



**AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF
CRIME LABORATORY DIRECTORS, INC.**
139 A Technology Drive Garner, NC 27529

ASCLD Board Comments

Ensuring that forensic analysis is based upon task-relevant information

2nd paragraph under section 1

“This document does not apply to broader tasks such as surveying crime scenes to determine what evidence should be collected or advising police and lawyers on the meaning of test results and how various test results might fit together.”

Footnote:

While this document addresses analytic, comparison disciplines in forensic science, concerns about cognitive and contextual bias have been raised about other aspects of forensic science and about expert evidence generally. These broader concerns will be examined and, where appropriate, addressed in future Commission documents.

In the commission meeting it was stated during discussion that this document doesn't apply to crime scenes since no analytical work happens there. In reality, it can start there; viewing and beginning an analysis of evidence in situ can often be extremely beneficial. Many labs have forensic scientists who respond to crime scenes. When that happens they are often privy to the information the investigators have, suspect/victim statements and the theories being formulated in an attempt to determine what will become evidence. Often, these same forensic scientists continue their work at the lab. This document does not acknowledge that more than evidence collection happens at the scene.

The footnote is confusing/not clear and can be deleted.

From the 2nd bullet point on page 2

*“When evaluating whether a latent print at a crime scene came from a particular suspect, for example, it would be inappropriate for the fingerprint examiner to be influenced by whether the suspect made incriminating statements or had a convincing alibi, **or whether other forensic evidence implicated the suspect.**”*

This would seem to indicate a name from a CODIS Hit could not be used to do a direct comparison as opposed to a blind AFIS search relying on turning up the same individual. With all the problems of “known” prints in AFIS (poor quality, incomplete, section in question missing, etc.) this just isn't practical. A latent analyst would always prefer to do a direct comparison if a name is known. Likewise, is this to mean that an AFIS hit could not be passed on to DNA for references to be asked for?

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Case Managers

A case manager is offered as a potential way to mitigate contextual bias. The general concern here is a staffing issue. Larger labs may be able to shift personnel to accomplish this but smaller labs may not have this as a viable option. In the example it is offered that even a 2-person section could alternate this task. In reality, shouldn't a technical reviewer (the other person) also not be privy to "task-irrelevant info"?

ASCLD Board of Directors

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