



**Multimedia Section  
Reporting Guidelines**

**Digital and Multimedia Evidence Division**



## 1. Digital Forensic Laboratory Reporting Guidelines

### 1.1. Purpose

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

### 1.2. Scope

1.2.1. This procedure describes the steps to be taken when reporting case analysis results to ensure consistency within the Multimedia Section. The LIMS report is the official reporting mechanism for the section.

### 1.3. Limitations

1.3.1. 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, where applicable, shall be copied into the case record. Forensic software-generated reports may be provided to the customer on DVD or other digital media or attached to the case record in LIMS.

### 1.4. Equipment

- Forensic Computer
- Administrative workstation with LIMS program

### 1.5. Overview

1.5.1. 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 derivative media including but not limited to photos, extracted data, forensic software reports, images, video segments, etc. 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 analyst will consult with the section supervisor/lead or manager for appropriate wording for the report.

### 1.6. Case Reviews

1.6.1. All cases will be submitted to a qualified analyst, supervisor/lead, or manager for a Technical Review (TR). A technical review consists of reviewing the case report, analyst's notes in LIMS, forensic software generated reports, derivative media (if applicable), and photographs of submitted evidence.

#### 1.6.1.1. Technical Review

- Conclusions are accurate and supported by the examination records.
- Verify all requests were addressed.



- 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.
- Verify chain of custody.
- If the reviewer finds that the report and case records are deficient, they will be returned to the analyst for corrections and resubmission for TR.

1.6.2. All cases will then be submitted to another analyst, supervisor/lead, manager, or other HFSC personnel for an Administrative Review (AR). The exception is for call outs. The same analyst, supervisor/lead, or manager can technically review and administratively review these cases. An Administrative Review consists of reviewing the case record notes and report in LIMS.

1.6.2.1. **Administrative Review**

- Case notes and report was technically reviewed by a qualified analyst, supervisor/lead, or manager.
- 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 analyst's name are on each printed page, if applicable.
- Verify chain of custody.
- If the reviewer finds that the case notes or the report is deficient, it will be returned to the analyst for corrections and resubmission for TR and AR.

**1.7. Resolution of Differences of Opinion**

1.7.1. If the reviewer disagrees with or has a difference of opinion regarding the conclusions stated in the case records and test report (if not resolved between the reviewer and analyst), then the issue will be brought to the supervisor/lead who will review the issue(s) and decide on the correct resolution for the matter. If the supervisor/lead is unavailable, the issue can be brought to the section manager who will then decide on the correct resolution. The resolution of differing conclusions will be recorded in the case record.

**1.8. Report Modification**



- 1.8.1. 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.
- 1.8.2. 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.

**1.9. Exigency Exception:**

- 1.9.1. Whenever a customer requests expedited processing, the supervisor/lead, manager, or Division Director may authorize the analyst to release some or all derivative evidence content to the customer prior to it being technically or administratively reviewed. The analyst may not issue an opinion concerning that information.
  - 1.9.1.1. If derivative data needs to be released for investigative purposes, this information is considered an "investigative copy" and an item number in LIMS is not required. The release will be documented in the case record.
  - 1.9.1.2. 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 section's server for the purpose of the technical and/or supervisory review.
  - 1.9.1.3. 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.