

Procedure for Reviewing Laboratory Reports

1.0 Purpose – To establish the procedure for reviewing Laboratory Reports.

2.0 Scope – This procedure applies to all employees who perform reviews on Laboratory Reports in the State Crime Laboratory (Laboratory).

3.0 Definitions

- **Administrative review** – A procedure that checks case file documentation and Reports for consistency with Laboratory policy and for editorial correctness.
- **Technical review** – An in-depth examination of analysis records and test Reports to ensure the validity of results and conclusions.

4.0 Procedure

4.1 Technical Reviews

4.1.1 Technical Review Specifications

Each technical review shall be conducted to ensure at least the following:

- Appropriate analyses have been conducted.
- Conformance with technical procedures and Laboratory policies and procedures.
- Conclusions of the reporting Forensic Scientist are reasonable, consistent with the documented data, and within the constraints of validated scientific knowledge.
- Accuracy of the Laboratory Report and that the data support the results and/or conclusions in the report.
- Proper qualifications in the Laboratory Report.
- Provision of all required information in the Laboratory Report
- Verifications have been documented.
- The technical language in the Laboratory Report is clear, accurate, and complete.

4.1.2 All Laboratory Reports and supporting analysis documentation shall be technically reviewed prior to release.

4.1.3 All casework documentation shall be considered in progress until the Forensic Scientist completes his/her work in Forensic Advantage (FA), the Laboratory's information management system. The Forensic Scientist's work on the case record shall be considered complete at the point the report is released in FA. Case records requiring a CODIS entry shall adhere to the Forensic Biology Section procedures.

4.1.4 Technical reviewers shall have been competency tested in the forensic discipline being reviewed. The FSM/Supervisor and/or technical leader shall designate Forensic Scientists who are authorized to perform technical reviews on the work authorization record.

4.1.5 Each Section Forensic Scientist Manager or Section Supervisor shall develop a method for assignment of reviews.

- 4.1.6 Manual calculations and data transfers shall be checked as part of the technical review. The completion and documentation of verifications shall be confirmed when such conclusions have been reached.
- 4.1.7 The technical review shall be documented in FA.
- 4.1.8 The technical review shall not be conducted by the Forensic Scientist or Laboratory employee who completed the work.
- 4.1.9 For Quality System purposes, the technical reviewer(s) and author are equally responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the technical aspects of the case record.

4.2 Administrative Reviews

4.2.1 Administrative Review Specifications

Each administrative review shall include at least the following:

- A review of the Laboratory Report for spelling and grammatical accuracy.
 - A review of all administrative and analysis records to ensure unique identification according to policies and procedures.
 - A review of the Laboratory Report to ensure that all required information from the Procedure of Reporting Results is included.
- 4.2.2 All Laboratory Reports and supporting documentation shall be reviewed administratively prior to release.
 - 4.2.3 An administrative reviewer shall check for adherence to Laboratory policy and procedure and shall proofread the Laboratory Report for clerical errors. In addition, the administrative reviewer shall ensure that language in the Laboratory Report is clear, accurate, and complete, and that the technical review has been conducted and documented.
 - 4.2.4 Each Forensic Scientist Manager or Section Supervisor shall designate who may conduct administrative reviews.
 - 4.2.5 The administrative review shall be documented in FA.
 - 4.2.6 The administrative review shall not be conducted by the Forensic Scientist or Laboratory employee who completed the work.
 - 4.2.7 Technical and administrative reviews may be combined as one process.

4.3 Review of Critical Findings

- 4.3.1 When an independent check of a critical finding is necessary, it shall be conducted by a qualified Forensic Scientist. The review shall be documented as a verification review to indicate the critical finding has been checked and agreed to by the reviewer.

- 4.3.2** If there is not a qualified employee within the Laboratory to confirm a critical finding, a deviation shall be requested in accordance with the Procedure for Authorizing Deviations to complete the independent check.

4.4 Verification Reviews of Test Results

- 4.4.1** Verification reviews must be conducted by an individual authorized to perform the testing.
- 4.4.2** A record of the verification shall be made identifying who performed the verification, date of verification, and the results of the verification.
- 4.4.3** When a verification review does not agree with the original test result, the discipline technical leader shall be consulted to determine the action to take. If the discipline technical leader is conducting the verification review, a third party senior scientist shall be consulted to determine the action to take.
- 4.4.4** The resolution of the action shall be recorded.

- 4.5 Timeframe for Review** - Reviews shall be completed within 20 business days from the request for review. The Forensic Scientist Manager or Section Supervisor may grant a time extension for the completion of a review for extenuating circumstances.

- 4.6 Case File Review for Testimony** - If a Laboratory employee is authorized to provide substitute testimony, the testifying employee shall be responsible for reviewing the case file prior to testifying. The case file review shall be documented on the Substitute Testimony Review and Results Authorization form. This form must be imported into the case record object repository once complete and published to the customer upon request.

- 4.7 Non-conformities** - A non-conformity discovered during a technical or administrative review shall be discussed with the Forensic Scientist. Resolution of any non-conformities shall be handled as provided in the Procedure for Corrective Action and Non-Conformities.

4.8 Conflict Resolution

- 4.8.1** If conflicts arise during the technical or administrative review of casework, the Forensic Scientists shall discuss the matter, refer to any applicable references, and attempt to resolve the disagreement. If resolution cannot be achieved, the Technical Leader and/or Forensic Scientist Manager shall be notified.
- 4.8.2** The Forensic Scientist Manager and a technically qualified third party shall be involved in the resolution process. Once a decision is rendered, it shall be clearly communicated to all parties involved and documented in the Laboratory case notes.

5.0 Records

- Documentation of technical and administrative reviews

6.0 Attachments - N/A

Revision History		
Effective Date	Version Number	Reason
06/01/2021	6	4.1.3 – Updated reference to Forensic Biology procedures 4.6 – Updated process for documenting the review of case file for substitute testimony