



American Board of Criminalistics

P.O. Box 1358, Palmetto, FL 34220

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08 August 2014

Letter from the ABC President,

The American Board of Criminalistics (ABC) has recently made some significant changes to the organization and has developed a comprehensive plan to seek ISO/IEC 17024 accreditation.

The ABC voted in Chris E. Taylor, US Army Criminal Investigation Laboratory, Georgia, as the President and Margaret (Meg) Aceves, California Department of Justice, as the Vice President of the Board of Directors at the AAFS Meeting in Seattle, Washington in February 2014. During this meeting, Marie Samples, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, New York City, was appointed as the Chair of the Examination Committee (EC) and Laura Silva, Oakland Police Department Crime Laboratory, California, was selected as the Vice Chair.

Long time serving ABC-Examination Committee Member, David Stockwell, was selected as a contractor to operate and provide oversight of the ABC-Question Database. The database manager has become a significant operation position of the ABC and the responsibilities were determined to be better off contracted than to continue to operate this position on a voluntary basis.

A Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), which was functioning as an ad hoc committee to provide quality management oversight, document control, and preparation for ISO accreditation, was approved in February and now will move forward as a standing committee with their main focus on ABC obtaining international accreditation.

The American Board of Criminalistics has decided to pursue accreditation to ISO/IEC 17024-Conformity Assessment; General Requirements for Bodies Operating Certification of Persons. The organization feels this is a critical future step for the ABC and forensic science. Our certificate holders deserve the highest standards and recognition from the organization that provides a significant, personal credential to their professional portfolio. The ABC has always been committed to being on the forefront of certification and, once again, we are striving to stay on top. Preparing and achieving international accreditation will be a

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challenge to personnel and financial resources. The ABC is in good financial standing; however, as you can image, obtaining accreditation is costly. Each of the examinations the ABC offers must go through an assessment and has an associated fee. The longer term benefits in achieving ISO accreditation will outweigh the planned cost increases for certification. The ABC plans to absorb as many of the costs it can; however, some of these increased costs to obtain this level of accreditation and maintain future operating costs will result in small increases to our certificate holders. The ABC has not increased certification fees in over ten years and we have been proud to keep your fees to some of the lowest levels compared to other certification bodies. In keeping with that tradition, ABC is only raising the recertification fee by just \$10 starting in 2015. The new annual recertification fee will now be \$50 per year. Late fees will also increase in 2015. ABC-QAC's ISO campaign is preparing and planning for submission of our application to ANSI by the end of calendar year 2015 to spring of 2016.

Future Plans:

There is recognition that additional examinations to address technicians and management, as well as, filling technical discipline gaps are required. The creation of a technical examination takes approximately one (1) aggressive year to develop and prepare the test for a pilot. These types of examinations are only in the early stages of discussion, and the ABC plans to focus on and obtain ISO accreditation prior to the introduction of additional tests.

Other activities and milestones:

The Texas Forensic Science Commission announced they have long term plans for mandatory certification. In July 2013, Chris E. Taylor was invited to attend round table discussions on this topic. The Roundtable session had a significant impact on The Commission decisions. The ABC has seen a significant increase in requests for certification examinations in both the public and private forensic science service providers in the state of Texas.

The ABC is proud to announce that early this year we surpassed 1000 certified practitioners. The ABC has been offering professional forensic science certification for over 20 years. Although we know there are many more practitioners that have not yet obtain this level of recognition, we are proud of those who have achieved certification and took the initiative to seek professional excellence. The ABC offers certification in Comprehensive

Criminalistics, Drug Analysis, Molecular Biology, Fire Debris Analysis, Hairs and Fibers, and Paints and Polymers.

The ABC has invested in the use of WebEx technology to hold periodic ad hoc topical meetings to improve communications and operational information reviews. This technology will improve effectiveness of operations and enhance the ability to complete business between the in-person bi-annual board meetings. The Examinations Committee is also using this method of communications to conduct business. The ABC-QAC is evaluating automation solutions for document control.

On behalf of the entire ABC Board of Directors, I want to thank the ABC Certification holders, the ABC Registrar's Office, all the ABC committee members, and the forensic science community for their continuous support of the American Board of Criminalistics. Additionally, I want to thank the forensic science leaders for supporting and continuing to support forensic science practitioners in obtaining certification in the appropriate category of testing and from recognized certification bodies.

Sincerely,

Chris

Chris E. Taylor, F-ABC
ABC- President