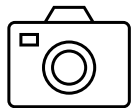


Standard Guide for Photographing Scars, Marks, and Tattoos



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 requirements and recommendations to forensic photographers for capturing images of scars, marks, and tattoos on living or deceased persons.

While there are many methods for photography available, this guide provides forensic photographers with camera and lighting parameters as well as guidance on the use of scales and specialized equipment to capture accurate and detailed photographs of scars, marks, and tattoos.

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

This standard can assist forensic science practitioners (FSPs) with capturing better quality and more consistent photographs of scars, marks, and tattoos that may be used for manual comparisons and image database searches.

The photography guidelines can also assist forensic science service providers (FSSPs) in developing training programs and in-practice protocols.

This OSAC Proposed Standard has been sent to Scientific Working Group on Digital Evidence (SWGDE) 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 guide is used by FSPs, who photograph scars, marks, and temporary or permanent tattoos that may aid in identifying a person.

Forensic photographers are provided with guidance in the following areas:

- Camera settings and file formats
- Flash type and when to use a flash for reducing glare or hotspots, controlling shadows, and accentuating texture
- Lighting and diffusers for reducing or avoiding harsh shadows
- Photograph orientation and scale to capture the area of interest and establish its location on the body
- Preserving subject dignity

Considerations specific to each (scars, marks, and tattoos) are detailed.

In some cases, special techniques (i.e., near infrared, reflective ultraviolet, and polarization) may be required. This standard provides requirements and recommendations for using these techniques.

