



**Quality Division Use Only**

Quality Tracking #:	2021-046	Classification:	Corrective Action
Non-Conformance Level:	Class II	Section:	Crime Scene
Date of Discovery:	07/30/21	Date of Incident:	12/26/20

Forensic Case Number(s), if applicable:	Agency Case Number(s), if applicable:
2020-17788	165841320

**Description of Non-conformance:**  
A crime scene investigator (CSI) tasked with processing a vehicle at the vehicle examination building (VEB) did not process cellphones for latent prints as requested by the investigating officer on the vehicle processing request form.

**Additional Information/Follow-Up:**  
When the CSI responded to the VEB to process the vehicle, he reviewed the request for processing provided by the investigator. However, the CSI did not notice that information regarding the request for latent print processing of cellphones was printed at the top of the second page. The CSI photographed the cellphones, including their serial numbers, but did not collect them nor process them for latent prints. The vehicle was released back to the Houston Police Department (HPD) on 12/26/2020.

This nonconformance was discovered when the investigating officer contacted HFSC's Crime Scene Unit (CSU) inquiring about the status of the report and evidence submission. During subsequent communications with the investigator it became apparent that the investigator had intended to request the cellphones, as well as other electronic devices, be collected from the vehicle by CSU. However, this request was not communicated on the vehicle processing request form.

The vehicle in question was used by four subjects apprehended in a pawn shop robbery that occurred in Montgomery County. The investigator had requested the cellphones be photographed and processed for latent prints. The investigator intended for the cellphones to be collected because he suspected the same subjects may have been involved in other previous incidents targeting pawn shops within Houston city limits.

The CSI photographed the exterior and interior of the vehicle, processed both the exterior and interior of the vehicle for latent prints, swabbed areas from the exterior and interior of the vehicle for contact DNA, and collected multiple items of evidence, all per the CSU SOP and vehicle processing request form.

Numerous other items of evidence were collected from the vehicle by HPD officers prior to being transported to the VEB.



**Summary of Root Cause Analysis:**

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

Upon interview, the CSI demonstrated accountability for this oversight. He stated that he did not see the request for latent print processing, but he acknowledged that he should have. Because the form printed onto two pages, the information regarding the processing request was inadvertently overlooked.

**Actions Taken:**

A CSU supervisor provided the initial response to the investigator inquiry. The supervisor reviewed the CSI's report so that it could be released, then asked the CSI to let the investigator know what items he had collected from the vehicle when he processed it. The CSI emailed the investigator on 08/07/2021 that the cellphones had been photographed per the request, but not processed for latent prints or collected. The CSI also provided the investigator with a copy of the evidence list.

A meeting was held between the investigating officer, the Quality Director, the CSI, and CSI's supervisor on 09/16/2021. Information was shared about how CSU processes vehicles and how improving communication between HFSC and HPD would help reduce recurrences of this type of nonconformance. Ideas for improving the vehicle processing request form were discussed, including adding a check box if the investigator wishes to be contacted and having a designated space to provide information about potentially-related cases even though neither revision would have directly prevented this nonconformance. These suggestions will be incorporated into the next revision of the form. A follow-up report will be issued after the form is revised.

Section Manager: Carina Haynes

Date: 10/23/21

Division Director: Carina Haynes

Date: 10/23/21

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

Technical Leader: N/A

Date: N/A

CODIS Administrator: N/A

Date: N/A

Quality Director: Erika Ziemak

Date Closed: 10/25/21