



11 September 2020

Ref IR-01-20-23847

Mr Paul White
Email: fyi-request-13547-30784a1d@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr White

Police references IR-01-20-23847

Thank you for your email received by Police on 18 August 23 March 2020 requesting:

"...relates to the peer review and the procedures that is followed by the two other fingerprint officers."

Your request has been considered in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982.

The peer review, with regards to any Fingerprint Identification is termed 'verification'. This process explains that two other qualified members must undertake their own ACE process to arrive at a conclusion. The verification process undertaken by qualified Fingerprint Officers is best described in the following Fingerprint Standard Operating Procedures;

- SOP # 2 - Latent Fingerprint Examination and Identification, and
- SOP # 24 Verification

Some of the information has been withheld (redacted) as;

- The information requested is withheld pursuant to section 6(c) of the Official Information Act 1982 as the making available of the information is likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law including the prevention, investigation and detection of offences and the right to a fair trial.

Police considers the interest requiring protection by withholding the information is not outweighed by any public interest in the release of the information.

If you have any questions you may contact Tanja van Peer at the email address below.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision if you are not satisfied with Police's response to your request.

Yours faithfully

Manager: National Forensic Services
Tanja.Van.Peer@police.govt.nz

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NEW ZEALAND POLICE FINGERPRINT SECTION
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

LATENT FINGERPRINT EXAMINATION AND IDENTIFICATION

S.O.P #: 2	Procedure category: OPERATIONAL
Effective date: 01 - 01 - 2015	Review date: 2021
Process owner	PFO Hamilton
Moderators	Fingerprint Management Group (Lead - Manager: National Fingerprint Service Centre)

1.0 Purpose

To provide standards for examining latent fingerprints, and making and recording identifications of latent fingerprints.

2.0 Scope

This procedure applies to Fingerprint Assistants, Assistant Fingerprint Officers, and qualified Fingerprint Officers undertaking latent fingerprint examination and identification.

3.0 Rules governing New Zealand Police Fingerprint Section's Identification Standards

A pre-determined minimum number of friction ridge characteristics / details / features is NOT required to be present in two impressions in order to establish a positive identification.

Friction ridge identification is established through the agreement of friction ridge formations, in sequence, having sufficient uniqueness to individualize.

Nothing in this standard shall be seen to override the internal policies, procedures and quality controls of individual jurisdictions.

4.0 Key Terms

Term	Definition
ACE-V	The methodology used in examining and identifying fingerprints; where A = Analysis; C = Comparison; E = Evaluation; V = Verification.
Complex examination	May include, but not exclusively, identifications made predominantly on third-level detail, distortion, multiple impressions.
Feature	The structure and flow of friction ridges formed during biological development and to include characteristics, ridge edge shape and pores. A temporary or permanent influence, eg scars, crease, wart, etc, not being a component of the friction ridge development.
Characteristic	Galton points, bifurcation, ridge ending, dot.
Levels of detail	1 - pattern (classification), ridge flow/path; 2 - characteristics, ridge flow/path; 3 - supporting information, edgeoscopy.

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	poreoscopy, creases, scars, incipient ridges, ridge flow/path.
Friction ridge impression	Fingerprint, palmprint, or footprint.
Fingerprint	In the context of this SOP, the term 'fingerprint' equates to 'friction ridge impression' as defined.
Latent fingerprint	Generic term referring to the 'unknown' prints to also include patent and contaminant prints.
Verification	Independent undertaking of the ACE process to determine if you reach the same conclusion as the identifier.
Exemplar	Recorded print from known source.

5.0 Roles / Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Fingerprint Assistant Assistant Fingerprint Officer	Analysis of latent fingerprints; comparison of latent fingerprints to known fingerprints; and evaluation of result. Identification of latent fingerprints.
Fingerprint Officer Senior Fingerprint Officer Principal Fingerprint Officer	Analysis of latent fingerprints; comparison of latent fingerprints to known fingerprints; and evaluation of result. Identification of latent fingerprints. Verification of fingerprint identifications.

6.0 Procedure

Procedure	Action	Responsibility
	The examiner/identifier:	
6.1	In comparing two friction ridge impressions, use the ACE-V methodology.	FPO / SFO / PFO/ Trainee
6.2 ANALYSIS	Examine the latent fingerprint to determine the presence or lack of features that may permit comparison; the quantity and quality thereof; and the presence or lack of factors that may render a comparison complex.	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee
6.3 COMPARISON	Make a comparative assessment of the configurative, sequential, and spatial relationships of identifying features between the two fingerprints.	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee
6.4	Initiate the Comparison process by referencing the features within the latent print and searching for them in the exemplar print.	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee
6.5 EVALUATION	Assess the level of agreement of identifying features between the two fingerprints to establish whether (a) there is agreement, and (b) if the level of agreement	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee

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	constitutes a sufficient basis on which to base an opinion of identity.	
6.6	Ensure you have located a number of corresponding identifying features between the latent and exemplar prints which, in your opinion, could not have originated from more than one source. That is, the configuration of features is specific and unique to the individual producing the print.	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee
6.7	Reach a conclusion as a result of the ACE process, which may be one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification - the latent fingerprint and the exemplar have originated from the same source. - Exclusion - the latent fingerprint and the exemplar have NOT originated from the same source. - Inconclusive - there is insufficient recorded detail in either fingerprint (latent or exemplar) to come to either of the above conclusions. - Unsuitable – the quality or the clarity of information contained within the print is so low as to render the print valueless. 	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee
6.8 VERIFICATION	Two qualified fingerprint officers undertake the ACE process independently to reach an evaluation/conclusion. The verifiers must follow the same process as above to determine whether they reach the same conclusion as the identifier. If they reach a different conclusion, refer to SOP # 4. SOP # 24 guides further on the verification process.	FPO / SFO / PFO
6.9	Once the verification process has been completed, that is, two other qualified experts have reached the same conclusion as the identifier, then an identification has been established and the notification of identification can be released. (Note: This notification must NOT be released before the verification process is completed.)	FPO / SFO / PFO
6.10 DOCUMENTING IDENTIFICATIONS	Having completed the ACE process and formulated a hypothesis of identity, produce an image of the latent fingerprint (and corresponding known exemplar),	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee

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	and mark on them corresponding features until you have reached the opinion of identification. These form your working notes.	
6.11	Use the latent fingerprint lift as the reference for marking the identifying detail, unless a photograph is the method you used to preserve the fingerprint.	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee
6.12	Work from the latent fingerprint to the known fingerprint. In rare occasions where the quality of the latent fingerprint exceeds that of the known fingerprint, this could occur interchangeably.	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee
6.13	Ensure you mark the correct type and location of identifying features. Where a feature appears to have been recorded differently between two fingerprints (eg ridge ending on one, bifurcation on another), use all available information, including other sets of known fingerprints, to form an opinion as to which is correct, and appropriately mark both features.	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee
6.14	Ensure identification characteristics are marked in the correct ridge sequence.	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee
6.15	Endorse the image of the latent fingerprint with the identified AFIS number, lift or image number, finger identified, date and identifier's initials.	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee
6.16	Complete an identification file consisting of: - marked images - SOC documentation - SOCO notes, or photographs - identified person's XXXXXXXXXX Summary sheet - identification cover sheet - other relevant notes or documents	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee
6.17	Follow SOP # 24 for verification procedures.	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee
	The verifiers:	
6.18	Complete an independent comparison and evaluation process to determine if you reach the same conclusion, or not, as the identifier. Sign the documentation, and initial and date the image to show you	FPO / SFO / PFO

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	have undertaken a verification process.	
6.19	Do not sign an identification unless you would be prepared to give the evidence of identity yourself, should you be required to do so.	FPO / SFO / PFO
6.20	If there is a disagreement about sufficiency or identity, you may apply the Independent Evaluation Review SOP#4.	FPO / SFO / PFO
6.21	If an identification has been made on Level 3 detail alone, the PFO should refer it to the FMG for consultation.	FPO / SFO / PFO
	The identifier:	
6.22	If the identification is of a Child or Young Person (18 or under), you must ascertain that the set of known fingerprints used to make the identification is lawfully held. If in doubt or it is unclear, these should be referred to your PFO, who will seek guidance.	FPO / SFO / PFO/Trainee/M:NFPSC

6.0 History of Change

SOP / Revision No.	Description of SOP / Revision	Date / Staff QID
		19/02/2015 - FMG
2	Clarified verification process and added additional step to 5.27. Added SOP # 2 as reference.	25/9/2018 – TVM910
3	Aligned with new SOP # 24	2/8/2019
4	Updated for SOP#4 name change	27/8/2020 - M:NFPSC

7.0 Attachments

nil

8.0 References

New Zealand Police Fingerprint Section Identification Standard: **No scientific basis exists for requiring that a pre-determined minimum number of friction ridge characteristics / details / features must be present in two impressions in order to establish a positive identification.**

SOP # 4 Independent Evaluation Review

SOP # 24 Verification

Annexure

NEW ZEALAND POLICE FINGERPRINT SECTION
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

VERIFICATION

S.O.P #: 24	Procedure category: OPERATIONAL
Effective date: 15 - 07 - 2019	Review date: 2021
Process owner	Manager: National Fingerprint Service Centre
Moderators	Fingerprint Management Group

1.0 Purpose

To provide the standard procedure for the process of verifying identifications of prints from scenes of crime, exhibits or as a result of any other work.

2.0 Scope

This procedure applies to all qualified Fingerprint Officers.

3.0 Key Terms

Term	Definition
Verification	Independent undertaking of the ACE process to determine if you reach the same conclusion as the identifier.
Qualified Fingerprint Officers	Fingerprint Officers / Senior Fingerprint Officers / Principal Fingerprint Officers
Prints	Includes all palms, fingers, phalanges and feet either taken under Section 32 of the Police Act or for elimination purposes or volunteered or taken from deceased.
Single impression identification	Cases where only one print has been identified to a person.
Blind Verification	A completely independent undertaking of the ACE process by a second competent examiner who does not have information about the first examiners conclusions. Complex identification, the process will be semi-blind.

4.0 Roles / Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Fingerprint Officer (FPO) Senior Fingerprint Officer (SFO) Principal Fingerprint Officer (PFO) , including the Manager: National Fingerprint Service Centre	Ensuring the process outlined in this SOP is adhered to.
PFO/SFO/FPO's	Maintaining proficiency in verification and completing the verification training pathway.
PFO	One of the verifiers and final 'gatekeeper' for all identifications wherever possible. PFO may delegate other staff into this role.

5.0 Procedure

Procedure	Action	Responsibility
5.1	A print contained on a lift or image taken from a crime scene or exhibit is evaluated as 'identified' to a set of prints held on the database, or otherwise taken under controlled conditions.	FPTSO AFO FPO SFO PFO
5.2	All 'identified' prints must be subjected to the verification procedures as directed under SOP #2 Latent Fingerprint Examination	FPO SFO PFO
5.3	The purpose of the verification process is to undertake an independent ACE process to determine if the same evaluation as the identifier can be reached.	FPO SFO PFO
5.4	There are two routes that an 'identified' print may follow through the verification process and those routes are defined as standard or complex identifications.	FPO SFO PFO
5.5	Standard identifications are those with high levels of quality and quantity comparison features in both the known and unknown prints. Complex identification prints may include, but are not exclusively limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor quality print • Low quantity of features • Movement or distortion • Overlaid or multiple impressions • Poor contrast 	FPO SFO PFO

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor photographic focus • Single impression identifications • All scenes we have attended <p>These may apply to the unknown or known prints.</p> <p>Identifications made on 3rd level detail alone are also to follow SOP # 2</p>	
5.6	<p>The determination of which verification process is applicable to an identification is made by the 'identifier'.</p> <p>This does not, as per standard practice, preclude a verifier from using unmarked copies of the prints to form their own evaluation for any case they are to verify.</p> <p>If a verifier in the simple pathway determines the identification should undertake the complex pathway, the verifier should seek guidance from the PFO.</p> <p>If a verifier in the complex pathway determines the identification should undertake the simple pathway, the verifier shall take no action and leave the identification in the complex pathway.</p> <p>If the file contains a mix of complex and simple pathway verifications, it must go through the complex verification pathway, however, only the complex images need to follow the complex process.</p>	FPO SFO PFO
5.7	<p>Standard identifications:</p> <p>The marked copies of the working notes, crimcons (or other) or ABIS screens, are forwarded to the first verifier for them to follow the process as defined in SOP # 2.</p>	FPTSO AFO FPO SFO PFO
5.8	<p>If the first verifier confirms the evaluation of the identifier then the file is to be forwarded to the second verifier to follow the same process.</p>	FPO SFO PFO
5.9	<p>If the outcome of the verification process confirms the original evaluation then an identification has been established.</p>	FPO SFO PFO
5.10	<p>The working notes, crimcons, ABIS print outs or other, are to be signed and dated by both verifiers to confirm</p>	FPO SFO PFO

	they are verifying the identification, then SOP # 2 applies.	
5.11	<p>Complex identifications:</p> <p>The original identification and all working notes related to that, and the main file is retained by the identifying officer.</p> <p>All other contents of the file that are relevant to the identification, are to be forwarded for verification, including unmarked copies of the known and unknown prints, and are to be provided to both verifiers simultaneously.</p>	FPO SFO PFO
5.12	Each verifier will independently mark-up crimcons (or other working notes), following the process as defined in SOP # 2, in order to demonstrate the evaluation that they reach. A semi-blind verification process is to be undertaken.	FPO SFO PFO
5.13	Each verifiers will reach a conclusion as defined in SOP # 2 and each pass their working notes, containing their evaluations, back to the identifier on completion.	FPO SFO PFO
5.14	The identifier will review both outcomes of the verification process and if both 'confirm' the original evaluation then an identification has been established.	FPO SFO PFO
5.15	The identifier will collate the file with the two independently semi-blind verifications included and check for data accuracy and ID memo accuracy. The identifier may record in FIMS the QID's of the two verifiers at that stage.	FPO SFO PFO
5.16	<u>All</u> independently marked crimcons, ABIS print outs or other working notes, are to be attached to the file and notification of the identification may be released, as per SOP # 2	FPO SFO PFO
5.17	If the outcome of the verification process from either of the verifiers under either the standard or complex processes does not confirm the original evaluation then the procedures detailed in SOP # 4, Independent Evaluation Review applies.	FPO SFO PFO

6.0 History of Change

SOP / Revision No.	Description of SOP / Revision	Date / Staff QID
		02/07/19 – MHK981
2		16/7/2019 - FMG
3	To incorporate feedback	26/7/19 - FMG
4	To add clarification	2/8/19 – M:NFPSC
5	To incorporate FPTSO role and reflect name change to SOP#4	19/8/20 - M:NFPSC

7.0 Attachments

8.0 References

SOP # 2 – Latent Fingerprint Examination and Identification.

SOP # 4 – Independent Evaluation Review