

Gel Lifts

Maine State Police Crime Laboratory – Latent Print Section

Intro:

Gel lifts are used on smooth, non-porous surfaces (e.g., floors, windows, doorknobs, bottles, coated cardboard, etc.)

Gel lifts can be used to lift impressions in dust, impressions that are visible and don't need to be developed with fingerprint powder, and impressions developed with fingerprint powder (see note*)

Supplies:

- Gel lifts
- Fingerprint roller
- Sharpie/Marker

Steps:

1. Locate, mark, and photograph your impression (including comparison quality photos).
2. Use a black gel lift. Do not use clear gel lifts. Only use white if lifting an impression developed with black powder.
3. Do not cut the gel lift smaller than the palm of your hand.
4. Slowly pull the clear cover sheet off the gel lift and allow the gel to "rest" for ~1min.
 - a. Longer if you pulled off the cover sheet quickly.
 - b. The larger the gel lift, the longer it will need to "rest."
5. Anchor one end of the gel side of the lift to the surface just outside of the impression.
6. Using a fingerprint roller or stiff card, gently roll the gel lift onto the impression from one end to the other, "squeegeeing" out any air bubbles between the gel and the surface.
7. *If the impression has been developed using fingerprint powder, immediately remove the gel and take a second lift without powder. Let this second lift sit against the impression for at least 1 minute.
8. Let the lift remain on the unpowdered impression for at least 1 minute. The fainter the impression, the longer you leave it (generally up to 5 minutes).
9. Gently and slowly pull the lift from the surface and let rest for a few minutes.
10. Anchor one edge of the cover sheet onto one end of the gel.
11. Using a fingerprint roller (or stiff card) gently roll the clear cover back onto the gel from one end to the other.
 - a. MUST ensure bubbles don't get trapped between the impression and the cover sheet.
 - b. If a bubble becomes trapped against the impression, you can try to roll the bubble out to the side, or you can remove the cover and try again.
12. Using a permanent marker, gently write your initials and case number, and any other pertinent information such as orientation of the impression, on the back of the gel.
13. Secure the covered lift in an envelope for submission to the lab (the original silver envelope works great!).
14. Send the lift to the Lab with your photos of the impression stored on a media device.