
Professional Certificate in Forensic Document Examination

Document Alterations and Forgery Techniques

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Document alterations and forgery techniques are essential aspects of forensic document examination, which involves the analysis and comparison of questioned documents to determine their authenticity. This glossary aims to provide a comprehensive list of terms related to document alterations and forgery techniques to enhance understanding in the field of forensic document examination.

1. Alteration

An alteration refers to any change made to a document after it was originally created. Alterations can be made with the intention of deceiving or manipulating the content of the document. Common alterations include erasures, additions, obliterations, and substitutions.

2. Blind Alteration

A blind alteration is a type of alteration made to a document that attempts to conceal the change by matching the color and texture of the original document. This technique is used to make alterations less noticeable to the naked eye.

3. Cut-and-Paste Forgery

Cut-and-paste forgery involves physically cutting out a portion of a genuine document and pasting it onto another document to create a fraudulent document. This technique is commonly used to alter signatures, dates, or other critical information on a document.

4. Electrostatic Alteration

Electrostatic alteration is a technique used to alter documents by removing toner from one document and transferring it to another. This method is often used to alter printed text or images on documents.

5. Erasure

An erasure refers to the act of removing or obliterating existing content on a document. Erasures can be made using various tools such as erasers, chemicals, or electronic means. Forensic document examiners can detect erasures through various techniques such as oblique lighting and infrared photography.

6. Forgery

Forgery involves the creation or alteration of a document with the intent to deceive. Common types of forgery include signature forgery, document fabrication, and alteration of legal documents. Forensic document examiners use a combination of techniques to detect and analyze forgeries.

7. Indented Writing

Indented writing refers to impressions left on a document by writing or drawing on a sheet of paper placed on top of it. This technique can be used to recover information that has been erased or altered on a document. Forensic document examiners use various methods such as oblique lighting and ESDA (Electrostatic Detection Apparatus) to reveal indented writing.

8. Ink Examination

Ink examination involves the analysis of ink used on a document to determine its composition, age, and authenticity. Different types of inks such as ballpoint, fountain pen, and gel pen ink can provide valuable information about the origin of a document. Ink examination is a crucial technique in detecting document alterations and forgeries.

9. Microscopy

Microscopy is a technique used in forensic document examination to analyze the physical characteristics of documents at a microscopic level. Microscopes allow examiners to detect alterations, identify printing techniques, and analyze the structure of paper fibers. Microscopy is essential for examining documents for authenticity and alterations.

10. Obliteration

Obliteration refers to the act of covering up existing content on a document to make it unreadable. This technique is commonly used in document alterations to hide information or changes made to the document. Forensic document examiners can use various methods to reveal obliterations and uncover the original content.

11. Overwriting

Overwriting is a technique used to alter documents by writing over existing text or images. This method is often employed to change dates, amounts, or other critical information on a document. Forensic document examiners can detect overwriting through various techniques such as infrared photography and chemical analysis.

12. Questioned Document

A questioned document is any document whose authenticity or authorship is in doubt. Questioned documents can include wills, contracts, checks, and any other written or printed material that is being investigated for forgery or alteration. Forensic document examiners analyze questioned documents to determine their authenticity and detect any alterations or forgeries.

13. Signature Forgery

Signature forgery involves the unauthorized replication of a person's signature on a document with the intent to deceive. Forensic document examiners use various techniques such as handwriting analysis, ink examination, and microscopy to detect signature forgeries. Signature forgery is a common type of document alteration that requires careful analysis to uncover.

14. Substitution

Substitution refers to the act of replacing original content on a document with new information. This technique is often used in document alterations to change names, dates, or other critical details. Forensic document examiners can detect substitutions through a combination of techniques such as ink examination, microscopy, and handwriting analysis.

15. Watermark

A watermark is a design or pattern embedded into paper during the manufacturing process. Watermarks are used to authenticate documents and prevent counterfeiting. Forensic document examiners can analyze watermarks to determine the authenticity of a document and detect any alterations or forgeries. Watermarks are commonly found on currency, official documents, and certificates.

16. Writing Ink

Writing ink refers to the liquid used to write or print text on a document. Different types of writing ink such as ballpoint, rollerball, and fountain pen ink can provide valuable information for forensic document examiners. Analysis of writing ink can help determine the authenticity of a document and detect any alterations or forgeries made to it.

In conclusion, document alterations and forgery techniques are critical components of forensic document examination. By understanding the various terms and concepts related to document alterations and forgery techniques, forensic document examiners can effectively analyze and compare questioned documents to determine their authenticity and detect any alterations or forgeries. The comprehensive glossary provided in this document aims to enhance knowledge and skills in the field of forensic document examination.