- **Information Only Reports**
  - Information-only reports can be issued when vital information has been discovered that should be reported, and there has been no examination of latent prints. Worksheets will not be created for Information-only reports.
- **Limited Examinations**
  - Limited examinations are comparison assignments where there is at least one latent print identification to each individual named in the request, and the results are reported without all of the remaining latent prints having been compared. Limited examinations may be conducted in the following cases:
    - Property crime requests, whether from a detective or through an AFIS association.

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- Any case in which a detective directs that only latent prints from certain surfaces be compared with the individual(s) named in the request.
  - Other situations which have been approved by the section supervisor. This approval must be documented in the case record for each request worked.
- The report must clearly state that this assignment was conducted as a limited examination, and that some latent prints have not been compared with the individual(s) named in the request.
- Limited examinations will not be technically reviewed.
- A report issued under exigent circumstances is not considered a limited examination, since the assignment will continue to be worked until completed.
- A Modified Limited Examination is a limited examination in which the assigned examiner will compare latent prints from inside surfaces or items from the interior of a crime scene until each individual named in the request has been identified at least once. If there are no interior latent prints submitted, or there hasn't been an interior print identification to all subjects, the examiner should compare the subject(s) with latent prints found on the exterior. The examination will continue until all persons have been identified or all latent prints have been compared. All other requirements for limited examination will also apply to modified limited examinations.

#### **4.3 RELEASE OF RECORDS INFORMATION**

No Supplemental Requirements

##### **4.3.1 RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

No Supplemental Requirements

##### **4.3.2 RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO THE NEWS MEDIA**

No Supplemental Requirements

##### **4.3.3 OPEN RECORDS REQUEST**

No Supplemental Requirements

##### **4.3.4 DISCOVERY ORDER**

No Supplemental Requirements

##### **4.3.5 REQUESTS FOR REPORTS**

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No Supplemental Requirements

#### **4.4 REMOVAL OF RECORDS FOR COURT**

No Supplemental Requirements

#### **4.5 ARCHIVING LABORATORY CASE FILES**

No Supplemental Requirements

#### **4.6 EXPUNCTIONS**

No Supplemental Requirements

#### **4.7 CONTROL OF LABORATORY RECORDS**

No Supplemental Requirements

### **5 EVIDENCE PROCEDURES**

#### **5.1 General Practices**

##### **Responsibilities**

- The Latent Print Section maintains custody of the latent prints.
- Only Latent Print Personnel are to file or remove latent packets from file cabinets.
- Except for periodic purging, the latent print examiners will place color-coded out cards in the long term storage file in place of each latent packet removed. The out cards will contain the case number and the date the packet was removed from the drawer.
- In process evidence must be secured at the end of the workday.

##### **Practices**

- Known fingerprint and palm print records are considered examination records. Known fingerprint and palm print records submitted directly to the LP Section are not entered into Versadex or LIMS are not assigned a LIMS item number.
- Known fingerprint and palm print records submitted through the Evidence Control Section are assigned a LIMS item number, but need not be listed in the "items submitted" portion of the report.

##### **Release of Evidence**

- All latent print evidence will be transferred to evidence control when being released with the exception of in-court release.

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- Steps taken when releasing evidence:
  - Confirm the number of lift cards or photographs
  - Scan all front and back of the lift cards and envelope into LIMS
  - Update the Chain-of-Custody to reflect the transfer

#### **Transfers Within the Section**

Evidence will be securely maintained by placing all latent print envelopes and case documentation in a container when transferring custody between Examiners (ISO 5.8.1).

- The entire CD or latent packet must be transferred. Individual lift cards will not be transferred apart from the packet.
- Each employee taking possession of a CD or latent packet for the first time will initial the outer packaging for identification. The initials will be placed just above the dotted line on the front of the packet.

#### **5.2 OBSERVATION BY OUTSIDE EXPERTS**

No Supplemental Requirements

#### **5.3 EVIDENCE DISPOSAL**

##### **Responsibility**

- **Purging Latent Files**
  - The latent files will be purged at least once per year. Latent packets from cases older than five years will be transferred to Evidence Control and stored indefinitely. The only exception will be packets from death-related cases; these will be retained in the latent section files.

#### **5.4 DESTRUCTION OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES**

No Supplemental Requirements

#### **5.5 OUTSOURCING**

No Supplemental Requirements

#### **6 LABORATORY SAFETY**

The handling of latent lifts, photographs, casts or post-mortem exemplars is not normally hazardous; however in some situations those items could contain blood, body fluids, or development chemicals, refer to Safety Manual for the handling of these items.

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**7 PERSONNEL**

**7.1 DOCUMENTS**

No Supplemental Requirements

**7.2 SUBPOENAS**

No Supplemental Requirements

**7.3 PRIVATE CASE CONSULTATIONS**

No Supplemental Requirements

**7.4 TESTIMONY FOR PREVIOUS EMPLOYEES**

No Supplemental Requirements

**7.5 ATTENDANCE**

No Supplemental Requirements

**7.6 CERTIFICATION OF ANALYSTS**

No Supplemental Requirements

**7.7 EMPLOYEE TRAINING PROGRAM**

No Supplemental Requirements

**7.8 EMPLOYEE APPROVAL FOR CASEWORK**

No Supplemental Requirements

**7.9 EMPLOYEE CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

No Supplemental Requirements

**7.10 CONTINUING EDUCATION**

No Supplemental Requirements

**7.11 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

No Supplemental Requirements

**7.12 VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

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No Supplemental Requirements

### **7.13 RIDER PROGRAM**

No Supplemental Requirements

## **8 COMPUTER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

### **Scope**

The LP Section utilizes several electronic databases for retrieving, searching, and storing known finger and palm prints used in latent comparison work.

### **Responsibility**

- Unidentified latent prints submitted to the LP Section can be searched through known finger and palm print databases to determine if there is a viable candidate for further examination. Currently there are three database systems available for searching.

### **Practices**

- All equipment is self-calibrating or is calibrated by the vendor under contract.
- Quality, quantity and area (tip of finger) of the latent friction ridge detail can limit the effectiveness of an AFIS inquiry.
- Quality and quantity of the exemplary friction ridge detail in the databases can limit the effectiveness of an AFIS inquiry.

### **Maintenance**

- The Austin Police Department owns and operates the Local ten-print and palm print database AFIS (Cogent® AFIS).
- The hardware is maintained by the City of Austin IT Section personnel who have administrative access which only allows for troubleshooting the system and correcting technological issues.
- User access is granted to those personnel who have been issued a personal sign-on password by the CAFIS Administrator. (ASCLD/LAB 5.8.4.6.4).
- The software is maintained by Cogent of California. Cogent Systems, Inc. has remote access accessibility to allow for troubleshooting and is contractually obligated to obtain prior approval from the APD systems administrator prior to accessing the system.
- Known prints are entered by crime records section personnel located downtown at the main Police Station.
- Personnel from connected external agencies must assign a unique identifier to their entered records to differentiate it from an APD record.
- The LP Section utilizes the state ten-print and palm print database maintained by the Texas DPS in Austin, Texas.

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- The State Archive is a web based viewer that provides online access to the fingerprint records for the State of Texas and is maintained by the Texas DPS.
- The Federal AFIS system (NGI) is maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in West Virginia. It houses the fingerprint records for the FBI.
- The Federal database is accessed through DPS by utilizing the Universal Latent Work Station (ULW) software.