



I.O.F.O.S. Recommendations for Quality

Assurance: FORENSIC ODONTOLOGY

REPORT

Working Group Background

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IOFOS recommendations edited February 2008 with advice from

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IF YOU FOLLOW THESE STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Black indicates required steps (standards).
- Blue indicates recommended steps (recommendations) and may be omitted or changed without further explanation.

GENERAL

1. The forensic odontology report is a legal document and shall fulfill:
 - (a) general requirements to fulfill the stated goals of the document; and
 - (b) specific requirements to comply with national laws.
2. The report shall be systematic and always end in a conclusion.
3. The report shall avoid or at least define technical terms so that it is understandable to the lay person.

4. A worksheet should support the report, documenting different stages of the investigation.

THE REQUEST

1. A request for odontology casework should be in writing. The report should: (a) inventory all information relevant to the case; (b) indicate questions to be answered; and (c) state all objectives and questions it will answer.

2. If permitted by Law, oral requests may be accepted, but should preferably be followed by a written request. The report can contain oral information however, ideally verifiable written information is more desirable.

3. In any case the prior authorization to proceed with casework shall be accurately verified (consent and/or authorizations of people/institutions involved, e.g.) and at least briefly recalled in the report.

THE REPORT

1. The report shall: (a) be written on official paper (your name, institution, address, telephone, e-mail etc); (b) be dated, contain the date of the request and the case number; (c) be an answer to the person or institution who made the request; (d) include the reference numbers and/or the relevant background information; (e) include sufficient substantiating facts and evidence to support the conclusions stated in the report; and (f) detail the examined material.

2. The report should indicate: (a) when and how the material was obtained; (b) what the material consisted of; (c) how the material was stored; (d) was the material marked in any way; (e) was the material returned or retained by the Forensic Odontologist; and (f) background information, that should be sufficiently recalled/summarized so that the report is able to stand alone and be understood without reading other documents.

3. When examining a living individual: (a) shall confirm the identity of the person by ID card with photo (if available); (b) the report shall state that a valid informed consent was obtained or a court order was

delivered to the individual before the examination; (c) the release/court order shall cover permission to perform all the procedures included in the examination; (d) the examination shall be performed in a legal and ethical manner; and (e) the report shall state if a third person assisted in the examination.

METHODS USED

1. The report shall: (a) describe the methods used to collect and examine findings in detail ; (b) if utilising a published method, cite reference(s); and (c) explain why the method was deemed eligible for the case and follow the most up-to-date and approved scientific protocols.

2. The report should include: (a) the justification for the adopted methodology; and (b) photographs that should be taken to document visual data.

RESULTS

1. The report shall: (a) state the findings of the examination; (b) state negative or inconclusive findings if relevant; (c) make sure you address the given questions; (d) Give results from supplementary investigations; and (e) indicate limitations and possible sources of bias.

2. The report should: (a) give results from calculations, etc; and (b) if permitted by Law, state findings outside the request if judged important to the case.

DISCUSSION

1. The report shall: (a) discuss the nature of the ascertainment and the question to be answered; (b) discuss the interpretation of the findings and results; and (c) state questions which could not be answered.

2. The report should: (a) discuss the implication in relation to the question to be answered; (b) discuss the uncertainties and limitations (probabilities, possibilities); (c) include an evaluation of the facts and data included in the report; and (d) include opinions and conclusions drawn from those facts and data.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The conclusions shall: (a) be clear and not lead to misunderstanding; and (b) answer the questions given in the request.

2. The conclusion should: (a) the conclusion is your honest opinion in the case and should start with "*according to my/our opinion and the result found*"; (b) the conclusion should state the certainty of the opinion and limitations; (c) if permitted by Law, author should state conclusions outside the request only if of great importance; (d) if more experts are charged by the same authority or party, report should be concluded after a decision meeting; and (e) conclusion should include disclaimer as : "*The opinions contained in this report are based upon the evidence presented to the author by the and is up to the date at the time the report was written. The author was unable to verify the accuracy of the depositions as well as any other background information or evidence. The author reserves the right to amend this report should additional information becomes available or the information provided proves inaccurate*".

MATERIAL AND DOCUMENTATION

1. The report shall: (a) include a record of the chain of custody of relevant evidentiary material; and (b) be submitted to the appropriate individuals and agencies.

2. The report should: (a) include a record stating the current location of relevant evidentiary material at the time of the report submission; and (b) a copy of the report should be retained by the author.

SIGNATURE

1. The report shall include: (a) date of the report completion; and (b) full name and valid signature of the author (handwritten or digital signature).

2. The report should: (a) include qualifications/position of the author; (b) if permitted by Law, authorities and parties who made the request, be countersigned by a second colleague who has read the report and agreed with the conclusion; (c) present qualifications of the second

colleague; (d) state the adherence to the IOFOS recommendations for quality assurance; and (e) state where copies of the report are sent and if the report is submitted digitally.