

2018 FORENSIC PRINT SPECIALIST

TASK LIST

I. OBTAINING LATENT PRINTS

1. Follows radio, telephone, and verbal instructions including information such as street address and type of crime and drives a vehicle to a crime scene location.
2. Talks with other investigators at major crime scenes (e.g., homicides) regarding latent print evidence and items that should be processed to ensure that all evidence is obtained in an orderly and efficient manner without destroying or contaminating the evidence.
3. Determines location and items at crime scenes to be processed for prints by using investigative techniques such as analyzing physical evidence and interviewing witnesses.
4. Walks, climbs, or crawls to possible print locations which may be in hard to reach areas such as window ledges, skylights, tunnels, or rugged terrain, or in hazardous areas, such as narcotics labs, where protective equipment (e.g., masks, gloves) is required.
5. Inspects possible print locations by looking for surfaces and objects which may have been touched during the course of the crime, such as window ledges, objects picked up but not taken, and vehicles.
6. Applies black, silver, or magnetic dusting powder (which reacts to moisture in prints) using a brush to develop latent prints on surfaces and objects.
7. Identify objects and surfaces at a crime scene that may require the use of chemicals to make latent prints visible in order to be photographed.
8. Visually inspects latent print impressions by looking for ridge characteristics in order to decide whether or not to lift prints.
9. Lifts fingerprints by applying, lifting, and attaching tape with print on the front of a lift card and then cuts any excess tape off.
10. Records pertinent information on the back of lift card including victim's name and address, description of location of print, time and date lifted, DR (division record) number, and draws a diagram of the print location
11. Applies various chemicals to latent print evidence at a laboratory setting in order to develop prints.
12. Applies Cyanoacrylate (which adheres to friction ridge residue) to latent prints by following these steps:
 - a. makes crime scene or evidence area airtight (e.g., sealing closed doors and windows with towels or tape, covering with plastic tent, or placing item in airtight container);
 - b. rehydrates prints (e.g. placing containers of hot water in room);

c. heats superglue with a hot plate or other heat source; and

d. waits the necessary amount of time in order to enhance the chances of developing latent prints on hard surfaces, pliable plastics, and other nonporous surfaces, and prepare prints for other processes, such as dusting or photographing.

13. Uses portable alternate light source (ALS) at a crime scenes in order to view chemically induced or inherently luminescent prints.

14. Brings stationary alternate light source (ALS) up to full power by following appropriate steps, including making specific adjustments at designated intervals and ensuring sufficient voltage; positioning evidence relative to ALS; choosing appropriate goggles (containing filter glass) for viewing and eye protection; and, upon completing all ALS print detection work, shuts ALS down by following specific steps, including allowing sufficient cooling time.

15. Contacts Police photographer to photograph various types of prints to document evidence, including prints which have been developed but can't be lifted or might be lost if lifted, visible prints left at the crime scene in some type of medium (e.g., blood, dust, grease), and dyed prints illuminated by an alternate light source (ALS) by using an appropriate filter on camera.

II. OBTAINING OTHER PRINTS AND EVIDENCE

16. Takes finger and palm prints from crime victims ,witnesses, and court defendants by cleaning hands, pressing fingers and palms onto Porelon ink pad, and rolling fingers and palms one at a time on a fingerprint exemplar card in order to have prints for crime scene print elimination or identification.

17. Makes casts of tire or shoe impressions by building frame around imprint, mixing casting material with water, pouring casting mix into impression, removing hardened cast, and recording DR (division record) number and pertinent information with a permanent black marker in order to supply cast impressions to other investigators for analysis by forensic experts.

III. SAFETY

18. Wears appropriate safety equipment and takes appropriate precautions, including wearing masks or respirators, gloves, and protective clothing when working with biohazardous materials and carcinogenic chemicals, at crime scene in order to ensure safety of self, other Police personnel, and the public.

IV. COURT TESTIMONY

19. Prepares enlargement of prints recovered from crime scene and exemplar prints taken from arrestee; highlights the common relevant characteristics used to make a positive identification by employing various design aids, and visually inspects completed charts in order to prepare latent print evidence for presentation in court and ensure its accuracy.

20. Appears in court as an expert witness to provide testimony, such as the development and recovery of latent print evidence (or absence thereof), collection of shoe and tire impressions, and analytical conclusions regarding friction ridge analysis.

21. Keeps current on the latent print evidence field by reading, studying, and comprehending current court decisions related to the admissibility of latent print evidence.

V. ANALYSIS OF LATENT PRINTS

22. Uses a magnifying glass to visually compare single, partial, and distorted latent prints taken from crime scenes with:

a. prints of persons known not to be connected with the commission of the crime (i.e., investigative personnel and victims) in order to identify and eliminate the prints of those persons from further investigation; and

b. prints of subjects provided by the investigating officers detectives in order to identify and eliminate the prints of subjects related to the commission of the crime.

23. Receives prints taken from crime scenes by patrol officers and other Forensic Print Specialists and visually inspects the quality according to the following criteria:

a. identifiable – impressions containing sufficient quality and quantity of detail;

b. palm or fingerprints -determined by the quantity and quality of the characteristics; and

c. Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) quality – impressions containing sufficient quality and quantity of detail for database search.

24. Enters required demographics of case evidence in appropriate computer database in order to confirm identification or exclusion.

25. Uses various computer image-enhancing software and a flatbed scanner to capture and improve latent prints for editing purposes.

26. Locates and marks friction ridge minutia for Automated Fingerprint Identification System AFIS search.

27. Visually compares latent prints to computer-generated candidate list for identification or exclusion.

28. Performs various computer database maintenance functions such as inserting or purging transactions, and retrieving statistical information from the database.

29. Visually compares latent print image to computer-generated exemplar (i.e., manual comparison) in order to confirm an identification or exclusion.

VI. ADMINISTRATION, DOCUMENTATION, AND RECORD-KEEPING

30. Completes appropriate forms associated with the collection of latent prints in order to document information on the case for court purposes.

31. Visually inspects lift cards other related documentation to ensure all documentation is accurate and complete.
32. Files evidence case packages containing latent print lift cards and other related documentation by DR (division record) number in a locked and secured evidence file room in order to maintain chain of custody.
33. Receives and records electronic requests for latent print services from patrol officers and investigators, may assign latent print field investigators to handle requests, and ensure all requests are handled in a timely manner.
34. Writes narrative reports regarding the results of latent print investigation and analysis in order to provide accurate documentation for the criminal justice system.
35. Enters, retrieves, and updates computerized statistical data, including number of prints lifted, results of Automated Fingerprint Identification System AFIS search, and the number of identifications made from comparisons, in order to assist in the preparation of Latent Print Unit reports.
36. Files latent print evidence in storage boxes for record retention.
37. May assign field investigations to other Forensic Print Specialists in the absence of a supervisor or Lead Specialist.

VII. Training and Education

38. Reads various literature pertaining to new technology in the field of obtaining latent prints or conducts research in this area and either refines or recommends changes in methods in order to ensure processes are constantly improved to reflect changing technology.
39. Conducts training sessions for LAPD personnel and other law enforcement agencies in the techniques of obtaining latent prints.
40. Gives oral presentations to schools and other interested civic groups on the methods of obtaining and identifying latent prints.
41. Serves on various commissions, committees, and boards relating to the latent print field in order to establish standards and exchange information.
42. Instructs individual Forensic Print Specialists in tasks which he/she may not be competent by demonstrating and assisting with the task in order to train the employee and achieve competency.
43. Must take annual proficiency tests required by the Latent Print Unit.
44. Reads and comprehends periodicals, Department manual, Latent Print Unit manual, and follows standard practices on a regular basis.