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Scientific Association of Forensic Examiners Standards

**Scope of Work of Forensic Document Examiners**

**1. Scope**

1.1 This guide provides a general description of the duties and responsibilities of a forensic document examiner, also known as a handwriting expert or handwriting examiner.

**2. Job Description**

2.1. The forensic document examiner uses the scientific method to perform examinations, comparisons, and evaluations of documents for the purpose of:

2.1.1. forming an opinion as to genuineness or nongenuineness;

2.1.2. revealing alterations, additions, deletions, or other indicators of forgery;

2.1.3. identifying or eliminating a specific writer or writers;

2.1.4. preparing reports as requested by a retaining party to explain the expert's findings;

2.1.5. testifying to aid the finder of fact to understand the expert's findings.

**3. General Duties**

3.1. Forensic document examination requires expertise in handwriting identification.

“Handwriting” includes cursive, hand printing, signatures, numerals, and other graphic expressions made by the human hand.

3.2. This application of handwriting examination does not include personality assessment or calligraphy.

3.3. Identification of typewriting or other forms of written communication may be required.

3.4. Assignments generally address the integrity of any written communication or record.

3.5. An examiner may be required to testify in criminal and civil trials in local, state, or federal courts.

3.5.1. Typical questions for examination encompass:

3.5.1.1. identification of handwriting;

3.5.1.2. establish the history of a document, which may include sequence of preparation, alterations, deletions or additions.

3.5.1.3. Information in documents may be obscured, damaged, or in other ways prove difficult to decipher.

3.5.1.4. it is the document examiner's responsibility to preserve and catalog any relevant physical evidence present on the documents under examination.

#### **4. Equipment Used**

4.1. Optical aids, such as stereo microscopes, imaging devices (cameras, scanners, etc.),

4.2. Lighting methods along the electromagnetic spectrum (ultraviolet, visible, infrared, etc.).

4.3. Electrostatic or other devices may be used to uncover indentations on paper.

4.4. Measuring devices.

#### **5. Keywords**

5.1.

#### **6. Referenced Documents**

6.1. SAFE Standards:

6.1.1. Safe Training Standard