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Introduction

The SFR process can be used for standard Ignitable Liquid / Fire Accelerants casework submissions, namely the analysis of fire debris, clothing and other similar items relevant to scenes of fire, and the identification of suspected flammable liquids. This will form the bulk of fire investigation laboratory submissions. However, some results/submissions from these types of work requests may not be suitable for reporting through the SFR format; for example, if the expert considers that the restrictions of an SFR report mean that it could be open to misinterpretation, then an MG11 (Full Evaluative Statement) format should be considered as an alternative - this will usually be where a case is particularly complex or otherwise requires a more detailed explanation.

The SFR process is not suitable / concept has not been proven for the results pertaining to other associated fire investigation laboratory submissions: the examination, relevant testing, and assessment of potential incendiary devices; examination and interpretation of thermal (heat) damage of clothing and flashburning; and assessment and testing of flammability. These types of disciplines should be reported either by an MG11 (Full Evaluative Statement) or other appropriate forensic report template.

For reports/results relating to fire scene investigation, including opinion on causality and / or origin of the fire, please see relevant Fire Scene Investigation section.

Ignitable Liquids / Fire Accelerants – Forensic Information Report – MG22A

Typically, results from laboratory analysis for the presence of fire accelerants / ignitable liquid residues will be issued on an MG22B (SFR1). The MG22A format can, however, be used to:

- Outline the case strategy that has been adopted
- Provide preliminary results (subject to the inclusion of any relevant disclaimers, where relevant)
- Highlight any part of the strategy that is incomplete or stages of the submission whereby results are pending
- Provide an update on aspects of the submission in which analysis was not undertaken, for example, in scenarios where packaging has not passed quality assurance and analysis was not suitable
- Provide factual information relating to the examination / analysis, for example description of items and provision of photographic records of the items examined.
- Report a wholly negative result

However, if it is believed that the result of any examination provides, or could provide, some useful evidence to the court or intelligence to the investigation teams then these results should be reported on an MG22B (SFR1).

Ignitable Liquids / Fire Accelerants – Forensic Results Report – MG22B (SFR1)

The MG22B can be used to report results from the analysis of one or more exhibits or items and to provide expert interpretation based on the results and case information available at the time of writing. The level of interpretation provided should be of sufficient detail to avoid any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the value of the laboratory findings by the reader.

Findings relating to more than one suspect should be presented as separate reports, allowing each defendant to accept, or identify an issue, independently. However, it is acceptable to portray results relating to both a scene and a suspect on a single MG22B.

The report will not contain significant amounts of technical or supporting information, or detailed explanations/rationale concerning how the conclusion was formed. General technical information can be found in Supplementary Technical Notes for Ignitable Liquid Casework SFR and can be found at <https://www.fcn.police.uk/sfr-technical-notes-and-guidance>. However, if any specific technical or method information is relevant to the case result, it can be referred to in either the Technical Section or, if the author chooses to, referenced in the results section.

The results / findings section can be utilised to provide description of the items received and the results from analysis, including any relevant expert opinion. Results from fire debris recovered from the same scene and items from a single ensemble of clothing recovered from a single person of interest can be grouped for the purpose of reporting.

The status section of the document can be utilised to:

- Provide additional information in relation to the examinations or analysis undertaken, where relevant.
- Outline any child exhibits created, or material retained during the examination(s).
- Depict any items that have not been selected for analysis, or where examination is pending, in accordance with the case strategy.
- Highlight any deficiencies encountered in relation to the packaging of the items or suitability for analysis, or other discrepancies noted, for example in the labelling present on the item.
- Inform the reader of any next stages in the case strategy for the relevant items, for example, progression of DNA examinations under the direction of other scientists.

Ignitable Liquids / Fire Accelerants – Forensic Results Report – MG22C (SFR2)

The MG22C can be used to respond to any findings detailed in the MG22B that have been disputed by the defence, providing expert opinion in the form of an evaluative conclusion based on the information available at the time of writing. The expert completing the MG22C can be expected to be called to attend court to give evidence on the issues contested in the case. As such, the author must ensure that they meet all of their obligations as an expert and include the status of compliance to the FSR Code.

Ignitable Liquids / Fire Accelerants – Forensic Results Report – MG22D (SFR2)

This statement can be used, when challenged, to provide factual information. It could be used by support staff to provide statements of continuity, or by fire debris analysts / scientists to provide statements of fact that do not contain any opinion.