

CQR: Images Generated by the Laboratory

Introduction “Image technologies” refers to any system or method used to capture, store, process, analyze, transmit, or produce an image.

Such systems include but are not limited to film cameras, digital cameras, video devices, scanners, printers, and computers.

Original images An original image refers to a film negative or the initial image data obtained during the capture process of any digital or video technology.

5.8.4.4

All original images must be maintained unchanged (see *Storage of recording media containing original images*).

Copies or duplicates must be made if images are to be annotated or otherwise worked with for the case (see *Images as examination records*).

Recording media must not contain images from any unrelated case.

Recording media for original images

5.8.4.4

Original images will be archived on recording media suitable for long-term storage.

The analyst must verify the images were properly archived.

The following recording media are recommended because of their quality, durability, permanence, and reliability:

- film negatives
 - write-once Compact Disk Recordable (CD-R)
 - Digital Versatile Disk Recordable (DVD-R)
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Original images as evidence By definition, when evidence can only be recorded or collected by photography the photograph, negative, or digital file of the image becomes evidence.

5.8.4.4

Policy: All original images will be stored and tracked as *evidence*

Storage of recording media containing original images

5.8.4.4

Disks containing original images must be sealed in plastic cases. Negatives containing original images must be sealed in plastic protector sheets.

All seals must be initialed. See also *Labeling guidelines*.

NOTE: It is recommended that working images be stored on a separate CD, DVD, or memory card from the originals. However, if working and original images are stored in the same location, they must be clearly differentiated. See *Images as examination records*.

The recording media (CD, DVD, or negatives) and a description of its packaging (sealed case for CD's or DVD's or sealed plastic protector for negatives) are entered by the analyst into the laboratory's case tracking system as a new submission, but without initiating a chain of custody. A barcode label is printed and placed on the packaging.

The analyst then transfers the barcoded package to the Evidence Section. This establishes a chain of custody that must be maintained.

The initial chain of custody information should record the transfer from the analyst to the evidence clerk and from the evidence clerk to the appropriate storage location (CD file cabinet or negatives binder) within the Evidence Section.

Note: All CD's containing photographs generated from proficiency and competency tests will remain with the proficiency test report and will not be transferred to evidence.

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Images as examination records

Copies of original images may be used as working images. These images may be annotated and can be used, for example, to replace hand-drawn sketches, to compare evidence marks, or to record the location of excised samples.

These working images and their recording media, unless stored on a CD or DVD with original images (see above), become part of the examination records of the case.

CD's or DVD's placed in the examination records must be sealed in plastic protectors. Film prints must be securely attached with tape to a note page or placed in plastic protectors. Pages containing printed digital images are inserted into the case file (see *Labeling guidelines*, below).

If additional work is requested in a case, the working images may be used if they are sufficient for the analysis or the original images may be retrieved from evidence.

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Labeling guidelines

For all *original images*, the following information must be recorded with the images or in the laboratory examination records:

- laboratory case number
- analyst
- date the image was captured
- item number or description of the evidence or subject that is imaged, if appropriate
- image capture settings, if appropriate

CD's or DVD's must be labeled with the following information:

- laboratory case number
- analyst initials
- date created
- if a copy, then so designated

• *Note pages containing printed digital images* must be labeled with the following information:

- laboratory case number
- analyst initials
- date
- page number

Plastic protectors must be labeled with the following information:

- laboratory case number
 - analyst initials
 - date
 - page number, if inserted into the case file
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