



## AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIME LABORATORY DIRECTORS LABORATORY ACCREDITATION BOARD

August 26, 2008

Kenneth F. Martin, President  
International Association for Identification  
2535 Pilot Knob Road, Suite 117  
Mendota Heights, MN 55120-1120

Mr. Martin:

The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB) has proposed a set of *Guiding Principles of Professional Responsibility for Crime Laboratories and Forensic Scientists*, which may be found at [www.asclcd-lab.org](http://www.asclcd-lab.org). We are seeking your organization's comment and input into these proposed guidelines.

ASCLD/LAB has accredited 343 laboratories in the United States and other countries, as of August 2, 2008. The Bureau of Justice Statistics has reported in the *Census of Publicly Funded Crime Laboratories, 2005*, that more than three-quarters of the publicly funded crime laboratories were accredited by ASCLD/LAB. One of our goals is to help laboratories maintain high levels of professionalism through a culture of professional responsibility in the laboratory. In 2008, ASCLD/LAB implemented a standard that all new employees in accredited laboratories be given training in ethics and professional responsibility.

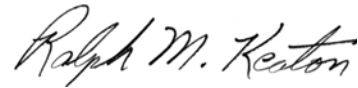
We have realized, however, that there are no widely accepted guidelines for professional responsibility. While many forensic scientists belong to professional forensic science organizations that have codes of ethics, not everyone does. Even the codes that do exist among these associations are not uniform. Some are very general, giving little guidance, while others are very specific. Most laboratories do not have a code or professional guidelines pertaining specifically to the conduct of forensic scientists. We envision these guidelines as a supplement to the codes and guidelines that do exist, and to be a model for those organizations and laboratories that do not have one.

Through your input, ASCLD/LAB hopes to produce guidelines that are generally accepted and applicable throughout the forensic science community. Certainly, guidelines that are adopted by the accrediting body for the greater majority of public laboratories, and a significant number of private laboratories, will help provide uniform guidance, enhance the reputation of the forensic science community, and increase the public's confidence in our profession.

In order to obtain input into these guidelines, presentations have already been made at a Council of Federal Forensic Laboratory Directors meeting and at the International Association of Forensic Sciences (IAFS) triennial meeting, both in July of this year. Future presentations include the ASCLD annual meeting in September 2008, and the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) annual meeting in February 2009. If your organization is interested in having an ASCLD/LAB representative make a presentation, please contact ASCLD/LAB.

As mentioned above, you may access the draft guidelines at [www.ascd-lab.org](http://www.ascd-lab.org), and provide your comments in an e-mail to [comments@ascd-lab.org](mailto:comments@ascd-lab.org). We appreciate your attention to this important project and look forward to hearing from you. If at all possible, we would request that feedback be provided by December 1, 2008.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ralph M. Keaton".

Ralph M. Keaton  
Executive Director