



Quality Division Use Only

Quality Tracking #:	2022-018	Classification:	Incident
Non-Conformance Level:	N/A	Section:	Crime Scene
Date of Discovery:	01/18/22	Date of Incident:	09/17/21

Forensic Case Number(s), if applicable:	Agency Case Number(s), if applicable:
2021-31309	125436321

Description of Non-conformance:
A crime scene investigator (CSI) mistakenly formatted her camera's SD card prior to retaining her scene photographs.

Additional Information/Follow-Up:
The CSI was preparing to write a crime scene report in December 2021 when she realized that she did not have her scene photographs. The CSI had processed the scene on 9/17/2021.

When interviewed, the CSI stated that she remembered the scene because after she arrived and began processing, she started to feel ill. She knew that her squad was down several people, so rather than ask for relief she continued processing the scene. She also stated that she did not upload her photographs to Dataworks (a data storage system used by the Houston Police Department to house digital photographs) at the end of her shift as required by the CSU SOP. She stated that she had intended to ask for a deviation to upload them during her next shift but acknowledges that she does not remember doing so and there is not documentation of such a request in her case record. She thinks that when she came into work for her next shift, she thought she had already uploaded the images to Dataworks and created a CD for her case record, and therefore reformatted her SD card.

The CSI was on leave January 2022 through April 2022.

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:

When the CSI realized the photographs were not in her case record nor in Dataworks, she notified the Crime Scene Unit (CSU) Director. The Director instructed the CSI to notify her supervisor and give the supervisor the case record to review. The Director also asked the CSI to double check that the photographs were missing. The CSI checked her SD cards and her camera hard drive, and she re-checked Dataworks. She also checked where she temporarily stores photographs prior to uploading them to Dataworks. The photographs were determined to be unrecoverable.

Between the initial scene and the date that the CSI discovered she was missing her scene photographs, CSU had hired new supervisors. The CSI was assigned to one of the new supervisors in December 2021. The new supervisor was hired in November but did not assume responsibility for her new squad until early January 2022. The supervisor did not submit the workflow until March because she did not realize she needed to do so. When interviewed in March, the supervisor stated that she was not familiar with the incident/corrective action workflow submission process, nor did she have a firm understanding of her role in the process as a supervisor.

The supervisor met with two Quality Specialists on 3/15/2022 to discuss the workflow process. During the meeting the supervisor contacted both the investigator and the prosecutor to let them know about the missing photographs. The investigator stated that during his investigation a surveillance video was recovered from a convenience store which that provided clear images of the alleged suspects. Additionally, other officers were able to identify the subjects on the surveillance video because they were known to the officers. The video was released through Crime Stoppers, and several citizens called in and confirmed the identity of the subjects.

The prosecutor was not available when the supervisor tried to contact her on 3/15/2022. The supervisor left a voice mail message, and a Quality Specialist followed up with an email on 3/15/2022 letting the prosecutor know that the scene photographs were missing which would be documented by HFSC as a nonconformance.

This nonconformance is being considered an incident because this is a first-time occurrence for the CSI and because the CSI assumed responsibility for her actions. Because of the surveillance video, the lack of scene photographs does not appear to present a significant risk to the investigation.

Section Manager: Carina Haynes

Date: 07/29/22

Division Director: Carina Haynes

Date: 07/29/22

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

Technical Leader: Nicole Teele

Date: 07/28/2022

CODIS Administrator: N/A

Date: N/A

Quality Director: Erika Ziemak

Date Closed: 08/01/22