

Best Practice Recommendation for Photographic Documentation of Footwear and Tire Impression Evidence



WHAT IS AN AAFS STANDARD FACTSHEET?

The AAFS produces clear, concise, and easy-to-understand factsheets to summarize the contents of technical and professional forensic science standards on the OSAC Registry. They are not intended to provide an interpretation for any portion of a published standard.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STANDARD?

This standard provides the best practice recommendations (BPR) for personnel responsible for photographic documentation of footwear and tire impressions for future examinations.

Photography is recommended as the initial method for documenting footwear and tire impressions. Photography complements other recovery processes, such as casting or lifting of footwear and tire impressions.

WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS?

If a forensic science service provider (FSSP) deviates from this document captured images may not be suitable for examination.

The standard acknowledges that different approaches are required for photographic documentation of footwear and tire impressions performed at the scene and in the laboratory. This standard provides recommendations to support capturing the most information from an impression in all of these scenarios, thereby maximizing the use of the images in later examinations.



HOW IS THIS STANDARD USED, AND WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS?

This standard is to be used by forensic science practitioners responsible for the photographic documentation of footwear and tire impressions for future examinations. It is not intended to be a substitute for training in the documentation and photography of footwear and tire track evidence.

Recommendations include:

- Equipment and materials to be used
- Steps needed for photographic documentation of footwear impressions at a scene
- Steps needed for photographic documentation of tire impressions at a scene
- Steps needed for photographic documentation of both footwear and tire impressions in a laboratory

The standard allows for flexibility in the order of the steps in each multi-step procedure.

The procedures covered in this standard may not cover all aspects of footwear and tire photography but generally address the proper use of evidence markers and scales; the capture of images at different distance ranges, lighting, and lighting angles; the capture of images in uncompressed format; the use of highlighting sprays, aerosol wax, or aerosol paint in snow conditions at a scene; and the use of electrostatic and black gelatin lifts in a dark room, adhesive lifts, and scanners when at a laboratory.