

## Standard Practice for the Documentation and Processing of Shooting Scenes



### WHAT IS AN AAFS STANDARD FACTSHEET?

The AAFS produces clear, concise, and easy-to-understand factsheets to summarize the contents of technical and professional forensic science standards on the OSAC Registry. They are not intended to provide an interpretation for any portion of a proposed standard.

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROPOSED STANDARD?

This standard provides scene investigators with guidance for shooting scene documentation and processing for reconstruction.

It does not provide complete protocols for conducting a full shooting reconstruction.

Specific circumstances may require deviations from this standard; however, any deviations must be based on specific articulable circumstances and must be documented.

This standard builds on the foundational guiding principles for scene investigation and reconstruction in [OSAC 2021-N-0015](#).

### WHY IS THIS PROPOSED STANDARD IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS?

Some shooting scenes are processed and documented by scene investigators who will not be performing the final reconstructive analysis.

Properly documenting and processing forensic evidence, including photographing, labeling, and collecting, is critical for later shooting reconstruction.

This OSAC Proposed Standard has been sent to [AAFS Academy Standards Board \(ASB\)](#) for further development and publication. Get involved as a member or by providing public comment.

### HOW IS THIS PROPOSED STANDARD USED, AND WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS?

The standard is used by scene investigators responsible for documenting a shooting scene and on-scene reconstructionists performing documentation. The standard provides requirements for the following:

- Shooting scene preservation – Proper documentation of location documentation; can be blended with other scene processing procedures
- Projectile impact documentation - Photography, labeling, projectile impact characteristic(s), and 3-dimensional location
- Projectile recovery - Location and recovery of projectiles or projectile fragments from impacted objects

The standard directs scene investigators to be aware of other types of forensic evidence, such as bloodstain pattern analysis, audio and video recordings, fingerprint examination, and DNA analysis, which can add value to later shooting reconstructions. The standard requires appropriate development, documentation, and collection techniques for all evidence found at the scene.

Requirements for recording and reporting observations are also addressed.

