



Collaborative Testing Services

Your Trusted Partner in Proficiency Testing Since 1971, 100% Employee-Owned

Phone (+1) 571-434-1925
Email info@cts-interlab.com
www.collaborative-testing.com

Physical Address
21331 Gentry Drive
Sterling, Virginia 20166

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 650820
Sterling, VA 20165

Collaborative Testing Services
AFTE PTRC Report Statement
3 December 2024

Collaborative Testing Services (CTS) would like to thank the Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners (AFTE) for conducting a root cause analysis of the results of CTS Test 23-5262: Firearms Examination. The creation of the Proficiency Test Review Committee (PTRC) to focus specifically on the results of this proficiency test is a clear indication of AFTE's dedication to the community that makes up their membership, and we are grateful for both their hard work and the opportunity to be involved with their review.

We would also like to directly thank the members of the committee for the thoughtful questions and concerns they raised, as well as for conducting their inquiries in a manner that was fully respectful of our client confidentiality policy and proprietary information, which allowed us to assist with their work to the best of our ability.

As a global proficiency test provider, our mission is to provide reliable, practical, and relevant proficiency testing to our clients. While many of our customers have different standard operating procedures, accreditation standards, and training requirements, one common piece of feedback regarding proficiency testing as a whole is that tests are not challenging enough to truly judge the ability of the participants. We designed Test 23-5262 with this feedback in mind to provide a case-like scenario, but the results showed that the test was more challenging than originally intended. We acknowledged that the increase in difficulty was greater than intended within the publicly available Summary Report (https://cts-forensics.com/reports/23-5262_Web.pdf), and as a result of feedback from the test, we are implementing additional quality control measures, described at the end of this report, to improve future tests.

CTS would like to provide additional support to recommendation number two within the AFTE PTRC Report, where laboratories are encouraged to indicate to examiners that the entire range of conclusions used in casework are available within a proficiency test.

Since we expect that participants will follow their laboratory's standard operating procedures while participating in our tests, we attempt to follow current discipline-specific reporting schemes. If the fixed response section does not mirror a laboratory's typical reporting, we ask that they adopt the provided reporting scheme in order to add to the collection of data for consensus determination purposes, then use either the Conclusions or Additional Comments section to provide their responses using any laboratory-specific wording.



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We would also like to add that CTS follows the ISO/IEC 17043 standard on the determination of the assigned value within our proficiency tests. While the preparation information (ground truth) is known and may have been supported during our verification processes, it does not preclude the possibility that within the full reporting population the consensus may differ or be unachievable. A review of how the consensus for Test 23-5262 was handled is available in the Summary Report linked above.

We are continuously committed to collaboration with and support of the communities that we serve. We would like to thank every participant who provided their valuable feedback and remind the firearms community that there is no progress without challenge. Test 23-5262 was more challenging than intended, but we believe that the results are meaningful and provide worthwhile opportunities for improvement. We are hopeful that the insights gleaned from the PTRC's full report will encourage dialogue that will further strengthen the quality of testing and drive innovation for firearms examiners worldwide.

Christopher Czyryca
President
Collaborative Testing Services