

Postmortem Impression Submission Strategy for Comprehensive Searches of Automated Fingerprint Identification System Databases



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?

Rapidly identifying decedents using postmortem impressions centers on the use of Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) technology. It is essential that law enforcement agencies, as well as the medicolegal community, understand current fingerprint technology and leverage resources to ensure postmortem impressions are appropriately searched through AFIS fingerprint databases for identification purposes.

While several factors affect a successful fingerprint search through an automated fingerprint system, one of the most important factors is ensuring the fingerprint is searched through appropriate antemortem fingerprint databases.

The proper databases, protocols, and requirements for each are outlined to ensure the best results.

WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS?

Friction ridge analysis (to include fingerprints, palm prints, and footprints) is a reliable, rapid, and cost-effective means to identify unknown deceased individuals.

In mass fatality incidents, the victims may be from anywhere in the world. Therefore, searching a single state database where the incident occurs may not be enough. Using the broader search approach recommended in this standard will ensure the best possible outcome, regardless of the size of the event.

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

- This best practice recommendation provides guidance to medical examiners, coroners, and investigators regarding the submission of recorded postmortem impressions for comprehensive searches of essential automated fingerprint identification system databases.
- The objective of Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) is to match acquired postmortem data from the recovered remains with antemortem data obtained from the victim's next of kin or other external sources to help establish a positive forensic identification.
- Friction ridge analysis is the fastest and cheapest modality of forensic identification.
- Fingerprint databases are vast and one of the only places to search true unknown individuals with a high success rate of identification because people are printed for a variety of reasons, both criminal and civil.
- There are multiple local, state, and federal databases to search, and knowing when and how to search is imperative to success.
- This standard provides all the necessary information to properly capture, format, and submit the friction ridge prints for identification to all the applicable databases.
- This standard includes a workflow on best practices for which databases to search and in what order, ensuring fast and likely results.
- The standard is intended to be used in conjunction with ANSI/ASB 094, 1st Ed., 2021

