



# Maine State Police Crime Laboratory

## Case File and Report Review

### 1. **Scope**

This document outlines the laboratory's policies on technical and administrative review of laboratory case files and reports. This policy also defines what constitutes a technical and administrative review.

### 2. **Definitions**

**Peer** An individual having expertise in a specific functional area gained through documented training and experience. The individual must be certified to perform independent casework in the relevant functional area.

**Verification** Agreement by a peer with reported individualizations or exclusions of known sources.

**Technical Review** A review by a peer for technical correctness. This is accomplished by reviewing bench notes, data, and other documents that form the basis for scientific conclusion. This is not to be confused with verification.

**Administrative Review** A review for grammatical correctness. This review covers the administrative documentation, case note documentation, and final report.

### 3. **Technical Review**

3.1 The laboratory will technically review 100% of the files of processed cases.

3.1.1 Cases that are closed prior to examination do not need to be technically reviewed.

3.1.2 For cases where there is only one expert in the laboratory, at least 10% will be sent to another qualified examiner or agency for the technical review. If the examiner processes less than 10 cases per year in a discipline, then a minimum of one case per year will be sent to another qualified examiner or agency for technical review.

3.1.3 Additional exceptions to the technical review requirement may be listed in section protocols.

3.2 The technical review will be completed by an examiner certified to perform casework in the type of analysis being reviewed.

3.2.1 If a technical review is conducted by an examiner outside of this laboratory, the laboratory will ensure that the technical reviewer has read and understands the laboratory's technical procedures relevant to the work being reviewed.

3.3 The author or co-author of the examination record and report may not perform the technical review.



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- 3.4 Technical review includes a check of the case notes and data to see if procedures are accurately applied, technically correct, and complete:
- Are the techniques used appropriate and according to protocol?
  - Are sufficient standards and controls used?
  - Is packaging documented?
  - Is item description documented?
  - Are technical terms and abbreviations used appropriately?
- 3.5 The results of all analyses must be in the report. However, if a result is obtained through a series of tests, only the final result needs to be reported. The examiner is not required to report information documented in the case notes which aid in the examiner's recollection or which document the examiner's thought process.
- 3.6 All examinations and results identified in the report must be in the notes.
- 3.7 The conclusions drawn in reports must be accurately reflected in the notes or accurately derived from the data.
- 3.7.1 Verifications, when applicable, are separate from the technical review and may be conducted prior to preparing a report.
- 3.8 Associations must be properly qualified in the reports.
- 3.9 Lab and item numbers must be accurate in the case notes.
- 3.10 Significant errors in packaging, labeling or anything of equal significance that would adversely affect the reliability of results should be included in the report.
- 3.11 Upon completion of the technical review, if errors need to be corrected, the technical reviewer will initial and date the Case File Review Form and return the case file to the examiner to correct any issues.
- 3.12 The examiner will correct any errors and will return the case file to the technical reviewer for a final review. If all issues have been addressed, the technical reviewer will sign and date the Case File Review Form.



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3.13 If the technical reviewer and the examiner disagree on an issue, the technical manager of the discipline will make the final determination.

3.13.1 If no final consensus can be reached, the laboratory may seek input from an external source.

3.14 All individualizations will be verified. Other results may require verification. Please see separate section protocols.

3.15 Calculations and data transfers will be checked.

3.16 Reagent lot numbers and consumable lot numbers will be checked.

3.17 The additional comments and disclaimers at the end of the report will be checked.

3.18 Any discipline-specific technical review items above and beyond those listed in this policy should be addressed in the section policies.

#### **4. Administrative Review**

4.1 Administrative review of all case files will be conducted to ensure that all reports are complete, concise, and within laboratory policy.

4.2 The report will be checked for grammatical completeness.

4.3 The laboratory numbers, item numbers, and agency case numbers will be checked in the report.

4.4 The report will be checked to ensure that the proper primary investigator is listed.

4.5 Names, dates of birth, firearms serial numbers, vehicle registration numbers, vehicle identification numbers, etc. will be checked for accuracy.

4.6 Laboratory case file pages will be checked for laboratory numbers, initials, dates and page numbers. Only analytical documentation needs to be page numbered.

4.7 Laboratory case file pages will be checked to ensure that strike-outs and interlineations are properly initialed and dated.

4.8 All photographs in the case file must have the proper case number, initials, and date either within the photo or on the photo page. Photographs must be secured in the case file.

4.9 The reviewer will spot check the chain of custody and sub-items in LIMS.



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- 4.10 An administrative review may be completed as part of the technical review of the report.
- 4.11 Upon completion of the administrative review, if errors need correction, the reviewer will initial and date the Case File Review Form and will return the case file to the examiner to correct any issues.
- 4.12 The examiner will correct any errors and will return the case file to the administrative reviewer for a final review. If all issues have been addressed, the administrative reviewer will sign and date the Case File Review Form.
- 4.13 The reviewer must print a final copy of the report after marking it administratively reviewed in LIMS. The printed report will be included in the case file. The final copy of the report must include the printed signature of the examiner. If the signature does not appear on the final report, the review milestones must be cleared and the examiner must re-mark the report as Draft Complete.