



U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Laboratory Division

Handbook of Forensic Services

Revised 2003

Handbook of Forensic Services

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Editor

Colleen Wade

Associate Editor

Yvette E. Trozzi

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Introduction

The purpose of the *Handbook of Forensic Services* is to provide guidance and procedures for safe and efficient methods of collecting, preserving, packaging, and shipping evidence and to describe the forensic examinations performed by the FBI's Laboratory Division and Investigative Technology Division.

FBI Forensic Services

The successful investigation and prosecution of crimes require, in most cases, the collection, preservation, and forensic analysis of evidence. Forensic analysis of evidence is often crucial to determinations of guilt or innocence.

The FBI has one of the largest and most comprehensive forensic laboratories in the world. The forensic services of the FBI Laboratory Division and the Investigative Technology Division are available to the following:

- FBI field offices and Legal Attachés.
- U.S. attorneys, military tribunals, and other federal agencies for civil and criminal matters.
- State, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies in the United States

and territorial possessions for criminal matters.

All forensic services, including expert witness testimonies, are rendered free of cost; however, the following limitations apply:

- No examination will be conducted on evidence that has been previously subjected to the same type of examination. Exceptions may be granted when there are reasons for a reexamination. These reasons should be explained in separate letters from the director of the laboratory that conducted the original examination, the prosecuting attorney, and the investigating agency.
- No request for an examination will be accepted from laboratories having the capability of conducting the examination. Exceptions may be granted upon approval of the FBI Laboratory Assistant Director or a designee.
- No testimony will be furnished if testimony on the same subject and in the same case is provided for the prosecution by another expert.
- No request for an examination will be accepted from a nonfederal law enforcement agency in civil matters.