

OSAC is Back! (OSAC = Organization of Scientific Area Committees)

NAME OSAC UPDATE #3: OSAC 2023-S-0006

Standard Guide for Photographing Scars, Marks, and Tattoos

This Standard Guide was developed by the OSAC subcommittee Video/Imaging Technology and Analysis. Consider a “standard guide” as a helpful reference that advises on best practices. This OSAC document should be useful to NAME members as a training document for new autopsy room employees, continuing education for current staff, or as a basis for a SOP. AAFS has developed checklists for many of the OSAC documents. The AAFS checklist for this document seems particularly useful (see link below). Approximately 1/5 adults in the USA have at least one tattoo. In recent years the FBI has worked to expand the capabilities of the FBI Tattoo Recognition Database.

This is a brief summary of OSAC 2023-S-0006, and as such may leave out or misinterpret important details. See link to full document (below).

SCOPE: Intended to increase the quality and consistency of photographs of tattoos, scars, and marks (nevi, piercings, etc.) for optimal manual comparisons and image database searches.

- Suggests equipment including lens types and filters, light sources, and scales (such as ABFO).
- The camera settings/directions section provides specific directions.
- The general considerations section has tips and advice such as the camera lens should be perpendicular to the area being photographed, and the scale should be placed near the edge of the field in a close-up photograph so as not to fill any more of the frame than necessary. It also advises that an orientation photograph be taken in reference to a “landmark” on the body to establish location before close-up photography.
- Gives separate specific advice about photographing scars, tattoos, and marks.

- Separate sections provide directions about the use and purposes of Near Infrared (NIR), Reflective Ultraviolet (UV), and Polarization photography.

Full Document: <https://www.nist.gov/document/osac-2023-s-0006-standard-guide-photographing-scars-marks-and-tattoos>

Checklist:

https://www.aafs.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/Video_OSAC%202023-S-0006_%20Checklist%20V1.xlsx