



Digital Forensics

Reporting Guidelines

Crime Scene/Digital and Multimedia Division



3. Digital Forensic Laboratory Reporting Guidelines

3.1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance for reporting case analysis results.

3.2. Scope

This procedure describes the steps to be taken when reporting case analysis results to ensure consistency within the Digital Forensic Laboratory. The LIMS report is the official reporting mechanism for the DFL.

Forensic software-generated reports are supplemental exhibits that are often not user-configurable to enable the insertion of header/footer or page numbering, etc. Some software-generated report content concerning forensic imaging of devices, where applicable, shall be copied into the case record (see Physical and Logical Imaging Procedure). Forensic software-generated reports are provided to the customer on DVD or other digital media and controlled by issuing a LIMS barcode and affixing the barcode to the returned media in order to maintain a chain-of-custody.

3.3. Equipment

- Forensic Computer
- Administrative workstation with LIMS program

3.4. Overview

LIMS reports shall address examination requests and provide the customer with all relevant information in a clear and concise manner. The case analysis results shall include the forensic method utilized, the results of the analysis, and any returned media including but not limited to photos, extracted data, and forensic software reports. There may be certain situations in which this report format may not address the nature of the case and/or data being analyzed. In these situations, the examiner will consult with the Section Manager or designee for appropriate wording for the report.

3.5. Case Reviews

All cases will be submitted to a qualified supervisor or examiner for a Technical Review. A technical review consists of reviewing the case report and examiner notes in LIMS, forensic software generated reports, and photographs of submitted evidence.

Technical Review

- Conclusions are accurate and supported by the examination records.
- Verify that the performance verifications were performed and all forensic hardware/software is approved for use.
- The appropriate technical procedures (test methods) were used.
- The accuracy of report results and conclusions are supported by the technical data.



- Proper recording of actions, evidence description, and software version utilized are documented correctly.
- Ensure that derivative evidence exported to **external media (such as a DVD or flash drive)** was issued a unique identifying number and that evidence was properly documented in LIMS.
- **If the reviewer finds that the report and case records are deficient, they will be returned to the examiner for corrections and resubmission for TR.**

All cases will **then** be submitted to another qualified supervisor or examiner for an Administrative Review. An Administrative Review consists of reviewing the case record notes and examiner report in LIMS.

Administrative Review

- Case notes and report was technically reviewed by a qualified examiner.
- Grammar and spelling **are** correct.
- Page number, **electronic signature**, and other requirements are in the LIMS report.
- All necessary documentation has been recorded in the LIMS case record (i.e. photographs, results, imaging software report, derivative evidence documentation for DVD, etc.).
- A review of all examination records to ensure that the unique case identifier and examiners **name** are on each printed page.
- **If the reviewer finds that the case notes or the report is deficient, it will be returned to the examiner for corrections and resubmission.**

3.6. Resolution of Differences of Opinion

If the reviewer disagrees with or has a difference of opinion regarding the conclusions stated in the case records and test report, then the issue will be brought to the Technical Supervisor or designee who will review the issue(s) and decide on the correct resolution for the matter. The resolution of differing conclusions will be recorded in the case record.

3.7. Report Modification

It is sometimes necessary to modify a report after it has been issued. This may be necessary to correct an error in the report, to document additional information conducted after the issuance of the report, at the request of the customer, or for various other reasons.

If it becomes necessary to amend a signed report, then the new report will be clearly identified, it will contain a reference to the original report that it is replacing, and will clearly state why an amended report was issued. The original report must be maintained within the case record.

Exigency Exception:



Whenever a customer requests expedited processing, the supervisor may authorize the examiner to release some or all *derivative evidence* content to the customer prior to it being technically or administratively reviewed. The examiner may not issue an opinion concerning that information. Rather, the examiner is merely providing a data-dump of raw or formatted forensic software-generated content.

- The examiner is required to issue a LIMS barcode to any derivative evidence released and that evidence shall be controlled in LIMS. The customer is advised that the derivative content is evidence and should be handled as such. The chain-of-custody transaction shall be recorded in the case record.
- The customer will be advised that the official LIMS report **will not** be issued until it is technically and administratively reviewed. A copy of the derivative evidence released to the customer shall be temporarily copied to the F-SAN for the purpose of the technical and/or supervisory review (See Technical Procedure for F-SAN Data Storage).
- The customer will be notified in the event the technical review of the derivative evidence reveals anomalies or supplemental information, and that information will be fully documented in the case record.