



**BCI Questioned Documents Submission Policy
Effective 01/14/2019**

As part of BCI's on-going effort to effectively and efficiently assist law enforcement in Ohio, the Laboratory has adopted the following policies for all Questioned Document submissions:

PACKAGING REQUIREMENTS

Upon receipt, evidence items must be packaged to protect them from loss, cross transfer, cross contamination and/or deleterious change.

- Evidence submitted via email will not be accepted for examination.
- Small evidence items must be submitted in a minimum of ~ 5x7 package(s).
- Package questioned and known items separately. The package label should clearly indicate whether the contents are questioned or known items.
- Packaging should be labeled prior to placing evidence into it in order to avoid leaving indentations on the document evidence.
- Seals should be initialed with a marker, not a regular pen, to avoid leaving indentations on the document evidence.

LABORATORY REQUEST DETAILS

- I. Provide a summary narrative of the case facts. The synopsis should provide the following information:
 - How the evidence relates to the crime in question
 - To whom the evidence belongs
 - Where the evidence was located
- II. To accommodate timely results for all law enforcement agencies throughout Ohio, BCI works evidence in order of submission. Rush requests impede this process; therefore, they will be accepted on a limited basis. Criteria that may constitute a rush request include:
 - A significant public safety concern
 - Approaching jury trial proceedings.

Consult with the Questioned Documents Laboratory Supervisor with any rush request. Please provide as much notice as possible.

EVIDENCE ITEM ACCEPTANCE

- I. The original item of evidence or document should be submitted, when possible. If the original is not available, only first generation copies or high quality digital images will be accepted.
- II. **Cases for handwriting comparisons will not be accepted without sufficient standards.** However, question to question comparisons can be conducted upon request. The following are general guidelines for the submission of standards:

Questioned Writing	Number of Standards Recommended
Signatures	20 signatures of name in question
Short Sentence/Prescription	15-20 similar in content + extended writing
Extended Writing	4-5 pages continuous natural writing

- The standards should be written on the same type of document (i.e. check) with the same type of writing instrument and the same style (i.e. print to print or cursive to cursive) as the questioned writing.
- Digital BMV signatures are not sufficient reference standards

The Questioned Documents Unit is also available at (740)845-2615 to provide training regarding the recommended methods for the collection and preservation of standards and evidence.

We invite you to direct your questions concerning this policy to:

Mark Losko, Laboratory Supervisor
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