

Standard for Report Content in Forensic Toxicology



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 published standard.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STANDARD?

Forensic toxicology testing results are communicated to interested parties through reports. This document describes reporting requirements following forensic toxicology analyses. The standard describes the minimum information that must be included to ensure that reports are comprehensive and understandable.

The standard applies to the subdisciplines of human performance toxicology (e.g., driving-under-the-influence of alcohol or drugs and drug-facilitated crimes), postmortem forensic toxicology, non-regulated employment drug testing, court-ordered toxicology (e.g., probation and parole, drug courts, child services), and general forensic toxicology (e.g., non-lethal poisonings or intoxications).

The standard does not apply to the reporting of breath alcohol testing results.

WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS?

Adherence to this standard ensures that forensic toxicology written reports or, as appropriate, their case records include appropriate detail.

This document requires reports to clearly note important limitations in the reported test results (e.g., preliminary results).

Forensic science service providers providing forensic toxicology services are encouraged to meet this standard.



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

This standard outlines specific report content or elements that must be included in the report, or in the case record, when not included in the report itself. When specimen condition or volume impacts testing, the standard requires acknowledgment of these limitations in the report.

The standard requires that the name or class of analyte, the result obtained, and the specimen(s) tested be included in the report, as well as the technique(s) used. It also requires that the reporting limit or limit of detection for each analyte be included in the report, an appendix to the report, or made available elsewhere to the customer.

The standard also describes how results should be reported (i.e., none detected/not detected, inconclusive results, preliminary results and positive results that are qualitative or quantitative in nature). Qualitative results indicate the *presence* of a substance, while quantitative results specify the *quantity* of the substance that is identified.

Requirements for results obtained from an outside reference laboratory are also provided, as well as the issuance of supplemental or amended reports. When interpretive information is included in a forensic toxicology report, the standard provides requirements related to how that information is provided. Additional guidelines on written opinions regarding the interpretation of analytical toxicology findings are described in [ANSI/ASB 037, 1st Ed., 2019](#).