

	American Association for Laboratory Accreditation	
	R318 - Specific Requirements: Forensic Examination Accreditation Program - Inspection	Document Revised: October 14, 2015
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R318 - Specific Requirements: Forensic Examination Accreditation Program - Inspection

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Introduction

The American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) is a non-profit, nongovernmental, public service, membership organization dedicated to operating a nationwide, broad spectrum accreditation system. Included in this system is the accreditation of inspection bodies to the international standard ISO/IEC 17020.

Inspection bodies perform such functions as the examination of materials, products, components, assemblies, cargoes and consignments, usually for compliance with specified criteria. For the purposes of this document, forensic inspection is defined as the examination of an item or location and, on the basis of professional judgment, the determination of conformity with proposed events or known conditions.

Activities performed by crime scene units include but are not limited to:

- The evaluation and documentation of a scene;
- The collection of evidence;
- The transport and storage of evidence;
- The inspection of evidence for compliance with known samples (e.g. bullet/cartridge case comparison, fingerprint comparison);
- The submission of evidence to accredited testing laboratories for analysis; and
- The determination of events based on inspection and testing results (e.g. scene reconstruction).

A2LA recognizes the very close relationship between inspection, sampling, testing and measurement yet understands that inspection includes a variety of activities not covered in testing laboratory accreditation. For the purposes of accreditation, measurements that are used to assist in documenting the inspected location or item and tests or processes that are used to assist in the identification, visualization and collection of forensic evidence may be listed on the inspection body's Scope of Accreditation. All other testing must be assessed to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025 and be listed under a separate Scope of Accreditation.

1 Scope

This document describes the requirements for forensic inspection organizations seeking A2LA accreditation.

All organizations seeking accreditation for forensic inspection must meet the general requirements of ISO/IEC 17020:2012.

When tests and measurements are involved as part of the inspection process and measurement traceability is required, *P113 - A2LA Policy on Measurement Traceability for Life Sciences Testing and Forensic Conformity Assessment Bodies* applies.

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Organizations seeking accreditation for forensic inspection must also meet A2LA policy and requirements documents:

R105 - Requirements When Making Reference to A2LA Accredited Status

R102 – Conditions for Accreditation

R301 – General Requirements – Accreditation of ISO/IEC 17020 Inspection Bodies

This document describes additional accreditation requirements specifically applicable to organizations performing forensic inspection.

An inspection body which is engaged in testing, measurement or sampling work may apply for accreditation for this work concurrently with its application for accreditation for inspection. Additional information and application document for the forensic testing and inspection programs can be found at www.A2LA.org/forensic.

1.1 References

R105 - Requirements When Making Reference to A2LA Accredited Status

P113 – A2LA Policy on Measurement Traceability for Life Sciences Testing and Forensic Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs)

R102 – Conditions of Accreditation

ILAC G19:08/2014, Modules in a Forensic Science Process

R301 – General Requirements: Accreditation of ISO/IEC 17020 Inspection Bodies

2 Definitions

- 2.1 For the purposes of these requirements, the relevant terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC 17000, the VIM, and ISO/IEC 17000 apply. As used herein the following terms shall have the meanings specified:
- 2.2 **Administrative Review** – An evaluation of the report and supporting documentation for consistency with organization policies and for editorial correctness.
- 2.3 **Court Statement** – A written report of the results and interpretations of forensic tests/examinations submitted to court. Such reports may be in a format prescribed in legislation.

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- 2.4 Examiner/Analyst – An individual who conducts and/or directs the inspection of scenes of crime or submitted items, interprets data, reaches conclusions and testified in court.
- 2.5 Forensic Inspection – The examination of an item or location and on the basis of professional judgment the determination of their conformity with proposed events or known conditions.
- 2.6 Forensic Science – The examination of scenes of crime, recovery of evidence, examination of evidence, interpretation of findings and presentation of the conclusions reached for intelligence purposes or for use in court.
- 2.7 Known samples – Those samples whose identity or type is established
- 2.7.1 Exemplar¹ – A specimen of physical evidence collected from a known origin
- 2.7.2 Control¹ – A material of established origin that is used to evaluate the origin of a test or comparison
- 2.8 Objective Test – A test which, having been demonstrated and validated, is under control so it can be demonstrated that all appropriately trained staff will obtain the same results within defined limits. These defined limits relate to expressions of degrees of probability as well as numerical values.
- 2.9 Physical Evidence – Items collected or submitted for examination in relation to a crime or criminal act.
- 2.10 Reference Collection – A collection of stable materials, substances, objects or artifacts of known properties or origin that may be used in the determination of the properties or origins of unknown items.
- 2.11 Technical Review – An evaluation of reports, notes, data, and other documents to ensure an appropriate and sufficient basis for the scientific conclusions. This review is conducted by a second qualified individual.

3 Specific Requirements

Along with ISO/IEC 17020, the specific requirements for this Forensic Examination program are found in *C318 - Specific Checklist: Forensic Examination Accreditation*

¹ ASTM Standards, ASTM E 1732, Standard Terminology Related to Forensic Science

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Program – Inspection. Applicant laboratories must at a minimum meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17020, C318 and all applicable A2LA policy and requirement documents as specified in Section 1 of this document.

REVISION HISTORY

DATE	REVISION
January 11, 2013	- Updated ISO/IEC 17020 references to 2012 version and removed references to ILAC/IAF A4.
March 25, 2013	- Introduction was revised to clarify the functions of a forensic inspection unit.
October 14, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document identification number changed from R309 to R318 for consistency with the associated checklist (C318). - Revised sections 1 and 1.1 to remove P102 and replace with P113. (traceability policy). - Revised sections 1 and 1.1 to remove P101 and replace with R105. (advertising requirements). - Revised section 1.1 to update reference to ILAC G19 to current version. - Updated font and header in document to meet current format requirements.