

Standard for Processing Evidence for the Detection of Friction Ridge Impressions



WHAT IS AN AAFS STANDARD FACTSHEET?

The AAFS produces clear, concise, and easy-to-understand factsheets to summarize the contents of technical and professional forensic science standards on the OSAC Registry. They are not intended to provide an interpretation for any portion of a proposed standard.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROPOSED STANDARD?

This standard specifies the requirements for utilizing processing techniques on various surfaces in order to optimize the detection of friction ridge impressions.

The standard covers broad class processing techniques, allowing a forensic science service provider (FSSP) to determine which will be used based on their efficiency and limitations, availability of resources, the circumstances of the case, and the type and condition of the evidence.

The standard does not address friction ridge preservation, enhancement of friction ridge impressions, validation of processing techniques, equipment specifications, or storage requirements.

WHY IS THIS PROPOSED STANDARD IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS?

This standard promotes improvement in the quality and consistency of friction ridge examination practices.

Acknowledging that certain situations may require supplementing or deviating from the sequence specified in the standard, this standard provides examples of when deviation is appropriate and requirements for when deviations occur.

The standard requires an assessment for potential negative implications to other types of forensic examinations prior to applying processing techniques.

This OSAC Proposed Standard has been sent to AAFS Academy Standards Board (ASB) for further development and publication. Get involved as a member or by providing public comment.

HOW IS THIS PROPOSED STANDARD USED, AND WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS?

This standard is to be used for the sequential processing of evidence for the detection of friction ridge impressions on non-porous, porous, semi-porous, and adhesive substrates. The standard provides guidance for when an item of evidence consists of more than one physical property.

When following this standard, an FSSP will:

- use appropriate processing techniques that move from the least destructive to the most destructive,
- evaluate any potential negative implications to other types of forensic examinations prior to applying a technique, and
- preserve detected friction ridge impressions prior to applying the next technique in the sequence.

The standard recommends that an FSSP review the specific processing techniques based on substrate/matrix combination and apply sequential processing recommendations when applicable. Additional resources related to application, formulation, and optimization are listed in this standard.

