



Latent Print Section
Automated Fingerprint Identification
System (AFIS) Operations
Comparative & Analytical Division



I. Scope

This procedure details the searching and retrieval of finger and palm print records and latent impressions in local, state, and federal databases located within the Latent Print Section of the Houston Forensic Science Center (HFSC).

II. Equipment

- a. IDEMIA AFIS (formerly MorphoTrak) is a database containing latent and record finger/palm prints. This database is housed and maintained by the Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO).
- b. Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) houses and maintains a database containing latent and record finger/palm prints. It is accessed by and searched through the Universal Latent Workstation (ULW) software provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).
- c. The Next Generation Identification (NGI) is a database containing latent and record finger/palm prints. This database is housed and maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Criminal Justice Information Services Division (CJIS).
- d. Friction ridge databases and searching parameters are beyond the control of HFSC Latent Print section. Changes made to database systems by the owners and/or vendors may impact reported resolutions (such as enrollment in unsolved databases).

III. Procedure

- a. Obtaining Database Record Prints
 - i. Latent print examiners may have access to the HCSO, DPS, and FBI's databases to obtain record prints.
- b. Unknown Latent Impression Searches
 - i. There are instances where some latent prints within the same case are determined to be duplicate impressions. An examiner may choose to not search all the duplicates but choose the latent impression with the best clarity and quantity of friction ridge detail for optimal search results.
 - ii. Interpretation of suitability for searches in AFIS is based on the experience and judgment of the examiner conducting the analysis and is subject to verification.
 - iii. Section workflows and customer requests can determine which databases unidentified latent impressions are searched and retained in.
 - iv. Latent print examiners can encode, search, and compare the latent impressions to return candidates for a possible hit for each of the



databases used. The following naming conventions should be used for the designated systems:

1. Harris Co. (IDEMIA) – When searching the IDEMIA database, the file name format field must be ten (10) characters long. The designator “HF” should precede the file name format to designate a latent encoded by HFSC followed by the last two digits of the year of the forensic case number (FCN). Since the FCN must be 10 characters long, zeros should be inserted in between the two-digit year and the laboratory number until the case ID field reaches ten characters.

Example: FCN 2017-00123 to be entered. IDEMIA: HF17000123

- a. Latent impressions searched within the IDEMIA database should be entered at 1000ppi and saved in a JPEG format.
2. DPS (NEC) – When searching the DPS database, the format field is ten (10) digits long. The complete FCN of the case should be used. Replace the dash between the year and the case digits with a zero.

Example: FCN 2017-00123 DPS: 2017000123

- a. Latent impressions searched within the DPS database should be entered at 500ppi or 1000ppi and saved in a TIFF format.
3. FBI (NGI) – When searching the NGI database, the format field is ten (10) digits long. The complete FCN of the case should be used.

Example: 2017-00123

- a. Latent impressions searched within the NGI database should be entered at 500ppi or 1000ppi and saved in a TIFF format.
4. Unidentified latent prints may be registered in the unsolved latent files maintained by IDEMIA and NGI.
5. If a latent impression is registered to the ULF, all incoming record finger and/or palm prints are compared by the database software to the latent impressions registered in the ULF. Using a matching



algorithm, the system searches for relationships between the registered print and all incoming record prints. Once a set threshold of correlation exists, the system will then send potential candidates back to the submitting agency to be reviewed.

- v. For complex, severely degraded or fragmented latent prints, and/or poor-quality images of the record candidate on-screen, examiners have the discretion to seek a consultation from another examiner and/or obtain clear record finger and/or palm prints from a database. Any consultations between examiners must be documented in the case record.

IV. Records/Results

- a. Examiners will document their case activities using the approved section notes and will issue a report of their findings following the **Evidence Handling and Documentation** and Reporting Results and Interpretations Standard Operating Procedures.
- b. **Maintaining candidate search list results are not required as a part of case documentation practices and such lists are not included in HFSC's case record.**
 - i. **Due to many circumstances outside of the control of HFSC, candidate lists are not always available.**
 - ii. **If a request is made in writing to view a candidate list, the request will be reviewed to see if it can be generated.**
 - 1. **Prior to releasing a reproduced candidate list, please contact HFSC General Counsel regarding any potential limitations for the recipient.**
 - 2. **All communications will be uploaded to the case record.**

V. Quality Assurance/Quality Control

- a. Technical and administrative reviews are performed on all casework before a final report is released.

References

1. HFSC Latent Print Section, Reporting Results and Interpretations Standard Operating Procedure.
2. HFSC Latent Print Section, Analysis, Comparison, Evaluation and Verification Methodology Standard Operating Procedure.
3. SWGFAST, Document #8 Standard for the Documentation of Analysis, Comparison, Evaluation, and Verification (ACE-V) 09/11/12 Ver 2.0
4. SWGFAST, Document #12 Standard Friction Ridge Automation Training (Latent/Tenprint) 11/14/12 Ver 2.0



5. SWGFAST, Document #101 Limited Examination Considerations for Latent Print Sections
(Latent) Position Statement 09/11/12 Ver 1.0

Wording Removed from Previous Versions

Clause	Wording Removed
1.2.1	It is available to HFSC but is operated outside the scope of HFSC.
1.2.2	It is available to HFSC but is operated outside the scope of HFSC.
1.2.3	It is available to HFSC but is operated outside the scope of HFSC.
1.3.3	Hit/Reverse Associations 1.3.3.1. When an examiner determines that a hit/reverse association has been made, based on the information displayed on the AFIS system screen, a digital screen shot will be taken of the latent image searched and the associated record finger and/or palm image. For complex, severely degraded or fragmented latent prints, and/or poor-quality images of the record candidate on-screen, examiners have the discretion to seek a consultation from another examiner and/or obtain clear record finger and/or palm prints from a database. Any consultations between examiners must be documented in the case record. 1.3.3.2. A screenshot of the Hit/Reverse Association will be maintained in the case record. All available demographic information of the candidate will also be saved; this may include name, date of birth, and HCSO, State Identification Number (SID), or FBI numbers. • For searches conducted in IDEMIA, all information cannot be captured within one screen shot. Additional screen shots will capture the available demographic information of the candidate. 1.3.3.3. The file name format should be written as follows for screen shots for hits: • L-001 Case # ACCS (Last Name of Person) Initials of Examiner • L-001 Case # ACCS Info 1 (Last Name of Person) Initials of Examiner • L-001 Case # ACCS Info 2 (Last Name of Person) Initials of Examiner 1.3.3.4. The file name format should be written as follows for screen shots for reverse associations: • Case# ACCS (Last Name of Person) Examiner Initials