

**SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROCEDURE**

DATE: OCTOBER 8, 2020
NUMBER: 6.07 – PATROL
SUBJECT: LATENT PRINT DOCUMENTATION AND TRANSMITTAL PROCEDURES
RELATED POLICY: N/A
ORIGINATING DIVISION: LABORATORY
NEW PROCEDURE:
PROCEDURAL CHANGE: **EXTENSIVE CHANGES**
SUPERSEDES: DP 6.07 – 06/02/16

I. PURPOSE

This Department procedure establishes guidelines to ensure the proper handling, processing, and chain of custody of latent print evidence.

II. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all members of the Department.

III. BACKGROUND

- A. Judicial opinions tend to direct that ANY physical evidence obtained during a police investigation must be retained for court examination, regardless of whether the agency feels it has any material value in subsequent prosecution.
- B. During a latent print search, and prior to the recovery of any lifts, an examination of the developed area should be made, using discretion by the officer to determine if there is any friction ridge detail that may be of evidentiary value. If an area is questionable, consider it of value. All lifts recovered after this examination must be retained.

NEW

IV. DEFINITIONS

NEW

A. Latent Print Lift

Developed latent prints found at a crime scene or on items of evidence that have been processed using fingerprint powder shall be lifted/recovered using fingerprint lifting tape. This tape is referred to as a latent print lift (shoe, tire, cloth or glove prints should NOT be included with latent print evidence). Refer to Departmental Procedure 3.02, Impound, Release, and Disposal of Property, Evidence and Articles Missing Identification Marks, for direction in impounding this type of evidence into the Property Room.

NEW

B. Latent Print Card

Latent prints recovered with fingerprint lifting tape are mounted on the glossy side of a latent print card. The non-glossy side is for a sketch of the recovery location of the latent print and case information that should be thoroughly filled out.

C. Known Print Exemplars

A known print exemplar is a standard fingerprint or palm print exemplar that represents the friction ridge detail of the fingers and hands collected from a known individual. This includes inked or Livescan fingerprint cards that are recorded at the time of arrest or booking.

D. Elimination Prints

Elimination prints are rolled, inked impressions of all persons not involved in the offense, who have legitimate access to the premises because of employment, residence, or any other reason.

E. Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS)

The Automated Fingerprint Identification System is used to store and retrieve known finger and palm prints, using minutiae (fingerprint ridge characteristics) matching technology, an image system, and a network capability for law enforcement agency access to local, state, and national databases.

F. Automated Latent Print System (ALPS)

The Automated Latent Print System is a component of the AFIS System and is used to conduct a latent print search when "no suspect" has been identified through other means.

V. **PROCEDURES**

NEW

A. All latent print lifts shall be placed on department-issued latent print cards (PD-136 and/or PD-866 and/or PD-867). In order to thoroughly document the location of a latent print lift, it is crucial to fill out the pre-printed data format on the non-glossy side of the latent print card. When applicable, also document the interior or exterior of a surface (e.g., windows, doors, etc.).

NEW

B. **The collection of elimination prints is NOT REQUIRED.** However, if elimination prints are obtained, use the pre-printed Elimination Print forms (PD-1043).

NEW

C. Obtain an SDPD case and/or incident number and a barcode label.

NEW

D. All latent print cards shall be fully documented at the crime scene and maintained by the officer having collected them until they are impounded. **There shall be only one** valid SDPD case and/or incident number on each latent print card submitted.

1. All latent print cards, along with elimination prints that have may have been obtained, shall be placed in **one** latent print envelope (PD-887).
2. If photographs of latent print evidence are taken at the crime scene, a **working copy** of the scene CD shall be placed in a latent print envelope along with any latent print cards. Write “working copy,” along with the case and/or incident number on the CD. **DO NOT** barcode the “working copy” CD.
3. The impounding officer shall thoroughly complete the front of the latent print envelope, which will include **one** SDPD case and/or incident number and **one** barcode label (do not place barcode labels directly on the latent print cards).
4. The latent print envelope will be sealed with a Department approved evidence seal. The impounding officer’s initials, ID #, and date shall be placed across the border of the seal and the latent print envelope (½ on the seal, ½ on the envelope).
5. Latent print evidence, including known prints (e.g., inked suspect prints) cannot be received via interoffice mail.
6. The latent print envelope shall be deposited in the locked drop box located at each area station or impounded in the Headquarters Property Room.

7. Each area station will have personnel assigned to transport the sealed latent print envelopes to the Headquarters Property Room.
8. Personnel from the Latent Print Unit of the Crime Laboratory will retrieve the sealed latent print envelopes from the Headquarters Property Room and verify that the envelopes and enclosed latent print evidence have been correctly documented. These envelopes will be scanned and received into the Latent Print Unit.
9. If, when received, the latent print evidence does not contain the correct information to proceed with an examination, Latent Print Unit personnel will notify the lifting officer. This can be accomplished via phone, email, or by arranging for the officer to come to the Latent Print Unit to make corrections.

If the impounding officer is on an extended leave, that officer's supervisor or a designated officer may correct the problem.

NEW

- E. The body of the crime report shall include the fact that a latent print search was conducted, the identity of the officer involved, the number of latent print cards recovered, the number of elimination prints if obtained, the items/surfaces latent prints were recovered from, and the disposition of the evidence.

The barcode number that contains the latent print evidence shall be noted in the Case Report or Officer's Report.

- F. Investigative personnel shall adhere to the same documentation and transmittal process contained in this procedure.

NEW

- G. The Latent Print Unit works all cases proactively (*no work request needed*) with the exception of:

- Homicide cases
- Cases with a known suspect(s) that requires a manual comparison
- Complex ALPS cases that require case management

Latent Print Unit personnel will send an email notification informing the assigned detective to submit a work request for cases that meet the above listed criteria which are outside of the Proactive Program.

NEW

- H. For cases that require submission of a work request:

1. Detectives that need latent print evidence compared to a known suspect shall submit a completed Latent Print Comparison Request that includes the following:

- a. The subject(s) name, DOB, and a CII/SID #, Main/AFIS #, or FBI #.
- b. The barcode # and brief description of the item(s)/surface(s) to be compared.
- c. If an ALPS computer search is needed **in addition** to the manual comparison (e.g., other suspects are unknown), make a note on the Latent Print Comparison Request to have the unidentified latent print evidence searched in the ALPS computer database.

NEW

2. Detectives with cases that do not meet the criteria of the Proactive Program and need the latent print evidence searched in the Automated Latent Print System (ALPS) shall submit a completed ALPS Computer Search Request that includes the following:
 - a. The barcode # and brief description of item(s)/surface(s) to be searched.