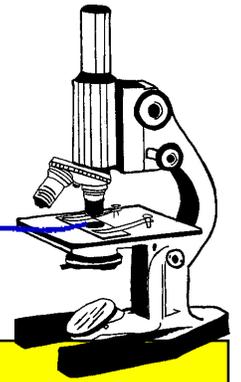


**A CURRENT
EDUCATIONAL
BULLETIN FOR
SUBMITTING LAW
ENFORCEMENT
AGENCIES**

A Closer Examination From The Benchtop...

UNDER the SCOPE



MISSOURI STATE HIGHWAY PATROL • CRIME LABORATORY DIVISION

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THE LATENT PRINT SECTION NO LONGER PERFORMS LABORATORY EXAMINATIONS ON SYRINGES OR CIGARETTE BUTTS.

LATENT PRINTS IN BLOOD MAY BE DESTROYED IF BOTH DNA AND LATENT PRINT EXAMINATIONS ARE REQUESTED. IF POSSIBLE, PRIORITIZE YOUR EXAM REQUESTS.

FOR YOUR SAFETY AND OURS, PLACE BIOHAZARD STICKERS ON PACKAGES CONTAINING EVIDENCE ITEMS THAT MAY HAVE BODY FLUIDS ON THEM, SUCH AS BLOOD. PLACE CAUTION/ SHARP STICKERS ON PACKAGES CONTAINING SHARPS HAZARDS, SUCH AS KNIVES OR BROKEN GLASS (SHARPS MUST ALSO BE IN PROTECTIVE PACKAGING WITHIN THE CONTAINER).



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Need a Lift?

In today's law enforcement world, officers still heavily rely on latent fingerprint analysis, a century old forensic science technique. Studies indicate that each person has a unique set of fingerprints (even identical twins have different fingerprints) that remain permanent throughout the person's lifetime. These facts have ultimately resulted in a valuable identification tool for officers to use. To assist your agency in obtaining the best possible fingerprint information for identification, the criminalists in the MSHP lab's latent print section have assembled information necessary for quality print examinations.

Latent versus Processing Cases

When submitting evidence items, indicate the type(s) of examinations required. Currently, the print section performs two types of exams: print processing and latent comparisons.

Print processing cases consist of crime scene evidence from which the print section attempts to develop latent prints. Latent prints of value are compared to any known suspects and/or searched through the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). AFIS houses latent print and ten-print card information. Through AFIS, crimes can be linked to one another, to arrestees or individuals on file, or perhaps both.

Latent comparison cases consist of an agency's submitted lifts taken from a crime scene. These lifts are compared to individuals under investigation as well as entered into the MSHP AFIS database.

Wear Gloves

Wear gloves when processing latent print evidence, with frequent glove change. Prolonged glove use may cause sweaty hands, which can result in leaving a latent print through a latex glove. Too often, the lab compares prints developed from a crime scene only to identify the officer who made the lifts or handled the item, which is time consuming for the lab and delays identification of the true suspect.

Ten-print Cards and Palm Prints

Submit ten-print cards so that the lab may conduct comparisons between latent prints and any individual(s) under investigation. The cards must be of good quality and clarity.

Faxed copies of ten-print cards are not acceptable for comparisons. For good prints, roll the finger from side to side, and do not use excessive ink. If possible, include the second and third joints of the fingers.

A majority of the lab's casework involves latent palm prints. Most agencies do not collect or submit inked palm prints at this time. While taking an individual's inked fingerprints, collect inked palm prints, too. If the suspect is not available for printing, but known to be on file, submit the full name, date of birth, social security number, and state identification number. Any additional information aids in ten-print card retrieval from the MSHP Criminal Records Division for comparison purposes.

Photographs

Photography of any latent prints developed at the scene is highly recommended, not only to preserve the latent prints, but also to prove that the lifts were made from the item as indicated. If you submit photos of latent prints for comparison, the image must be 1:1, life-size output, with a scale included.

Fluorescent Powder

At this time, the lab does not have the resources to compare latent prints developed with fluorescent powder. If submitted, comparisons will not be conducted, and the fluorescent latent prints will be returned to your agency. Black powder, bichromatic powder, and/or magnetic powder is recommended.

Proper Packaging of Evidence

Remember proper packaging procedures for print items. Porous items (paper, checks, cardboard) may be submitted in paper bags or envelopes. Nonporous items should be submitted in plastic bags or containers that minimize the chance of the evidence rubbing against the container sides, thus destroying any available prints. Each item of evidence should be packaged in its own container, except for multiple lifts which may be placed together in a single container.

The key to quality latent print results begins with your agency. Your attention to detail (wearing gloves, proper evidence collection and packaging, quality ten-print cards, etc.) greatly assists the criminalists with developing and comparing latent prints. If you have questions, please contact the latent print section of the lab.