

## Forward

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During the history of Forensic Document Examination, a multitude of individuals greatly contributed to the protocols, methods and procedures that have become a routine part of analysis. Effort has been made to give proper recognition to the authors of specific procedures in this manual however, in some instances the original source of forensic procedures has been lost in antiquity. For others, the general procedures belong to the public domain and are recorded in many basic references concerning Forensic Document Examination. Many of the procedures described in this manual have been adapted from standard laboratory practices, and the citation of thousands of references which deserve credit for aiding in the development of these procedures is neither practical nor possible. In addition, portions of this manual were adopted directly from procedures acquired from the U.S. Secret Service Forensic Services Division, Illinois State Crime Laboratory, TWGDOC (SWGDOC) Subcommittee for Standard Operating Procedures and Terminology and ASTM Standards. To all those scientists who have contributed to the knowledge of Forensic Document Examination contained herein, we do extend collective recognition and gratitude.

This manual is designed for the guidance of Questioned Document Section personnel who support investigations when documents or related items occur as physical evidence in a variety of alleged criminal activities or official investigations. The types of items that may be examined are as varied as the types of crimes that can be committed. The type of information that will be useful to an investigation and ultimate disposition of a case can vary greatly. As a result, most Forensic Document Examinations do not lend themselves to any one absolute procedure. Instead, the examiner must rely upon his/her training and experience to decide the best procedure for handling the evidence, the appropriateness of examinations and the best techniques to use. In addition, an examiner may use a non-routine procedure not specifically stated in this manual, provided all the following conditions are met:

1. The procedure used is based upon documented and scientifically accepted principles.
2. A notation is made on the worksheet indicating that the procedure followed is not specified in the manual.
3. The analyst also indicates on the work sheet why the particular procedure was selected over a procedure contained in this manual. Rationale must be detailed sufficiently to withstand close scrutiny by independent examiners.
4. The analyst provides documentation showing that the non-routine procedure had been properly validated per QM 5.4.
5. The non-routine procedure used will be recorded to a standard such that another scientist of similar skills and experience can understand fully the procedure used and the results obtained.