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Standard Practice for Collection and Preservation of Information and Physical Items by a Technical Investigator¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E1188; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers guidelines for the collection and preservation of information and physical items by any technical investigator pertaining to an incident that can be reasonably expected to be the subject of litigation.

~~1.2 For additional standards promulgated by ASTM Committee E-30, see Practices E620, E678, E860, and E1020.~~

~~1.3~~

1.2 This practice recommends generally accepted professional principles and operations, although the facts and issues of each situation require consideration, and frequently involve matters not expressly dealt with herein. Deviations from this practice should be based on specific articulable circumstances.

1.3 This practice offers a set of instructions for performing one or more specific operations. This standard cannot replace knowledge, skill or ability acquired through appropriate education, training, and experience and should be used in conjunction with sound professional judgment.

1.4 *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 limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

~~2.1 ASTM Standards:~~

~~E620 Practice for Reporting Opinions of Scientific or Technical Experts~~

~~E678 Practice for Evaluation of Scientific or Technical Data~~

~~E860 Practice for Examining And Preparing Items That Are Or May Become Involved In Criminal or Civil Litigation~~

~~E1020 Practice for Reporting Incidents that May Involve Criminal or Civil Litigation~~

3. Significance and Use

~~3.1 This~~ 2.1 This practice is intended for use by any technical investigator when investigating an incident that can be reasonably expected to be the subject of litigation. The intent is to obtain sufficient information and physical items to discover evidence associated with the incident and to preserve it for later analysis.

3.2 The 2.2 The quality of evidence may change with time, therefore, special effort should be taken to capture and preserve evidence in an expeditious manner. This practice sets forth guidelines for the collection and preservation of evidence for further analysis.

3.3 Evidence that has been collected and preserved shall be identified with, and be traceable to, the incident. This practice sets forth guidelines for such procedures.

4.3. Procedure

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~~3.1~~ 3.1 *Documentary Information*—Collect information related to events and conditions occurring before, during, or after the incident. Documentary information may be held by any entity associated with the incident. Make a broad search to identify documents and, where possible, collect them. Obtain statements as early as feasible from all individuals associated with the incident and recovery activity.

~~4.2~~ 4.2 *Physical Evidence*—Obtain and preserve physical items as early as possible. Plan the investigation to protect physical evidence significant to the incident. The plan should consider the possibility of identity loss, physical loss, deterioration or

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E30 on Forensic Sciences and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E30.11 on Interdisciplinary Forensic Science Standards.

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