11 Case Records

11.1 Examination Documentation

The notes and other documentation must support the conclusions of the examiner. The laboratory report must communicate both the analytical results and the conclusions of the examiner, conveying the essence of what he or she would say if asked for an expert opinion in court. Decisions may be made by police officers, attorneys and the courts based on the report alone without examiner clarification, so the report should be able to stand alone. Some case record requirements can be found in the Quality Manual, any additional case record requirements are included here.

Documentation must be in such a form that another qualified examiner or supervisor, in the absence of the primary examiner, would be able to evaluate what was done, interpret the data, and reach a scientific conclusion. Appropriate worksheets should be used.

Each examination worksheet(s) should include the following: initials, incident number, controls, dates of analyses, item names/numbers/quantity, results, and disposition. Items that are not tested or opened should be described to the extent to which they can be. A written description may suffice for some items, whereas others may need a drawing or photograph. Descriptions of evidence should be clear and sufficient to permit the later identification of an item. They may include any of the following: tears, cuts, missing buttons, possible bullet holes, location, and length of possible stab holes, soiling condition, degree of degradation, type of material, significant foreign material, etc.. Significant stains must be drawn or documented in a manner which clearly demonstrates the location, relationship to other stains, reactions to screening tests, etc. Abbreviations may be used; see SOP #12 for a listing of approved abbreviations.

If needed, the location of the substrate blank control and its relationship to the body fluid stain in question must be clearly documented. The type of material or fabric the stain is on may be significant.

11.2 Reports

Report the results of any tests performed, including ALS, AP, PHT, p30, HT and microscopic spermatozoa examination. If presumptive tests are positive but confirmatory tests are not performed, this fact should be reported. For some items, it may be useful to report what area of the item was tested. Also include trace examination, whether collected or observed. Instructions should be included in the report as to requesting trace analysis if needed. Note if any items listed were not analyzed.

It may be appropriate to include in the report a request for the submission of known samples from any of the following: suspects, complainants, witnesses, consensual sex partners, and/or other individuals for the purposes of elimination.

Although interpretation of individual tests are discussed in the appropriate protocols, analysis results must be considered together to ensure that conclusions take into account all reasonable possibilities. During analysis, the examiner must continuously monitor results for problems and inconsistencies that may ultimately affect final conclusions. Therefore, careful review of notes and results by the examiner should be undertaken before conclusions are drawn. A supervisor or qualified examiner may assist in the developing of the appropriate conclusions. Slightly different situations may lead to different conclusions. When in doubt, consult with other qualified examiners and/or the supervisor.

11.3 Examination Counts

Information related to the number of examinations performed during each analysis can be documented on the "Serology Examination Count Sheet" in LIMS. This information can be used by laboratory management to accurately capture metrics such as laboratory capacity, volume of specific requests, and sectional productivity.

The following is a summary of how totals for this form should be calculated:

Category	**How to Calculate**
Number of Items	Number of items listed on the report
ALS Exams	Number of items viewed with ALS (excluding controls)
AP	Number of swabs/stains tested (excluding controls)
Sperm searches	Number of slides viewed
p30	Number of cards tested
PHT	Number of swabs/stains tested (excluding controls)
HemaTrace	Number of cards tested
Trace collection/observation	Number of items with trace collected or trace observed
Bloodstain cards	Number of bloodstain cards made
Swabbings/cuttings	Number of cuttings or swabs collected
Portions for DNA	Number of portions created
Total examinations	Total of examinations – LIMS will calculate