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## Digitized Fingerprints and Palm Prints

The National Guidelines for Sex Offender Registration and Notification require that jurisdictions maintain certain registration information in digital format in order to facilitate immediate access and transmittal of information to various entities. Fingerprints and palm prints are required to be maintained in a digital form. This digital requirement has raised a concern among jurisdictions that they must purchase large quantities of costly digital print-taking equipment to come into substantial compliance with SORNA.

To substantially comply with SORNA, **jurisdictions are *NOT* required to use digital print-taking devices to obtain registered sex offenders' prints. Rather, jurisdictions may choose to take rolled, inked prints, scan the prints and upload those prints for inclusion on their registries.** Both scanned inked prints and digitally taken prints meet SORNA's immediate transmittal requirement. Digitally taken prints and scanned inked prints each have pros and cons, which will be discussed in turn to provide guidance to jurisdictions in selecting their preferred method.

### Digital Print-Taking Equipment

The primary benefit of using digital print-taking equipment is that it immediately alerts the user as to whether the print will be accepted by the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS or AFIS), which is run by the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) of the FBI. Digital print-taking equipment contains software that can be programmed to notify the user immediately when a print does or does not meet a programmed standard, such as the standard for acceptance by AFIS. While submission to AFIS is not a requirement under SORNA or the final guidelines, jurisdictions are encouraged to consider the benefits of submission of registered sex offenders' prints to AFIS.

### Rolled, Inked and Scanned Prints

Rolled, inked and scanned prints also can be submitted to AFIS. However, because the official taking the print gets no immediate feedback regarding the quality of the inked print, AFIS frequently rejects them due to poor quality. Because rolled, inked prints are often scanned and submitted to AFIS after the subject of the prints has left the location, rejection of the prints by AFIS would necessitate requiring the sex offender to return in order to re-take the prints should the jurisdiction want to submit them to AFIS. Readable rolled, inked prints are preferred by forensic print examiners, however. In situations where unknown prints need to be compared to prints in a jurisdiction's registry, such as in the case of an abduction or criminal investigation, comparison to rolled, inked prints may be preferable.

### Quality Standards

If your jurisdiction is interested in purchasing a scanner or digital print-taking equipment for uploading and transferring prints, the SMART Office encourages jurisdictions to consider issues of quality. For more information on quality standards, please see <http://www.fbibiospecs.org/fbibiothetic/iafis.html>.