

Forensic Science Practitioner Training, Continuing Education, and Professional Development Programs



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?

Forensic science service providers (FSSPs) establish training programs designed to achieve competency in targeted disciplines. This standard provides general foundational requirements for the training, continuing education, and professional development of forensic science practitioners (FSPs) and an annex with discipline-specific requirements for scene investigators.

Other standards used in conjunction with ANSI/ASTM E2917-24a include [ANSI/ASTM E3284-23](#) and [OSAC 2023-N-0001](#). These discipline-specific standards provide the requirements for developing and testing competency in primer gunshot residue examination and in video and image analysis and photography, respectively.

This standard does not address proficiency testing programs or specific requirements of professional certification and licensure bodies.

WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS?

Adherence to this standard promotes consistency between FSSPs, supports the efficient use of resources as the FSSP establishes a training program framework with program structure and content, and encourages general acceptance of training, continuing education, and professional development programs.

This standard recognizes the need for FSPs to remain current in their field and requires FSSP management and its parent agency to provide support and opportunities for continuing professional development.



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

This standard requires FSSPs to establish a process to oversee, coordinate, and document all training, testing to competency, and continuing professional development. FSSPs may partner to develop and provide formal discipline-specific training programs. Requirements in this standard address competency training criteria, documentation of training, training implementation, and continuous professional development.

Competency testing is recommended to be used as the measure of assessing the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) of FSPs. Required documentation of training includes satisfaction of positional requirements, initial training, education, subsequent training, professional development, and the total number of hours or days involved in achieving or maintaining professional development. This standard requires an annual average of at least 16 hours of continuing education or professional development to be obtained by all FSPs over a three-year period.

Training and continuing professional development can be implemented in a variety of ways to maximize opportunities, minimize costs, and ensure high standards of professional practice but must include one or more of the following: seminars, lectures, professional meetings, and in-service classes. Content and attendance are expected to be documented and available for external audits. Continuing education and professional development should be a combination of internal and external activities and can be delivered in-person, online, self-directed, or computer based.