

## **Suggestions for the Advancement of the Discipline of Forensic Footwear and Tire Tread Evidence**

Currently there is no enforced standard for minimal education and training for those tasked with the collection of footwear and tire track evidence at crime scenes. Likewise, there are no enforced standards for minimal education and training for those tasked with the examination of footwear and tire track evidence.

**Recommendation:** Mandate that minimum education and training requirements are met across the U.S. prior to the collection or examination of shoe and tire impression evidence.

Currently there are no standards for materials or equipment for the collection of footwear and tire track evidence.

**Recommendation:** Define and require materials and equipment that meet minimum performance standards.

Currently there are serious deficiencies for dedicated funding for training, research, materials and personnel. This results in a loss or diminished value of evidence, impedes the advancement of the science and hinders recruitment and retention of qualified and experienced examiners.

**Recommendation:** Dedicate sufficient funds to the specific areas of training, materials and equipment, research and development and for the establishment of career paths and other incentives to retain experienced personnel.

Currently there is no mandated level of competency for forensic footwear and tire track examiners required to opine on this evidence in a court of law.

**Recommendation:** Mandate an acceptable level of forensic footwear and tire track training, experience and proficiency, and require certification (upon eligibility) to qualify as an expert in this discipline in a court of law.

Currently there are no mandated standards for procedures, terminology or range of conclusions for the collection, examination or testimony of footwear and tire track examiners.

**Recommendation:** Establish and mandate standards for procedures, terminology or range of conclusions for the collection, examination or testimony of footwear and tire track examiners.

Currently there is no oversight board or committee comprised of certified, experienced and qualified forensic footwear and tire tread examiners who have the authority to enforce the aforementioned recommendations.

**Recommendation:** An oversight board or committee comprised of certified, experienced and qualified forensic footwear and tire tread examiners should be established to design, administrate and enforce the aforementioned recommendations.

*“Proficiency testing for examiners of impression evidence is available through Collaborative Testing Service, Inc., but the proficiency tests for footwear impressions include samples that are either a match or not a match<sup>49</sup>—that is, none of the samples included in the tests have the sort of ambiguities that would lead an experienced examiner to an “inconclusive” conclusion.”*

**Comment:** We concur that the CTS proficiency tests could be improved. CTS is the only test provider approved by the accrediting body for forensic laboratories. CTS footwear tests do include the possible response of inconclusive and this has been an appropriate response in past tests.