Types of Exams Offered

Inks and Paper

Printing Processes
- Counterfeit documents
- Copies vs. Originals
- ID cards, birth certificates, checks

Altered or Obliterated Documents

Charred or Damaged Documents

Additional Examinations:
- Dating Methods
- Latent Writing Impressions
- Faded or Bleached Writing
- Rubber Stamps
Steps for a Laboratory Analysis

- Fill out a Request for Lab Examination Form (3000-210-005).
- Separate documents into two groups: questioned vs. known documents.
- Place questioned documents in a labeled, sealed envelope sandwiched between cardboard or card stock.
- Place known documents in another labeled, sealed envelope. Group samples together by individual.
- Place the two envelopes in a larger envelope to be mailed to the lab.

If a handwriting examination is requested, locate and submit normal course-of-business writing. This type of writing is valuable in determining authorship. Remember to obtain known writing from the victim.

If a latent print examination is requested, please submit to the Questioned Documents Section prior to processing of latent prints.

Questioned Document Evidence Tips

- Handle documents carefully.
- Do not write on evidence envelopes containing documents as impression writing may be recovered.
- For pictures of threats or graffiti, take high quality, properly exposed, focused pictures perpendicular to surface. Do not use flash and try to use a tripod.
- WSP handwriting exemplar packets and instructions are available to agencies to collect request exemplars. Please contact the laboratory.
- Comparable writing is needed for comparison (e.g. hand printing to hand printing or signatures to signatures).
- For digital pictures, print on photo paper or put on a disc.

Questions?

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Questioned Documents in Review

A questioned document is one that is under scrutiny due to its authenticity or origin being challenged either in part or in its entirety.

Questioned Documents include, but are not limited to: checks, wills, threatening letters, anonymous notes, receipts, passports, social security cards, and medical records.

The growing trend of Identity Theft has left citizens feeling anxious, angry, or frightened. With today’s technology, individuals are becoming more sophisticated at creating this false documentation. Fortunately, document examiners have advanced tools at their disposal that can detect these attempts at fraud.

At the Washington State Patrol Spokane Crime Laboratory, the Questioned Documents Section is available to all government agencies in the state.

If a handwriting examination is requested, please submit to the Questioned Documents Section prior to processing of latent prints.

For questions on submitting evidence, please refer the Forensic Services Guide at http://www.wsp.wa.gov/forensics/docs/bureau/forensic_services_guide.pdf