CQR: Examination Records

Introduction

Examination records is the record of which procedures, standards, controls and instruments used, observations made, results of tests performed, charts, graphs, photos, and other documents generated which are used to support the examiner's conclusions.

4.13.2.1

Laboratory examination records

- is the permanent written record of the analyst's observations and activities
- the procedures, standards, controls, and instruments used
- provide the forum in which data and observations are analyzed, discussed, evaluated, and interpreted
- contains sufficient information to enable the tests to be repeated under conditions as close as possible to the original
- is used to review progress on the case and to plan future work

Forensic laboratory examination records are subject to scrutiny by the criminal justice community. Examination records could be reviewed by

- prosecution attorneys
- defense attorneys
- scientific experts
- juries
- courts

Guiding principle

Examination records is to be written with enough detail and clarity so that

- the analyst can understand the examination records even after considerable time has passed
- another analyst can
  - determine the methodology and procedures used to analyze evidence
  - review original data and observations
  - draw similar conclusions or interpretations

4.13.2.5
5.10.1

Laboratory examination records must be clear, concise, complete, and contain unambiguous statements.

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Clarity

Clarity in note keeping includes

- clear layout of the examination records
- clear descriptions of the observations and experiments
- legible penmanship

General examination records requirement
5.10.5

All conclusions, opinions, and interpretations must be supported by the examination records.

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Definition of examination records

4.13.2.4 supplemental

Examination records includes the following types of information:

- descriptions of the packaging (external and internal)
  - sealed or unsealed
  - other markings or information when appropriate
- preliminary descriptions of the evidence indicating submission numbers and item numbers, for example, 003-01: one folding-type knife, 005-05: seven strands of hair
- detailed descriptions of the evidence, such as
  - measurements
  - location of sampling
  - brand names
  - clothing sizes
  - color
  - condition, for example, torn, soiled
  - weight
  - aggregate form, for example, powder, chunks
  - descriptions of stains, for example, size, shape, color, texture, location
  - areas of interest/damage/blood deposition/bullet hole

5.10.3.2.b
5.10.3.2.c

- diagrams and copies of original images (working images)
- tests conducted, including information on
  - standards and controls
  - instrument operating parameters

5.9.1.1
4.13.2.5.2

- charts, graphs, spectra, and printouts
- observations and results of examinations
- estimate of the uncertainty of measurement, where applicable

5.10.3.1.a

- any additional information which may be required by
  - specific methods
  - customers
  - groups of customers
  - EXAMPLE: An example of additional information is the DMV analyst declaration in the alcohol report.

5.10.3.1.b
5.10.3.1.e

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Information excluded from case records

The following ISO/IEC 17025 (2005) requirements are excluded from case records:

ISO Requirement	Reason for Exclusion
5.10.2.k: *…where relevant, a statement to the effect that the results relate only to the items tested or calibrated.*	It is implicit within the context of the case records that the test results relate only to the items tested.
5.10.2.g: *…the date of receipt of the test or calibration item(s) where this is critical to the validity and application of the results…*	Chain of custody document showing the date of receipt of the evidence is recorded in the laboratory's case management system and available on demand. This document may or may not be included in the case record.

5.10.2.k

5.10.2.g

Sampling plan

The criteria addressing sampling plans are not applicable to the laboratory since, effective January 2012, the laboratory terminated quantitative analysis of controlled substance samples.

5.10.2.f
5.10.2.h
5.10.3.2.a
5.10.3.2.d
5.10.3.2.e