

SWGSTAIN HISTORY

For almost twenty years, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has actively organized and sponsored Technical Working Groups (TWG). The purpose of these groups, later renamed Scientific Working Groups (SWG) to distinguish them from other similarly tasked groups sponsored by the United States Department of Justice, was then, and continues to be, the establishment of professional forums in which local, state, and federal government experts, together with academic and commercial scientists, can operate to address operational issues arising within specific forensic disciplines. As evidenced by the diversity of disciplines now represented across the active SWGs, the concept of such professional forums has been a successful one. Due principally to the strengths of the individual participants, FBI sponsored SWGs have developed into important consensus building bodies that have become critical components in the standardization of diverse and complex forensic disciplines.

In the spring of 2002, the FBI Laboratory coordinated a meeting to explore organizing a scientific working group in bloodstain pattern analysis. This meeting was held at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, and was facilitated by the Laboratory's DNA Analysis Unit I (DNAUI) and its Forensic Science Research and Training Unit (FSRTU). This exploratory meeting convened a core group of sixteen recognized bloodstain pattern analysis experts from the federal, state, and local governments as well as private practitioners in the United States and Canada. After affirming the interest level in the bloodstain pattern analysis community for forming such a SWG, this group designed the architecture and formalized the business rules around which what they designated the Scientific Working Group on Bloodstain Pattern Analysis (SWGSTAIN) now operates. In the fall of 2008, the FBI transferred sponsorship and management of SWGSTAIN to the Midwest Forensics Resource Center (MFRC), a National Institute of Justice sponsored facility at Iowa State University.

At present, the membership of SWGSTAIN includes approximately thirty recognized BPA experts who represent law enforcement agencies and private consulting practices, in North America, Europe, New Zealand, and Australia. Additionally, SWGSTAIN regularly hosts *ex officio* representatives from the International Association of Bloodstain Pattern Analysts (IABPA), International Association for Identification (IAI), Association for Crime Scene Reconstruction (ASCR), and the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) at each of its biannual meetings. These meetings are hosted by the MFRC, usually in April and November, and assemble the regular SWGSTAIN membership together with invited guests for a program of group presentations and subcommittee-based discussions. Currently, there are six subcommittees active within SWGSTAIN: Taxonomy and Terminology, Training and Education, Legal, Quality Assurance, Research, and Business and Strategic Planning.