

Latent Print Section Cheat Sheet

Maine State Police Crime Laboratory

- I. Photos:**
 - a. All visible impressions should be photographed prior to physical collection (e.g., lifting or casting).
 - b. Take a photo of the impression to show where it is in the scene.
 - c. Take a comparison quality photograph with an appropriate scale.
 - d. Only submit comparison quality photographs to the latent print section (please don't submit general scene photos).
- II. Processing Non-Porous (non-absorbent) Surfaces (e.g., ceramic, glass, plastic, etc.):**
 - a. Fingerprints on non-porous surfaces wipe off and/or become easily damaged when packaged.
 - b. Process and collect fingerprints on non-porous surfaces at the scene whenever possible to prevent damaging the fingerprints in packaging and transport.
 - c. At the very least, superglue fume the fingerprints to preserve them prior to packaging.
- III. Processing Porous (absorbent) Surfaces (e.g., paper, cardboard, etc.):**
 - a. There is no need to process porous items at the scene.
 - b. If you choose to process paper with chemicals such as ninhydrin, document any impressions that develop. The impressions will fade, and the latent section generally can't redevelop them (depending on your technique).
- IV. Lifts:**
 - a. Take more than one lift (whether adhesive or gel lift) and label "lift 1", "lift 2", etc. Oftentimes the second or third lift has more detail.
 - b. Label lifts (name, date, lift #, item #, placard #, etc.)
 - c. Multiple lifts taken from the same scene/area can be submitted to the lab as 1 item number as long as they are labeled. (i.e., no need to package every lift in a separate envelope).
- V. Gel lifts:**
 - a. Use black gel lifts unless you have dusted the impression with black powder. If dusted with black powder use a white gel lift.
 - b. If the impression is visible, do not dust it. Just lift it as trained. The gel will record the impression.
 - c. If it is an impression developed with powder take an additional lift after you've removed the powder or use a white gel lift.
 - d. Label lifts (name, date, lift #, item #, placard #, etc.)
 - e. Replace the acetate and package lifts in original silver sleeve when possible. The silver sleeve can be used as evidence packaging.
- VI. Casts:**
 - a. Three dimensional impressions should be cast after photographed (casts accurately collect size information).
 - b. Impressions in SNOW: cast with Snow Print Plaster.
 - c. All other impressions can be cast with Dental Stone.
 - i. If using dental stone to cast in snow, the impression should be coated with a very heavy coating of Snow Print Wax first; the dental stone is then used to cast the wax mold of the impression.
 - d. Allow the cast to dry completely before packaging (24-48hrs). It will mold, even in a paper bag or box if packaged when wet.
 - e. Do not clean the cast, do not touch or damage the surface of the cast containing the impression.
 - f. Label casts on the back once hard (name, date, lift #, item #, placard #, etc.)
- VII. Digital Images:**
 - a. Scans (of lifts or cards) should be made using a flat-bed photo scanner (e.g., Epson Perfection) set to least 500 dpi and saved as a tiff file.
 - b. Email your comparison quality images and scans, along with a lab submission form, to:

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