



NSP CRIME LABORATORY CRIME LABORATORY MANUAL SERIAL NUMBER RESTORATIONS



I. Examinations

Restoration or recovery of a serial number can be accomplished whenever the obliterating process has not totally removed all evidence of the number. Many methods used to serialize an item will deform the material's structure well below the indentation, so a number may appear to be totally obliterated at the surface when in fact it can be recovered by chemical application, magnetic processing, heat treatment, or other recovery methods.

- A. There are many types of evidence which contain serial numbers. Some examples are:
 - 1. Firearms - all types
 - 2. Motor vehicles
 - 3. Bicycles
 - 4. Cameras
 - 5. Appliances
 - 6. Tools

- B. Many techniques are commonly used to obliterate numbers. Examples of these are:
 - 1. Scratching with a sharp tool or filing.
 - 2. Grinding with a power tool.
 - 3. Peening with hammer – difficult to recover.
 - 4. Overstamping/overpunching - difficult to recover.
 - 5. Welding or other heating process – difficult to recover.
 - 6. Reapplication of the original finish - done to hide the obliteration process.

- C. Some manufacturers place hidden serial numbers or other tracking numbers on their products that are cross-referenced to the original serial number. The Crime Lab can locate those additional numbers, consult with the manufacturer (if necessary), and summarize results in a lab report.

- D. Four results are possible from the restoration process. These are:
 - 1. Number fully restored and identified.
 - 2. Partial restoration of number.
 - 3. Restoration process unsuccessful.
 - 4. Hidden number was located or other manufacturer numbers resulted in serial number being recovered.

- E. Do not attempt serial number recovery with acid etching reagents unless

Document ID: 1673

Revision Number: 2

Date Approved: 9/29/2016 12:24:23 PM

Authorized By: Crime Laboratory Director

Page 1 of 2

THIS DOCUMENT IS UNCONTROLLED IF IT APPEARS OUTSIDE OF NSPCL'S QUALTRAX



NSP CRIME LABORATORY CRIME LABORATORY MANUAL SERIAL NUMBER RESTORATIONS



your agency is well-equipped and knowledgeable about both the variety of reagents available and the material for which the reagent is intended. Use of a stronger-than-needed reagent can result in the acid burning through the remnants of the original serial number, thus preventing that number from ever being recovered.

- F. Techniques exist for the recovery of obliterated serial numbers placed on non-metal objects (such as plastic, wood, etc.). Contact the NSP Crime Lab for additional guidance before discounting the possibility of serial number recovery from such items/materials.

II. Collection and Packaging of Evidence

- A. Do not attempt to remove the part or a section of the item containing the obliterated number. Submit the entire piece of evidence unless it would not be practical due to size.
- B. Pack large items securely in a box. Seal and initial over the seal.
- C. Complete the Laboratory Submittal form (NSP 750). Attach the completed submittal form to the outside of the box so evidence seals do not have to be broken during the evidence check-in process.