

OSAC REVIEW / SPRING-SUMMER 2025 (OSAC = Organization of Scientific Area Committees)

NAME OSAC UPDATE #17: ANSI/ASB Best Practice Recommendation 007, 2nd Edition, 2024

Postmortem Impression Submission Strategy for Comprehensive Searches of Essential Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) Databases

This best practice recommendation originated from the Scientific Working Group on Disaster Victim Identification (SWGDIV). It was drafted by the Medicolegal Death Investigation Disaster Victim Identification Subcommittee of OSAC. It completed the standards development process in the Disaster Victim Identification Consensus body of the AAFS Standards Board (ASB). In this best practice document, vetted recommendations, but no requirements are provided.

This is a brief summary of *ANSI/ASB Postmortem Impression Submission Strategy for Comprehensive Searches of Essential Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) Databases*, and as such may leave out or misinterpret important details. **See link to full document (below)**. Also the AAFS has developed checklists to supplement ASB documents. This document is a 2nd edition from 2024, and a new checklist is not yet available. The link to the checklist for the 1st edition is copied below. (This particular checklist is a rehash of the document in a spreadsheet format.)

(Like all OSAC developed Standards, Best Practices, and Guides, these are voluntary and separate from NAME standards and accreditation.)

Value: Useful in ensuring that friction ridge (fingerprints, palms, soles) identification is maximized by submitting unknowns to all available databases. Page 7 has a summary diagram. A Fingerprint Submission Template is provided on page 8. Whether your office submits directly, or uses law enforcement to submit fingerprints, this recommendation document can be used as a check that submissions are optimized.

BACKGROUND: Medical examiners use friction ridge comparison as a reliable, comparatively rapid, and cost-effective means to identify decedents.

The document's purpose is to discuss current technology and outline processes to enable complete search through AFIS fingerprint databases for decedent identification.

Definitions:

Next Generation Identification (NGI): As explained in recent NAME presentations, managed by the FBI, NGI is an incremental replacement for the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS).

Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT): Department of Homeland Security (DHS) system for storing biometric and biographic information and available to law enforcement and others.

10-print searches can be performed by computer if the prints are of high quality. *Latent print searches* are performed when fingers are not printable, or the quality is poor, but is more time-consuming and requires greater expertise.

General:

Current AFIS databases exist at local, state, and federal levels. "A single comprehensive and searchable database of AM fingerprint records collected in the United States or abroad does not exist."

Fingerprint Recovery Process:

- Refers to another standard for details (ANSI ASB Best Practice Recommendation 094 Postmortem Impression Recovery; Guidance and Best Practices for Disaster Victim Identification, 1st edition, 2022) This document is scheduled for review as part of this OSAC series.
- Fingerprints should be obtained as soon as possible so that decomposition does not deteriorate the friction ridges.

Submission of Impressions for Automated Searching:

- Use the Fingerprint Submission Template provided as Annex A
- Submission should request an automated 10-print search and a latent print search

- Recovered impressions should be attached as a digital image with a minimum resolution of 500ppi. The image shall also be saved in a lossless format (TIFF, or JPEG2000)
- The submission can also be mailed as a hard copy.
- Facsimiles may be too low quality for use, or not accepted by some agencies, images are preferred.
- Impressions should be submitted in the following order:
 - Local
 - State
 - Federal
 - International
- Contact information for agencies to allow for submissions is provided in the document.

Use of Mobile Capture Devices:

- In some jurisdictions these can be used without direct involvement of law enforcement.
- Currently, the majority of states do not have legislation specifically permitting the automated electronic submission of fingerprints to the FBI.

NamUs: If local, state, federal, and international databases fail to provide identification, upload the impressions to NamUs as this allows other resources to be used for identification.

Diagram for Submission Strategy on Page 7.

Template for Fingerprint Submission: Annex A, page 8.

Full Document:

https://www.aafs.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/007_BPR_e2.pdf

Checklist:

https://www.aafs.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/MDI_ANSIASB%20007_Checklist%20V1.2_0.xlsx