

# FD-258 Ink Fingerprinting Training Manual

## Smoky Mountain Notary

Professional Ink Fingerprinting Procedures (FD-258)

**Version:** 1.0

**Effective Date:** July 2025

## Professional Procedures for FBI-Standard Ink Fingerprints

This training manual is designed to teach proper ink fingerprinting using FBI FD-258 cards. It reflects real-world best practices focused on accuracy, rejection prevention, and professional liability awareness. This is not hobby-level guidance. Follow these procedures exactly.

---

## Disclaimer

This manual is provided for training and educational purposes only. Smoky Mountain Notary and its representatives are not responsible for fingerprint rejections, processing delays, or agency-specific requirements imposed by the FBI or any receiving authority.

Fingerprint acceptance is determined solely by the receiving agency. While procedures outlined in this manual are designed to reduce the risk of rejection, no guarantee of acceptance is expressed or implied.

Technicians must follow all applicable federal, state, and agency-specific requirements and remain current with changes to fingerprinting standards.

---

---

## Core Rule (Read This First)

### **Fingerprinting is a controlled process.**

The technician controls pressure, rolling, ink, and pace — not the client.

---

## What You'll Need (Required Supplies)

- FBI FD-258 fingerprint cards
- Fingerprint card holder
- Re-tabs (correction tabs)
- Black fingerprint ink (approved for FD-258)
- Flat, hard surface
- Paper towels or wipes

- Black ink pen (no gel pens)
  - Alcohol wipes
- 

## Step 1: Prep the Person (This Matters More Than You Think)

Proper preparation directly affects print quality.

### Hand Preparation

- Wash or wipe hands to remove lotion, oil, and dirt
- Hands must be **clean and dry**, not slick
- If skin is very dry: apply a small amount of lotion, then wipe excess completely off
- Warm cold hands before printing (rub hands together or use a warm wipe)

### Positioning & Control

- Have the person stand **beside you**, not across from you
- You roll the fingers — **not the client**
- Do not allow the client to press into the ink pad
- Guide the finger yourself to control pressure
- If the client stiffens their hand or tries to help, instruct them to look away and relax

**Pro Tip:** Cooperation causes smears. Relaxed hands produce clean prints.


---

## Step 2: Complete the FD-258 Card FIRST

All biographical information must be completed before fingerprinting.

### Required Fields (Print Clearly in Block Letters)

- Full legal name
- Date of birth
- Citizenship
- Social Security number (if required)
- Sex, race, height, weight
- Eye color, hair color
- Place of birth
- Reason fingerprinted
- Address of person fingerprinted
- Signature of person fingerprinted
- Date fingerprints taken
- Signature of fingerprint technician (signed **after** acceptable prints are completed)

 **Never fold, staple, bend, tape, or alter the card.**  
The FBI will reject damaged cards without exception.

---

## Step 3: Rolled Fingerprints (Primary Prints)

Rolled prints are the most important part of the card.

### Inking Technique

- Ink lightly from cuticle to cuticle
- Avoid over-inking — shiny or wet prints will be rejected

### Rolling Technique

- Place finger in the correct box
- Roll nail-edge to nail-edge in **one smooth motion**

**Direction Matters:** - Right hand: roll left to right - Left hand: roll right to left

### Pressure Rules

- Use firm, even pressure
- Do not mash the finger (no “mashed potatoes”)
- Never rock back and forth
- One roll only — no re-rolling in the same box

### Finger Order (Follow Exactly)

- Right thumb → right little finger
- Left thumb → left little finger

### Quality Standards

- ✓ Clear ridge detail visible immediately
- ✗ No smears
- ✗ No partial rolls
- ✗ No double impressions

### Re-Tabs (If a Print Is Bad)

- Maximum **two re-tabs per box**
- More than two re-tabs increases rejection risk
- Always test the print on the re-tab **before** applying it to the card
- Re-tabs have a different texture — prints may appear different

---

## Step 4: Plain (Flat) Impressions – Bottom Row

Plain impressions confirm the rolled prints.

## Technique

- Ink fingers again (lighter than rolled prints)
- Press straight down — **no rolling**

## Placement

- Thumbs together in the thumb block (touch naturally, do not force)
- Four fingers together in each four-finger block

**Think:** Stamp, not roll.

---

## Step 5: Final Quality Check (Before Mailing)

Review the card carefully.

### Checklist

- All fields completed?
- Clear ridge detail?
- No smears or double images?
- Prints within designated boxes?
- No folds, staples, tape, or white-out?

**Golden Rule:** If you wouldn't send it for yourself, don't send it for a client.

---

## Common FBI Rejection Reasons

- Smudged or over-inked prints
  - Excessive re-inking causing ridge fill
  - Incomplete demographic information
  - Wrong card stock
  - Prints outside designated boxes
  - Folded or bent cards
  - Using blue or non-approved ink
- 

## Scars, Cuts, or Poor Ridge Detail

If a finger has: - A scar - A cut - Missing ridge detail after multiple attempts

Provide the client with a **written explanation on company letterhead** describing: - Which finger(s) are affected - The reason prints could not be captured properly

The client should include this letter with their fingerprint submission.

---

## **Mailing Guidance**

- The client must confirm the correct FBI or agency mailing address
  - Fingerprinting services do **not** mail cards unless contracted to do so
  - The FBI does not forward rejected cards — they simply reject them
- 

## **Client Education: What to Tell Them**

- Rejections happen due to agency standards, not technician intent
  - Processing time is controlled by the FBI or receiving agency
  - Rejected cards require new fingerprinting and resubmission
- 

## **Professional Pricing Philosophy (For Technicians)**

You are not charging for ink. You are charging for: - Accuracy - Skill - Time - Liability

Rejected fingerprints cost reputation and repeat work. Price accordingly.

---

## **Technician Mantra (Memorize This)**

**Control the finger.**

**Control the ink.**

**One roll.**

**Clear ridges.**

**No hesitation.**

---

© **Smoky Mountain Notary - 2025**

All rights reserved. This training material may not be reproduced or distributed outside of authorized training without written permission.

**End of Training Manual**