

**Open letter of response**  
to the  
**National Academy of Sciences Report**  
from the  
**Scientific Working Group on Shoeprint and Tire Tread Evidence**

March 2009

The Scientific Working Group on Shoeprint and Tire Tread Evidence (SWGTTREAD) has prepared the following response to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report entitled *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*.

The forensic examination of footwear and tire tread evidence is an established discipline with a long history of providing sound and reliable information to the judicial system.

As a forensic discipline we continually strive to advance our knowledge base and capabilities. Consequently, we have reviewed and appreciate the comments set forth in the NAS report as they relate to footwear and tire tread evidence. It is our hope that this report will lead to mandated standards, additional research and increased funding that will further strengthen and advance the science of forensic footwear and tire track evidence.

Attaining these desired goals requires direct involvement of experienced and certified forensic practitioners. It has been our experience that lack of collaboration results in misdirection of resources and research that is not applicable. Although this report identifies areas for improvement, it also illustrates that some misinformation does occur without sufficient direct dialogue between the academic and practicing scientific communities.

A section of the NAS report (prepublication copy pages 5-14 through 5-18) directly addresses footwear and tire track evidence. Technical inaccuracies and misrepresentations of information have been noted in this section of the report. In an effort to provide a clear and accurate picture of this discipline and to enable viable direction for the future, the following documents have been prepared:

**Current Status of the Forensic Footwear and Tire Tread Examination Discipline** (document 1)

**Identification and Clarification of Inaccuracies in the NAS Report** (document 2)

**Suggestions for the Advancement of the Discipline of Forensic Footwear and Tire Tread Evidence** (document 3)

**SWGTTREAD 2007 Input to the National Academy of Science** (document 4)