

## CHAPTER 9

### DOCUMENT EVIDENCE

#### Types of Examinations

##### *Handwriting or Hand Printing*

Under the proper conditions, it is possible to determine whether a particular person did or did not write or print a particular document or signature.

##### *Printing Devices*

It is usually possible to determine if a particular check writer, adding machine, typewriter, photocopier, or similar machine were used. However, computer printers are not typically identifiable.

##### *Stamping Devices*

Often, an ink-using stamping device has enough individual characteristics to identify it as having made a particular impression.

##### *Examination of Inks and Papers*

Different inks can be distinguished from one another, but it is not possible to identify a particular pen as producing a writing. The success in comparing papers depends upon the uniqueness of the materials in question.

##### *Miscellaneous Document Problems*

The success of working with obliterations, restorations, alterations, indented writing etc., depends upon the circumstances in the individual case. Consult the laboratory for information on particular cases.

#### Preparation of Evidence for Submission

##### *Markings*

Do not mark document evidence in any manner. Make notes as to pertinent contents or identifying information rather than marking on the document. Mark containers before inserting documents. If the document is inserted first, indented writing may be placed on the document. Some officers, in making their own preliminary examinations, circle or underline specific details in questioned documents. This practice not only weakens the value of a document as evidence, but often damages the physical evidence it contains.

### *Latent Prints*

Do not process the document for latent prints. If this is desired, notify the examiner when submitting the document and this will be done in the laboratory. Include information as to whether the document should remain undamaged.

### *Submit in Condition Found*

Submit the document in the condition found; do not fold, staple or otherwise change the condition of the document as this may alter factors that are a part of document examination. The document should not be subjected to any testing before submission. Be cautious about copying, as some machines submit the document to heat and/or pressure.

### *Packaging*

Place all documents in a paper envelope as soon as possible to prevent alteration.

### *Protection of Indented Writing*

Indented writings are usually invisible to the naked eye and may prove or disprove factors such as identity or the chronology of a certain writing. They are commonly found on tablet-type specimens, usually with a glue and/or fiber stripe on one side. Do not attempt to make visible the indented writing by use of lead pencils, fingerprint powder, ashes, etc.

### *Charred Documents*

Handle them as little as possible as they are very fragile and easily damaged. The most practical procedure is to submit them in the container found, if possible. If not, place carefully in a sturdy box using absorbent cotton under them. Charred documents must be hand delivered to the laboratory. Do not subject them to rough handling. Do not mail charred documents.

### **What to Submit**

- **Original Questioned Documents.** When working with questioned documents, it is preferable to have the original specimens as some of the characteristics and points used for comparison do not show up on copies.
- **Comparison Samples.** See below for information on collecting handwriting, hand printing and typewriting standards.
- **Samples of Materials.** Investigation frequently reveals that the subject had access to paper, pens, envelopes, typewriter ribbons, carbon paper, etc., similar to those used for producing the questioned document. Submit samples of these types of materials.

## Collection of Standards for Handwriting and Printing

### *Verification of Standards*

In order to examine a questioned document for authenticity, it must be compared with specimens that have been verified as written by the person in question. These verified specimens are called standards. This verification is established by one of the following:

- Acknowledged by the writer.
- Testimony of a witness to the writing.

### *Types of Standards Needed*

Obtain standards of both left- and right-handed writing. Hand printing is of little value for comparison with cursive handwriting and vice versa. The standards must be of the same type as the questioned document. After normal standards are obtained, request the subject to include, in other samples, any outstanding characteristics observed in the questioned items, such as backhand (slanting to left) writing and different capital letters.

### *Avoiding Disguise*

In obtaining specimens of handwriting to compare with questioned writing, the important factor is to obtain standards that are free from all attempts at disguise. No one can completely disguise his writing; an individual cannot be aware of all of his writing habits. Even when disguise is attempted, it can often be penetrated if sufficient sample material is properly obtained. It is difficult to maintain all the elements of a disguise throughout an extensive sample.

### *Dictate the Specimens*

Ask the subject to write the actual text in question. Dictate the material, do not permit the subject to copy directly from the questioned document. Some persons are apt to copy the style as well as the content of the questioned article instead of writing naturally. If the writer wishes to disassociate himself from the questioned article, he may avoid forms, spellings and other details that would be of use to the examiner.

Dictate the same text at least five times, removing each page as it is written so that any disguising forms or styles must be reproduced from memory. Dictate the first specimen with absolutely no effort made to hurry the writer. Increase the speed in the following specimens until in the third sample the subject is writing as fast as possible without scrawling to keep up. This is done to assist in avoiding disguise. In some instances it may be advisable to have the material written again on another day. The subject might forget the disguises in the earlier sample.

### *Duplicate Conditions*

Duplicate, as closely as possible, the writing conditions of the questioned document. Give the writer paper of the same size, quality and form (line or unlined), as was used for the questioned document. Provide a writing implement similar to that used in the questioned document (ballpoint pen, stub or fine point pen, pencil with soft or hard lead). If possible, the writing implement, paper and ink used in preparing the questioned document should be used for the standard.

If checks are involved, take the sample on voided blank checks from the same bank, or on checks as similar as possible. If these are not available, use narrow strips of paper similar in size and quality, lined in the manner of a check. Have all writing reproduced, including material on both sides of the check. Submit five to 10 such specimens for each questioned check. When only the endorsement is questioned, see the procedure for signatures.

### *Signature Samples*

When only verification of a signature is desired, it is usually relatively easy to obtain genuine known signatures. Public records (voting records, deeds, license applications, applications for utility service and employment records) are all excellent sources of genuine signatures where probably no attempt at disguise was made. Genuine cancelled checks are also an excellent source. Submit 20 to 25 of these known signatures to make a valid comparison. Give preference to those samples written nearest the date of the questioned signature.

### *Make Notes*

Make notes about happenings while the specimens are being obtained and convey this information to the examiner. Note the subject's actions while writing; that is, does he appear to write freely or carefully, is he nervous, etc. Note instructions given to the writer while preparing the standards; right or left hand, backhand, etc.

Include information with regard to serious illness or other circumstances that might affect any of the samples submitted, questioned or standard. Convey all of this information to the document examiner.

### *Marking of Standards*

Each page of the standards must be numbered (in order written), dated, and initialed by the officer obtaining the specimens. Make all markings where they will not interfere with the sample material. Be sure the writer signs and dates standards.

### *Additional Standards*

As with signatures, other non-request specimens written by the parties at about the same period of time as the questioned document may be of value. You must be able to prove that the writing is actually that of the person in question for the samples to be used as standards.

Also obtain standards for people involved other than the suspect, including the **alleged victim**.

## Sources of Handwriting Specimens

Typical Sources of handwriting specimens include:

1. Account books
2. Administrator's reports
3. Affidavits
4. Agreements
5. Assignments
6. Autographs
7. Automobile insurance applications
8. Automobile license applications
9. Automobile title certificates
10. Bank deposit slips
11. Bank safe deposit entry slips
12. Bank savings withdrawal slips
13. Bank signature cards
14. Bank statements, receipts for
15. Bank and trust company loans
16. Bible entries
17. Bills of sale
18. Bonds
19. Books, signatures of owner in
20. Building "after hours" registers
21. Building permits
22. Business license applications
23. Charity pledges
24. Checkbook stubs
25. Checks, including endorsements
26. Church pledges
27. Complaints (legal)
28. Convention registration books
29. Contracts
30. Cooking recipes
31. Corporation papers
32. Criminal records

33. Credit applications
34. Credit cards
35. Deeds
36. Deeds of trust
37. Depositions
38. Diaries
39. Dog license applications
40. Drafts
41. Drive-it-yourself applications
42. Driver's license applications and tests
43. Druggist's poison registers
44. Employment applications
45. Envelopes
46. Express receipts
47. Fingerprint cards
48. Fishing license
49. Funeral attendance register
50. Gas service applications
51. Gasoline mileage records
52. Gate records at defense plants
53. Greeting cards
54. Hospital admissions forms
55. Hotel and motel guest registers
56. Hunting licenses
57. Identification cards
58. Insurance forms
59. Installment payments
60. Inventories
61. Leases, real property
62. Letters, personal and business
63. Library cards and applications
64. Light company applications
65. Life insurance applications
66. Loan applications
67. Mail orders

68. Manuscripts
69. Marriage records
70. Membership cards and applications
71. Memoranda of all kinds
72. Merchandise receipts
73. Military papers
74. Mortgages
75. Newspaper advertisement copy
76. Notes
77. Occupational writings
78. Package receipts
79. Parent's signatures on report cards
80. Partnership papers
81. Pawn tickets
82. Passports
83. Payroll receipts
84. Pension applications
85. Permit applications
86. Petitions, referendums, etc.
87. Photograph albums
88. Pleadings
89. Police reports
90. Postal cards
91. Power company applications
92. Probate court papers
93. Promissory notes
94. Property damage reports
95. Receipts for rent, etc.
96. Registered mail return receipts
97. Registration for voting
98. Releases of mortgages
99. Rent receipts
100. Rental contracts for equipment
101. Reports

102. Retail store sales slip
103. School and college papers
104. Social security cards and papers
105. Special delivery letters
106. Sport and game score cards
107. Stock certificates, endorsements on
108. Surety bond applications
109. Tax estimates and returns
110. Telegram copy
111. Telephone service applications
112. Time sheets
113. Traffic tickets
114. Transcribed testimony (signed)
115. Voting registration records
116. Water company service applications
117. Wills
118. Workers' compensation papers

## **Collection of Standards for Typewriting**

### ***Submit the Typewriter***

If possible, submit the typewriter in question, and the examiner will take the necessary specimens.

### ***Amount of Specimen***

If the typewriter cannot be submitted, obtain samples of the entire keyboard in both upper and lower cases. If the document is short, copy it entirely; if long, copy all headings and about 10 lines of the body of the document. Take several specimens, varying the pressure and speed.

### ***Single-Use Ribbon Machines***

With carbon ribbon machines or others with single-use ribbons, be sure to secure the ribbon. The original typing may still be on that ribbon.

### ***Making the Specimen***

Make samples with the ribbon and also direct carbon specimens. That is, remove the ribbon or set the machine on the stencil position and place a fresh piece of carbon paper **over** white paper and type directly onto the carbon paper.

### *Identification of the Specimen*

Initial each sheet on the back and date the specimens. Record the make and serial number of the machine.

### *Memory Typewriters*

Be cautious in dealing with typewriters with memory cells. Take standards of the memory cell contents before unplugging the typewriter. When unplugged, certain models will erase the memory contents.