



Designation: E 2289 – 03

Standard Guide for Examination of Rubber Stamp Impressions¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide provides procedures that should be used by forensic document examiners (E 444) for examinations and comparisons involving rubber stamps and their impressions.

1.2 These procedures are applicable whether the examination(s) and comparison(s) is of questioned and known items or of exclusively questioned items.

1.3 These procedures include evaluation of the sufficiency of the material available for examination.

1.4 The particular methods employed in a given case will depend upon the nature and sufficiency of the material available for examination.

1.5 This guide may not cover all aspects of particularly unusual or uncommon examinations.

1.6 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory requirements prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

E 444 Descriptions of Scope of Work Relating to Forensic Document Examiners²

E 1732 Terminology Relating to Forensic Science²

E 2195 Terminology Relating to Forensic Document Examination²

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of terms in this guide, refer to Terminology E 1732 and Terminology E 2195.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *coincidental peripheral printing, n*—printing resulting from an impression of unintended printing areas, often on the periphery, of a stamp. This may be due to the manufacturing process or the stamping technique.

3.2.2 *rubber stamp, n*—any of a wide variety of hand printing devices made of many materials not necessarily rubber. Syn.—*hand stamp, cachet*.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 The procedures outlined here are grounded in the generally accepted body of knowledge and experience in the field of forensic document examination. By following these procedures, a forensic document examiner can reliably reach an opinion concerning whether two or more impressions have a common origin or if a rubber stamp impression was created by a specific rubber stamp.

5. Interferences

5.1 Items submitted for examination may have inherent limitations that can interfere with the procedures in this guide. Limitations should be noted and recorded.

5.2 Limitations can be due to submission of non-original documents, limited quantity or comparability, or condition of the items submitted for examination (for example, impressions made with over-inked or inadequately inked stamps, partially imprinted impressions, or variations in surface texture). Such features are taken into account in this guide.

5.3 The results of prior storage, handling, testing, or chemical processing (for example, for latent prints) may interfere with the ability of the examiner to see certain characteristics. Whenever possible, document examinations should be conducted prior to any chemical processing. Items should be handled appropriately to avoid compromising subsequent examinations (for example, with clean hand coverings).

5.4 Consideration should be given to the possibility that a rubber stamp can be manufactured which duplicates the impressions of another stamp, and that various forms of simulations, imitations, and duplicates of rubber stamps or rubber stamp impressions can be generated by computer and other means.

6. Equipment and Requirements

6.1 Appropriate light source(s) of sufficient intensity to allow fine detail to be distinguished.

NOTE 1—Natural light, incandescent or fluorescent sources, or fiber optic lighting systems are generally utilized. Transmitted illumination, side lighting, and vertical incident lighting have been found useful.

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E30 on Forensic Sciences and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E30.02 on Questioned Documents.

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 14.02.