



Quality Division Use Only

Quality Tracking #:	<input type="text" value="2021-038"/>	Classification:	<input type="text" value="Incident"/>
Non-Conformance Level:	<input type="text" value="N/A"/>	Section:	<input type="text" value="Latent Print Section"/>
Date of Discovery:	<input type="text" value="07/22/21"/>	Date of Incident:	<input type="text" value="07/12/21"/>

Forensic Case Number(s), if applicable:	Agency Case Number(s), if applicable:
2021-26860	074553321

Description of Non-conformance:

Five unfired cartridges were processed for latent prints but were not included in the request by the stakeholder.

Additional Information/Follow-Up:

A firearm, magazine, and five unfired cartridges were collected by the crime scene unit. It is normal practice for the crime scene unit to visually examine any firearms related evidence for visible ridge detail. If observed, the items with ridge detail are sent to latent print processing. In this instance, the crime scene unit did not observe any ridge detail, so the items were sent to firearms for NIBIN entry. Prior to NIBIN entry, the stakeholder entered a request for latent print processing for the firearm and the magazine. All three items were transferred from the firearms vault to the latent print processing evidence vault and later all three items were processed by the processor. Based on documentation in the case record, the processor confirmed that the cartridges were swabbed for any potential DNA by the crime scene unit before being sent to the firearms section and subsequently the latent print processing section. However, this confirmation took place after the processing had already occurred. The processing of these items for latent prints did not have a technical impact on the case and did not destroy any potential DNA evidence. During an interview with the assigned processor and the quality specialist, the processor acknowledged his mistake. He stated that reviewing the request is one of his first steps when starting a case but cannot remember if he reviewed the request in this instance. He also stated that since the items were collected from the crime scene unit originally, that is most likely what lead him to process every item he received for that case. It was normal practice at this time for the crime scene investigator (CSI) to write on their evidence inventory notes if they observed ridge detail on any of the firearm evidence items. The processor told the quality specialist that if the processors received crime scene collected evidence that did not specifically state if ridge detail was observed, then



the processors would contact the CSI to see which items they needed processed. If the CSI could not recall, then the processor would process all the items they received for that case. However, the processor stated that since the items went directly to the firearms section after collection by the CSU and not to processing, he assumed that meant that no ridge detail was observed, and therefore he processed all the items. After the quality specialist interviewed the processor, she reviewed his notes in the JusticeTrax laboratory information management system (LIMS). The processor made a comment in his notes about how he reviewed the request and chose to process the item that was not included in the request. Based on the case milestones and review DUI, this comment was made after the reviewer discovered that the processor processed the item that was not requested and is not consistent with the information provided during the interview with the processor. Therefore, the actual process of events cannot be determined with certainty.

Summary of Root Cause Analysis:

Note: Incidents are documented for tracking purposes and trend analysis. Root Cause Analysis is not required for incidents.

N/A

Actions Taken:

The following comment was added to the latent print processing report, "Items 004-01 through 004-05 were processed for the presence of latent prints even though they were not requested by the investigator. Please refer to Quality report 2021-038 for more information." While there was no loss of evidence or technical impact to the case or other forensic disciplines by processing this extra item, this incident is being tracked as it is as repeat nonconformance by the same processor. In addition, since the notes in the case record made by the processor stated that he chose to process the item that was not requested, which is a violation of the quality manual and the second occurrence of a similar issue involving the processor, this issue was forwarded to the Human Resources Division. At this time, no changes were made to the section processes or procedures. This is due to the start of the Lean Six Sigma Project in the Latent Print Processing section on 10/28/2021 as changes to the existing process may be an outcome of the project.



Houston Forensic Science Center
Incident/Corrective Action Report
Quality Division

Section Manager: Rebecca Green

Date: 11/09/21

Division Director: Amy Castillo

Date: 11/10/21

Incidents or Corrective Actions that involve the Biology/DNA section are reviewed by the Technical Leader and CODIS Administrator.

Technical Leader: Jeniffer Molina

Date: 11/09/2021

CODIS Administrator: N/A

Date: N/A

Quality Director: Erika Ziemak

Date Closed: 11/12/21