

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

**4.1.2** 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 Procedure for Documentation and Review.

**4.1.3** The Section/Unit Technical Leader shall issue a memo to the Section Forensic Scientist Manager/Supervisor stating that a particular Forensic Scientist has the training, experience, and qualifications necessary to perform technical reviews. The FSM/Supervisor shall then designate that the Forensic Scientist is authorized to perform technical reviews.

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

#### **4.1.5 Technical Reviewers**

- Ensure the appropriate analyses have been conducted.
- Ensure the conclusions of the reporting Forensic Scientist are reasonable, consistent with the documented data, and within the constraints of validated scientific knowledge.
- Confirm that verifications have been documented.
- Ensure that technical language in the Laboratory Report is clear, accurate, and complete.
- Ensure there is sufficient supporting documentation.

**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 All Laboratory Reports and supporting documentation shall be reviewed administratively prior to release.
  - 4.2.2 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.
  - 4.2.3 Each Forensic Scientist Manager or Section Supervisor shall designate who may conduct administrative reviews.
  - 4.2.4 The administrative review shall be documented in FA.
  - 4.2.5 The administrative review shall not be conducted by the Forensic Scientist or Laboratory employee who completed the work.
  - 4.2.6 Technical and administrative reviews may be combined as one process.
- 4.3 **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.
- 4.4 **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. This case file review shall be documented in the comment field of the subpoena entry.
- 4.5 **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.

## 4.6 Conflict Resolution

- 4.6.1 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.
- 4.6.2 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**

<b>Revision History</b>		
Effective Date	Version Number	Reason
09/17/2012	1	Original Document
02/01/2013	2	4.3 - timeframe for Review was added; 4.1.2 - Modified to exempt CODIS entry from this requirement; 4.1.3 - Deleted due to redundancy with 4.1.2
02/15/2013	3	4.1.3, 4.2.3, and 4.3 - added Section Supervisor; 4.1.7 and 4.2.5 - added Laboratory employee
08/29/2014	4	4.1.2 - clarified when a case record is complete; 4.1.3 - clarified training and authorization of technical reviewers; moved part of 4.1.3 to create 4.1.4; added 4.1.9 - technical reviewer accountability