

Handling Packing and Forwarding of Questioned documents.

20.15 Questioned Documents

Questioned Material to be submitted

All questioned documents involved in a particular investigation should be submitted to the Laboratory for examination. This is important since questioned documents are identified by a comparison of similarities, plus an absence of divergences or dissimilarities. In order to make an identification, sufficient handwriting, typewriting, or other evidence must be available on which to base an opinion. This means that all questioned material is needed, as well as sufficient exemplars or known specimens.

Exemplars

It is very important to have sufficient handwriting exemplars for comparisons with the questioned document. One or two signatures on a suspect's driver's license or a draft card, in many cases, does not contain sufficient individual characteristics on which to base a conclusion. In some instances, such an examination may substantiate a suspicion and this should be considered as an investigation lead. To support this, it is necessary to obtain and examine additional standards.

... and employment applications, letters, booking card, and fingerprint card signatures are in most cases represent the individual's most normal writing. It is significant in many cases that these writings be of the same date as the questioned document. It is important to obtain request specimens from a suspect at the first interview, the suspect may be uncooperative at a later date.

The conditions surrounding the preparation of the questioned document should be duplicated as nearly as possible when the request exemplars are obtained. If yellow-lined paper and blue ink were used to produce the questioned document, the same or similar colour and type of paper and instrument should be used. If the suspect document is a threatening letter and the note is either handwritten or block lettered, the same style should be requested from the either. Have subjects write their names and addresses several times and brief personal histories. This should be removed and another sheet of paper furnished. Dictate the exact words and numbers, which appear in the questioned document; this should be done at least twelve times, removing the specimens from the writer's view as they are produced. If it is a cheque case, the specimens should be taken on blank cheques or slips of paper of the same / appropriate size. The number of specimens necessary for identification in any specific case cannot be determined; therefore, at least twelve specimens should be obtained for each questioned document.

... several copies of the questioned

- Questioned documents may be submitted personally or left in the previously described lockers at the Laboratory entrance.
- Such evidence sent to the Laboratory by mail must be a massive amount of material, it may be sent some other way, but the package must always be sealed.

Charred Documents

Where examination and decipherment of charred paper is involved, great care must be taken to prevent any additional crumbling or breaking apart of the burned material. Normally it should be placed on top of loose cotton in a box and delivered in person to the Laboratory. No matter how it is packaged, such material will be damaged if attempts are made to ship it by mail.

Other Questioned Document Evidence

In addition to handwriting and typewriting comparisons and decipherment of charred document, the Laboratory can conduct many other related examinations. These include, but are not limited, to:-

- Restoration or decipherment of altered, obliterated, or erased writing.
- Comparison of cheque protectors and rubber stamps with questioned printing.
- Identification of embossed or indented writing or typing.
- Examination of paper and commercially printed material, such as