

FACTS ABOUT OUR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & SERVICES

- For biological profiling, we use standard methods in forensic anthropology. The data collection protocol we produced through a grant funded research initiative is very similar to the protocol we use for human identification and reflects our philosophy:

Kimmerle EH, Powell JW. 2012. 3D Digital Reference Guide for Research in Human Identification. Version 1.0.2012. University of South Florida

Kimmerle EH, Tise MA, Humphries A. 2012. Data Collection Protocol for Human Identification. Version 1.0.2012. University of South Florida

- For ancestry estimation we use two statistical programs, Fordisc and 3D-ID (a newer program that uses 3D coordinate data for size and shape analysis and has modern “Hispanic” and “Latino” reference populations).
- In cold case analysis – many times the ancestry classification for unknown persons is changed because of the newer methods and tools used. This has significant implications for trying to identify unknown persons.
- We test chemical isotope samples for geo-referencing in cases where identification is unknown, unless otherwise specified. We can test hair, bones, and teeth.
- Chemical isotope testing can tell you a geographical region where the person lived during different periods in their life and if they migrated or moved to different regions in the years before their death.
- For every case we provide a detailed report and copy of photographs and any imaging that was done for the case. This typically includes a 3D PDF of laser scanned images for facial reconstructions and/or elements for skeletal trauma.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is this bone human?

On the issue of isolated elements that may or may not be human: various agencies have different methods for handling these types of cases. Some agencies will bring us bones or send photographs and in almost all cases, these turn out to be non-human and the MEO/LE does not require a report.

When can facial and clothing imaging be used?

This includes postmortem images of a face that needs “retouching” to create an approximation for public viewing, facial composites from skeletal remains, or photographic superimpositions for presumptive identifications, and photographic imaging of decomposing clothing for public viewing. Please contact the lab for questions or examples of imaging.

When do you need assistance at the crime scene?

Assistance in the field starts with search and recovery, searches may include surface scatter or clandestine burials. We search for persons who are missing, presumed dead and information leads investigators to a particular area to look for a burial. We work with agencies to establish the level of our involvement. In some cases, LE asks us to be present to assist with inventory of skeletal elements during the recovery process. In other cases, our team will take an active role in the processing and collecting of all remains/evidence, including photography, sketching, etc. We adjust our level of involvement based on the request of the LE.