

Latent Print Development from Crime Scene to Database

Course Description:

Friction ridge skin has unique features that persist from birth until decomposition after death. Upon contact with a surface, those unique features of friction ridge skin may leave an impression of corresponding unique detail. Depending on the deposition factors, forensic examiners on crime scenes will be able to analyse, develop, and preserve those unique features for analysis, comparison and evaluation, and if sufficient quality and quantity of detail is present in a corresponding area of both impressions, a competent examiner can effect an individualization or exclusion. The key for any latent examiner to be successful, depends on the quality of the preserved latent print.

The scheduled workshop will cover various concepts of latent print development from Crime Scene to Database. Basic topics that will be covered include: uniqueness and persistence of fingerprints; deposition factors influencing quality of latent prints; developmental methods (including chemical reactions during developmental phase); preservation (dusting and lifting, cyanoacrylate fuming, porous/non-porous identification and development, adhesive tapes, imaging); and image enhancement on Photoshop and Fingerprint databases (AFIX Tracker).

The intervention will provide a basic understanding of latent identification, preservation and enhancement for comparison. The target group should be law enforcement officers working in crime scene units, who process or plan to process latent fingerprints, as well as prepare quality prints for database searches. It will be a hands-on practical course with latent print development, imaging and enhancement. Students will process crime scenes at the crime complex to discover latent prints, develop and preserve them.