



American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors

Purpose of ASCLD

The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) is a non-profit professional organization of crime laboratory directors and forensic science managers dedicated to providing excellence in forensic science through leadership and innovation. As an organization, ASCLD provides leadership in the forensic community as well as assistance to its members by providing information, training and networking opportunities.

The ASCLD was founded in 1973 by a small group of crime lab directors from throughout the United States to foster professional interests and to assist in the development of laboratory management principles and techniques. Today, ASCLD is composed of over 650 crime laboratory directors and forensic science managers that represent over 250 local, state, federal and private crime laboratories in the United States. Membership also includes directors from 30 international laboratories, as well as national and international academic affiliates.

Our *Mission Statement*:

“To promote the effectiveness of crime laboratory leaders throughout the world by facilitating communication among members, sharing critical information, providing relevant training, promoting crime laboratory accreditation, and encouraging scientific and managerial excellence in the global forensic community. “

ASCLD Position Statements

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines to those outside our community for the positions we support in order to safeguard the integrity and value of our profession. These are not immutable laws nor are they all inclusive. However, they represent ASCLD’s positions on what each laboratory operation should strive to meet.

ASCLD recognizes the tremendous value, trust and responsibility that the forensic sciences bring and the role our laboratories play within the broader justice community

and to the public it serves. In keeping with ASCLD's history of providing leadership to the forensic community, we are proud to offer our 2008 Position Statements.

ASCLD Position #1 – Ethics and Objectivity. ASCLD believes the practice of forensic science must be built on a foundation of ethics and objectivity. Regardless of whether a laboratory is a part of a police or sheriff's department, a local or state attorney's office, a medical examiner's office or any other parent agency, laboratory managers and employees of forensic laboratories must avoid any activity, interest, influence, or association that interferes or appears to interfere with their independent ability to exercise professional judgment. Our professional ethics provide the basis for the examination of evidence and the reporting of analytical results by blending the scientific principles and the statutory requirements into guidelines for professional behavior. Laboratory managers must strive to ensure that forensic science examinations are conducted in accordance with sound scientific principles and within the framework of the statutory requirements to which forensic professionals are responsible.

ASCLD Position #2 – Financial Resources. ASCLD believes proper and continuous funding is critical for all forensic science laboratories and operations to meet their near-term and long-term operational demands as well as their training and continuing education needs. Adequately resourced budgets allow forensic managers to provide the proper space, technological support and staffing levels to meet (i) the quality and time demands of casework and (ii) the on-going competency requirements for training, research, technological development, and innovation. Funding must be substantial and consistent in order to provide accurate, timely and meaningful results that can identify the guilty and exonerate the innocent.

ASCLD Position #3 – Accreditation. ASCLD believes accreditation of ALL forensic science operations is an essential quality component. Accreditation, with movement toward ISO/IEC 17025 based international standards as currently offered by our strategic partners, provides confidence and assurance to a parent organization, its employees, the criminal justice community, and the public that the operation can meet the most comprehensive forensic quality management system requirements.

ASCLD Position #4 – Education, Training and Certification. ASCLD believes highly educated, technically competent and qualified forensic professionals are essential to our mission. Forensic laboratories must hire and retain qualified

personnel who have the integrity necessary in the practice of forensic science. ASCLD recognizes the essential need for enforceable standards in educational programs and the benefits of certification of all forensic practitioners. Proper training and individual certification provides confidence and assurance that the forensic practitioner can meet the stringent knowledge, skill and ability requirements for his/her discipline(s).

ASCLD Position #5 – Standardization and Best Practices. ASCLD believes laboratory managers and parent organizations need to develop, share and support the best practices of technological and fiscal efficiency in order to achieve standardization within the forensic disciplines. The development of standardized methods and procedures, the development of common language in benchmarking performance studies, and the careful analysis of fiscal and operational metrics will provide improved accountability to the justice community and standardization between all forensic science laboratories and operations.

ASCLD Position #6 – Oversight. ASCLD believes the creation and support of an advisory infrastructure which includes the appropriate stakeholders is a means to promote and encourage scientific and managerial excellence in the forensic community. Such an infrastructure, however named and formed, must be advisory (non-controlling) in function and comprised of individuals with the knowledge and understanding of forensic science which could identify and help resolve legitimate concerns while discrediting criticisms that are unfounded or unsupported.

It is the intent of ASCLD to actively promote open communication and a better understanding of the guiding principles of our profession with all interested parties so we may collectively benefit from meeting our core mission.

Issued December 2008

For questions or further information, please feel free to contact:

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