

Evidence Submissions

It is strongly recommended that original documents be submitted for all examinations, if possible.

For signature questions, it is best to submit at least 15 to 20 normal course-of-business signature exemplars that were executed as close in time as possible to the questioned document(s). Originals are highly preferred but good photocopies may be acceptable. It is best to submit as much known writing as possible in order to establish the writer's range of variation.

For handwriting questions, it is necessary to have a sufficient quantity of handwriting that is comparable in style and letter combinations. For example, if the questioned entry is hand printed, then the exemplars must be hand printed. If the questioned entry is cursive, the exemplars must also be in cursive. Upper case letters must be compared to upper case letters and lower case letters must be compared to lower case letters.

In all cases, there must be enough examples of words and letter combinations in the known exemplars to what is found in the questioned document in order to conduct a meaningful examination. Forensic Document Examination Services uses the recommended terminology of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and The Scientific Working Group for Documents (SWGDOC) in expressing opinions resulting from handwriting examinations. The ASTM and SWGDOC Standards use a 9-point scale, ranging from Identification to Elimination. The scale is copyright protected. For more information, please visit the ASTM site discussing this scale at www.astm.org/Standards/E1658.htm.

If the examination of any questioned document is prohibited from being sent to the laboratory for analysis, on-site examinations can often be conducted.