

FD-258 Ink Fingerprinting Training Manual

Smoky Mountain Notary

Ink Fingerprinting Procedures & Quality Standards (FD-258)

Complete Edition – Updated
Built from field experience since 2020

Important: This manual is proprietary. It may not be shared or used to resell training.

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Disclaimer & Professional Statement

This manual reflects independent, self-directed learning and real-world ink fingerprinting experience since 2020. It is not a government-issued curriculum and is not legal advice.

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

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Service Scope & Client Responsibilities

- Smoky Mountain Notary provides **ink fingerprinting only** using FBI FD-258 cards. We do **not** provide LiveScan (digital).
- Before beginning, confirm the client's receiving agency requires **ink** fingerprints (FD-258), not LiveScan.
- After printing, the client is responsible for confirming the correct mailing address and **mailing** their fingerprint cards.
- Acceptance, processing time, and any rejection are controlled by the receiving agency—not the technician.

FD-258 Card – Top Section Key Fields & Explanation

Field	Explanation
Name (NAM)	Enter full legal name: Last, First, Middle.
Signature of Person Fingerprinted	Sign in ink in the presence of the technician.
Aliases (AKA)	Former names, maiden names, or previous married names.
Social Security Number (SOC)	If required, enter full SSN.
Date of Birth (DOB)	Use MM/DD/YYYY format.
Citizenship (CTZ)	Country of citizenship.
Residence	Full residential address (Street, City, State, Zip).
Originating Agency Identifier (ORI)	9-character code identifying the requesting agency.
Date	Date fingerprints are taken (MM/DD/YYYY).
Signature of Official Taking Fingerprints	The person taking prints must sign here.
Employer and Address	Name and address of the agency/employer requesting the check.
Reason Fingerprinted	Purpose of the request (e.g., Employment, Firearm Application, Licensing).

Tip: Complete all top-section fields before inking any fingers. Do not fold or alter the card.

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.

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End of Training Manual

FD-258 Demographic Abbreviation Codes

Quick Reference – Ink Fingerprinting Training

SEX

Code	Description
M	Male
F	Female
U	Other / Unknown

RACE

Code	Description
A	Asian or Pacific Islander
B	Black
I	American Indian or Alaskan Native
U	Unknown
W	White

EYE COLOR (EYES)

Code	Description
BLK	Black
BLU	Blue
BRO	Brown
GRN	Green
GRY	Gray
HAZ	Hazel
MAR	Maroon
MUL	Multicolored
PNK	Pink

HAIR COLOR (HAIR)

Code	Description
BAL	Bald
BLK	Black
BLN	Blond
BLU	Blue
BRO	Brown
GRN	Green
GRY	Gray
ONG	Orange
PLE	Purple
PNK	Pink
RED	Red or Strawberry
SDY	Sandy
WHI	White



Fingerprinting Tips



Hands should be clean before printing:

- Clean with soap & water
- If that's not available use rubbing alcohol

Moist Hands:

- Wipe each finger with rubbing alcohol
- Use a small fan, if necessary

Hands with dry or flaky skin:

- Use a small amount of lotion and wipe away any residue

Fine ridge detail:

- Use a bit of lotion or "Ridge Builder"
- Apply less ink or use less pressure

Instruct the person to:

- Stand parallel to the work station
- Look away from the inking plate
- Try not to assist you
- Relax and let you do the work

Special Circumstances

Deformed or missing fingers: If the finger is deformed, every attempt should be made to record the finger in both rolled and plain impression blocks. If unable to record the image, place a notation in the fingerprint block (ex: deformed, webbed).

Missing fingers are fingers physically present but cannot be recorded at the time of capture due to injury. Each missing finger should be designated via a notation in the fingerprint block (ex: bandaged, injured, crippled, paralyzed).

Fully amputated fingers: Amputated fingers should be designated via a notation in the fingerprint block. (Ex: amp, missing at birth, severed)

Tip-amutated finger: If a portion of the first joint is present, record the available fingerprint pattern area in both the rolled and plain impression blocks.

Extra-fingers: If a portion of the first joint is present, record the available fingerprint pattern area in both the rolled and plain impression blocks.

Scarred fingers: When fingerprinting scarred fingers in both the rolled and plain impressions without a notation

Worn Fingerprints: Apply light pressure and use very little ink to record these types of fingerprint impressions.

What does the FBI look for on fingerprint cards

1. Clear, Classifiable Prints

- The ridges need to be clearly visible — no smudges, smears, or light impressions.
- Each finger must be rolled properly from nail to nail, and plain (flat) impressions must be included.

2. Proper Finger Placement

- Fingers must be in the correct boxes.
- Rolled impressions go in the top section; plain impressions go at the bottom.

3. Accurate Personal Information

- Full legal name (no nicknames)
- Date of birth
- Place of birth (state or country)
- Sex, race, height, weight, eye color, hair color
- Citizenship and social security number (if applicable)
- Reason for fingerprinting (e.g., "Employment," "Licensing," "FBI background check")

4. Correct ORI Number (if needed)

- ORI = "Originating Agency Identifier." This tells the FBI where to send the results. If it's missing or wrong, it can delay processing or send the results to the wrong place.

5. No Damage or Alterations

- Cards must be clean and not folded, stained, or torn.

- No white-out or scratch-outs on the form.

The FBI rejects a LOT of cards due to poor quality prints, missing info, or improperly filled-out forms. That's why it's so helpful when someone like you — trained and careful — handles fingerprinting!

Proper Capture of Image within Fingerprint Block



INCORRECT
Image printed too low in block.
Image protrudes into neighboring fingerprint block.

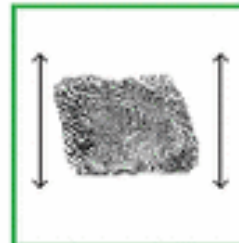


CORRECT
Entire image printed in the center of the block.

Proper Orientation of Rolled Fingerprint Impressions

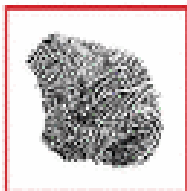


INCORRECT
Image captured at an angle.

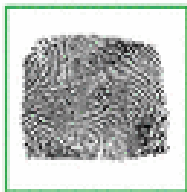


CORRECT
Capture image in a vertical upright position.

White Lines/Cracks/Worn Ridges within Fingerprint Pattern Area



INCORRECT
Indicates dry, rough skin.
Fingerprint ridge detail not visible.



CORRECT
Worn ridge detail may be improved with the following:

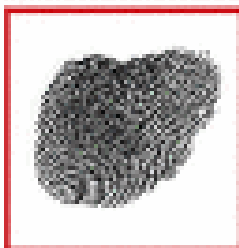
1. Ridge Builder
2. Corn Huskers Lotion
3. Lotion with Aloe Vera
4. Massage finger to force blood to fingertips

Non-Discernable Images/Smudges

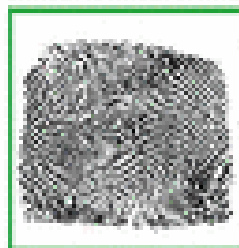


1. Do not apply excessive ink to the fingertip.
2. Do not apply excessive pressure to the fingertip.
3. During capture, turn subject's wrist and simply guide the finger being printed.

Complete Pattern Area Not Present in Rolled Impressions

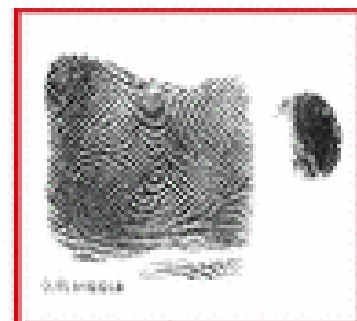


INCORRECT



CORRECT

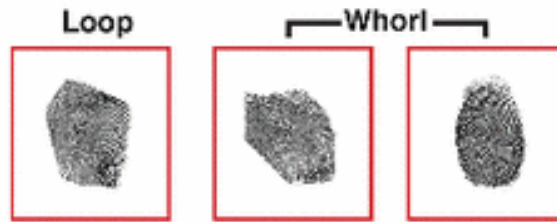
Multiple Images



Do not record multiple fingerprint images in a single fingerprint block.

Roll Fingerprints Nail to Nail*

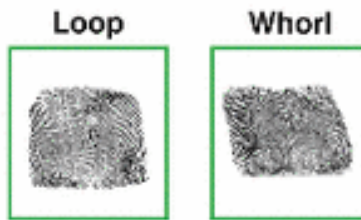
(*These instructions are not applicable if submitting flat impressions only.)



INCORRECT

Deltas need to be present in both the Loop and Whorl patterns.

Delta: the point on a ridge at or nearest the point of divergence of two type lines, and located at or directly in front of the divergence.



CORRECT

1. Roll finger in a smooth continuous motion from nail to nail.
2. Roll thumbs towards subject. Roll fingers away from the subject.
3. Ensure entire first joint of the finger is in constant contact with the card.

Proper Capture of Plain Fingerprint Impressions

INCORRECT
Image captured horizontally.

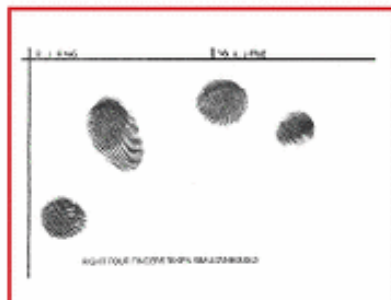


CORRECT
Image captured at an appropriate angle.



Complete Pattern Area Not Present in Plain Impressions

INCORRECT



CORRECT

