

Standard for the Forensic Examination and Documentation of Non-firearm Tools and Non-firearm Toolmarks



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 published standard.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STANDARD?

This standard provides requirements for the examination, documentation, and reporting of non-firearm tools and non-firearm toolmarks by forensic toolmark examiners.

This standard does not cover the microscopic comparison of toolmarks.

WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS?

The examination of non-firearm tools and associated toolmarks may be required for forensic purposes. Conforming to this standard allows for the documentation of these examinations to be sufficient for forensic purpose while supporting the flexibility needed by forensic service providers based on specific case scenarios and customer needs.

This standard provides requirements to address any potential safety concerns with this type of evidence as well as safeguards for any foreign or trace material that may be on the tool's surface.

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

This standard is to be used by forensic toolmark examiners when examining non-firearm tools and non-firearm toolmarks. It includes requirements related to the documentation of observations (primary focus), evidence handling and labeling, and report wording.

Required documentation, including any combination of worksheets, notes, sketches, photographs, etc., can be captured in writing or on electronic media.

Documentation of the following is required by this standard:

- Preliminary Examination – condition as received, including any damage, presence and location of any pertinent foreign or trace material, and information on any cast produced to improve the visibility of the toolmark
- Physical Examination – documentation of the tool, and documentation of the toolmark and/or cast

