Best Practices for the Preparation of Test Impressions from Footwear and Tires

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 best practice recommendation provides guidance to forensic science practitioners who are responsible for the collection of footwear and tire test impressions.

This standard outlines recommended steps for methods commonly used in the collection of two-dimensional and three-dimensional test impressions, as well as documentation best practices. Additionally, this standard offers guidance on evidence considerations and evidence preparation.

WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS?

Adherence to the recommendations ensures best practices are followed for the creation of two-dimensional and three-dimensional test impressions of footwear and tires.

Creating accurate and representative test impressions is crucial to the comparative aspect of footwear and tire track examinations. Being able to make appropriate and accurate test impressions is a key part of the experimentation phase of these examinations and can demonstrate the reproducibility of features.

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

This standard can be used by any forensic science practitioner with appropriate training who collects known standards from footwear and tires. These best practices can be used to provide guidance when creating standard operating procedures (SOPs), to supplement existing SOPs, or replace existing SOPs as deemed appropriate by a forensic science service provider.

The best practices in this standard provide step-by-step instructions for various recommended methods for the collection of two-dimensional and three-dimensional footwear and tire test impressions. Additional recommendations include documentation, photography, and safety concerns. Limitations of test impression collection are also covered in this standard.

While all aspects of uncommon and unusual situations may not be covered, this best practice standard offers guidance on what novel techniques in the test impression-making process should be able to capture.

This standard does not replace a formalized training program for test impression collection.

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