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# Minimum Guidelines for Facial Image Comparison Documentation

## 1. Scope

1.1. The purpose of this document is to provide minimum guidelines for facial image comparison documentation.

1.1.1. Documentation refers to any hard copy or electronic material that provides official information or serves as a record. Examples include, but are not limited to, notes, images with markups and annotations, narratives, worksheets, investigative lead or forensic reports, or any combination thereof.

1.2. This document does not discuss methods for how to conduct a facial image comparison, opinion scale(s), or details that may be agency specific.

## 2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*<sup>1</sup>

E3149 Standard Guide for Facial Image Comparison Feature List for Morphological Analysis

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<sup>1</sup> For referenced ASTM standards, visit [www.nist.gov/osac/astm-launch-code](http://www.nist.gov/osac/astm-launch-code), or the ASTM website, [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org), or contact ASTM Customer Service at [service@astm.org](mailto:service@astm.org). For Annual Book of ASTM.

14 2.2 *FISWG Standards:*<sup>2</sup>

15 FISWG Physical Stability of Facial Features of Adults

16 FISWG Guide for Role-Based Training in Facial Comparison

17 FISWG Standard Practice for Image Processing to Improve Automated Facial  
18 Recognition Performance

19 FISWG Facial Comparison Overview and Methodology Guidelines

20 2.3 *OSAC Standards:*<sup>3</sup>

21 OSAC Standard Framework for Developing Discipline Specific Methodology for ACE-  
22 V

23 **3. Terminology**

24 3.1 *Definitions:*

25 3.1.1 *forensic report, n*—a document whose intent it is to provide information to assist  
26 a trier of fact (e.g., judge or jury).

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<sup>2</sup> Available from Facial Identification Scientific Working Group (FISWG), <http://www.fiswg.org/documents>.

<sup>3</sup> Available from Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC), <https://www.nist.gov/organization-scientific-area-committees-forensic-science/digitalmultimedia-scientific-area-committee>.

27 3.1.2 *investigative lead report, n*—a document whose intent it is to provide  
28 information to operational personnel to assist them with meeting their objective (e.g.,  
29 investigator, detective, or analyst).

#### 30 **4. Significance and Use**

31 4.1 Documentation of a facial image comparison is generally performed by  
32 practitioners during a review or examination. Assessments are often undocumented due  
33 to the nature of the comparison.

34 4.2 These guidelines should be used as a reference by the practitioner to adequately  
35 record the facial image comparison process.

36 4.3 This document outlines the information needed to provide a clear understanding  
37 of the process conducted during a facial image comparison to the recipient.

38 4.4 The sections below provide recommended minimum guidelines for  
39 documentation intended to complement agency specific needs/procedures.

#### 40 **5. Items to Document for a Facial Image Comparison**

41 These items are not presented in order of relative importance or priority.

42 5.1 Case identifier

43 5.2 Date received

44 5.3 Date(s) searched/compared

- 45 5.4 Date of image capture (if available)
- 46 5.5 Requestor name and contact information
- 47 5.6 Relevant case information (if provided)
- 48 5.7 Organization conducting examination
- 49 5.8 Practitioner(s) name and contact information
- 50 5.9 Details and scope of the request (if provided)
- 51 5.10 Source of image(s)
- 52 5.11 File name/identifier/hash value of image(s) received
- 53 5.12 Indication of whether a facial recognition (FR) search was conducted and the  
54 results
- 55 5.13 Database searched, and any image galleries within the database (if relevant)
- 56 5.14 Disclaimer – agencies should include their own disclaimer identifying the  
57 limitations of the comparison method used and the intended usage of the report.
- 58 5.14.1 Agencies generating investigative leads from the use of a facial recognition  
59 system (FRS) shall include a disclaimer outlining the limitations and expected use of the  
60 lead provided.
- 61 5.14.2 See APPENDIX X1 – Facial Recognition System Comparison Disclaimers

62 5.15 Reference to comparison method used

63 5.16 Description of the disposition of both received and processed image(s), and

64 record of storage and retention

65 **6. Analysis**

66 6.1 Determination of image suitability for facial recognition search or facial

67 comparison

68 6.2 Image analysis documentation, to include, but not limited to, factors such as

69 lighting conditions, image resolutions, obstructions, and pose

70 6.3 Indicate whether or not images meet agency specific requirements for

71 comparison

72 6.4 Explanation for determination when images do not meet agency specific

73 requirements

74 6.5 Processed image(s) (if applicable)

75 6.6 File name/identifier of processed image(s) (if applicable)

76 6.7 Steps taken to process image(s) (e.g., cropping, rotating, adjusting exposure)

77 **7. Comparison**

78 7.1 Compare and document features of the face in each image, as defined in the  
79 ASTM E3149 Facial Image Comparison Feature List for Morphological Analysis

80 7.2 Observe and document effects of imaging conditions and physical stability of  
81 facial components or component characteristics

82 7.3 Provide a visual example of the compared facial images as per agency  
83 guidelines

## 84 **8. Evaluation**

85 8.1 Opinion scale used as per agency guidelines

86 8.2 Definitions or information and interpretation of what supports an opinion (if  
87 applicable)

88 8.3 Opinion reached to include reasoning

## 89 **9. Verification**

90 9.1 Verification in accordance with agency procedures

## 91 **10. Additional Information**

92 10.1 In accordance with an agency's data retention policies and quality management  
93 systems, additional information should be documented or saved (hardcopy/digital).

94 Examples include, but are not limited to:

95 10.1.1 Written and verbal correspondence (e.g., email, case notes, reports)

96 10.1.2 Received image(s)

97 10.1.3 Processed image(s)

98 10.1.4 Chain of custody

99 10.1.5 Software, algorithm, tools, or other technology utilized

100 10.1.5.1 Vendor name(s)

101 10.1.5.2 Version(s)

102 10.1.5.3 Specific configuration(s)

103 10.1.5.4 Date(s) implemented

104 10.1.5.5 Validation testing (if applicable)

105 10.1.6 Agency accreditation

106 10.1.7 Agency comparison method

107 10.1.8 Agency Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

108 10.1.9 Practitioner qualifications

109 10.1.10 Training: proficiency and competency testing and results

110 **11. Supplemental Information**



111 11.1 Supplemental Information should be provided to recipients of Facial  
112 Recognition System responses. Examples include, but are not limited to:

113 11.1.1 Facial Recognition Systems do not provide positive identification

114 11.1.2 Responses shall be used as an investigative lead only.

115 11.1.3 Any possible connection or involvement of any subject shall be determined  
116 through further independent investigation.

117 11.1.4 Other available evidence, including forensic shall be reviewed by operational  
118 personnel.

119 11.1.5 The content of the report is not sufficient for an arrest of any individual.

120 11.1.6 Administrative action shall not be taken based solely on the response from a  
121 Facial Recognition System (e.g., approval, denial, revocation).

122 11.1.7 Inserting this subject in a photo array shall follow applicable policies and  
123 laws.

124 11.1.8 This report shall be included in casework documentation.

125 11.1.9 Further dissemination of this investigative lead shall follow applicable policies  
126 and law.

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**APPENDIX**

**(Nonmandatory Information)**

**X1. FACIAL RECOGNITION SYSTEM COMPARISON DISCLAIMERS**

**X1.1 In a Law Enforcement Environment**

The result of a facial image comparison is not a positive identification. This is an investigative lead only. The arrest of an individual shall not be based solely on the investigative lead. Any possible connection or involvement of any subject shall be determined through additional investigation. Further dissemination of this information shall follow applicable policies and laws.

**X1.2 In an Administrative Environment**

The result of a facial image comparison is not a positive identification. This is an investigative lead only. Administrative actions shall not be taken based solely on the investigative lead. Any possible connection or involvement of any subject shall be determined through additional investigation. Further dissemination of this information shall follow applicable policies and laws.

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