

## Standard for Scene Investigation and Reconstruction— Foundational Principles



### WHAT IS AN AAFS STANDARD FACTSHEET?

The AAFS produces clear, concise, and easy-to-understand factsheets to summarize the contents of technical and professional forensic science standards on the OSAC Registry. They are not intended to provide an interpretation for any portion of a published standard.

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STANDARD?

This standard provides requirements and recommendations for forensic scene practitioners involved in scene investigation and reconstruction to establish a framework for expected behavior and decision-making.

Following these foundational principles, the scene practitioner strives to locate, document, collect, and preserve items of potential evidentiary value, and the reconstructionist uses information gathered to develop or eliminate possible explanations of how an incident occurred.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS?

This standard promotes consistency and reliability in scene investigation and reconstruction practices.

Evidence that has been collected and documented following these requirements can assist criminal investigators, lawyers, and triers-of-fact with understanding what was collected, where it was collected from, how it was collected, and what condition it was in when it was collected.



### HOW IS THIS STANDARD USED, AND WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS?

This standard sets forth requirements for scene practitioners in the areas of:

- Legal Considerations
- Personnel Safety
- Scientific Reliability and Validity
- Preserving Context
- Maintaining Evidence Integrity
- Transparency

Acknowledging the unique position of scene practitioners, this standard addresses the foundational principle of managing bias. Recommendations are provided related to the type of information that may be provided to a scene practitioner and the need for them to remain open to all hypotheses and potential evidence in their work.

This need to continually evaluate how to proceed is further supported by a recommendation to consider all of the topics — legal considerations through mitigating bias — when making decisions before, during, and after a scene is processed.