



Standard Practice for Reporting Opinions of Scientific or Technical Experts¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E620; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers the scope of information to be contained in formal written technical reports which express the opinions of the scientific or technical expert with respect to the study of items that are or may reasonably be expected to be the subject of criminal or civil litigation.

1.2 If compliance with this standard is claimed, the justifications for any deviations from this standard must be documented.

1.3 *This standard may involve hazardous materials, operations, and equipment. This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns associated with its use. It is the responsibility of whoever uses this standard to consult and establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²
E678 Practice for Evaluation of Scientific or Technical Data

3. Significance and Use

3.1 This practice establishes those elements of the expert's opinion report which will make the report understandable to the intended recipient and focus on the technical aspects germane to the purpose for which the opinion is rendered.

4. Report Content

4.1 While this standard does not specify report format, the following information shall be included:

4.1.1 *Descriptive Information*— The following information shall be contained within the report, preferably in the introduction:

4.1.2 Identifying number and date the report was prepared,

4.1.3 Name, address, and affiliation of each person who has rendered an opinion contained in the report,

4.1.4 Name of the person or organization, or both, requesting the report,

4.1.5 Generic description of the item(s) examined together with specific data to uniquely identify the item(s) such as a serial number, marking, or some other means of adequately identifying the item(s) examined,

4.1.6 Date and location of examination,

4.1.7 The scope of investigative activities performed in preparation for reaching conclusions and opinions.

4.2 *Pertinent Facts:*

4.2.1 The report shall contain all facts that are pertinent to the opinion rendered and shall be reported in accordance with the classifications set forth in **4.2.1.1** and **4.2.1.2**.

4.2.1.1 Identify those facts and data based on the observations by the expert of the item(s) in question or photographs thereof.

4.2.1.2 Identify other facts and data that the expert relies upon in rendering an opinion.

4.2.2 Whenever pertinent findings of fact are established through examination or testing, the person(s) rendering the opinion based on such findings shall have either supervised, conducted, participated in or observed such examination or testing, and failing to do any one of them shall list the name and business address of each person who supervised or conducted each examination or test establishing such findings of fact.

4.2.3 Evaluate facts and data according to Practice **E678**.

4.3 *Opinions and Conclusions:*

4.3.1 The report shall contain all of the technical opinions and conclusions rendered by the expert concerning the purpose for which the expert was engaged.

4.3.2 The report shall contain the logic and reasoning of the expert by which each of the opinions and conclusions were reached.

4.4 *Signature:*

4.4.1 The report shall contain the signature of each person who has rendered a joint or separate opinion contained in the report. The signature(s) shall be at the end of the opinion. A professional seal should be used, if applicable. If an opinion rendered is that of two or more experts, a signature page may be used.

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E30 on Forensic Sciences and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E30.11 on Interdisciplinary Forensic Science Standards.

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For Annual Book of ASTM Standards volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

4.5 The experts' qualifications may be included with the report, if requested.

4.6 *Formats:*

4.6.1 In some jurisdictions, the format and content of the report may be specified in court rules.

4.7 *Appendix:*

4.7.1 An appendix may be used in connection with the report. The appendix may contain tables, graphs, charts, photos, drawings, test results or data, and other appropriate information pertinent to the opinion.

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