

To ensure complete photographic documentation is obtained for every forensic examination, protocols should be in place outlining the minimum photographs to be taken, regardless of case type. Forensic photographs must be a clear and accurate representation of the evidence, thereby allowing independent review of the evidence by all parties involved.

Reasons to Utilize Forensic Photography

- Document the general condition of the animal visually.
- Document evidence and injuries present at the time of examination.
 - Particular attention should be given to injuries that cannot be preserved or left unaltered (e.g., wounds).
- Documentation of injuries or conditions before and after medical intervention (e.g., hair mats before and after shaving).
- Support and clarify medical records.
- Provide photographic evidence of the animal's condition that supports written documentation and testimony.

Tips and Considerations

- Ideally, take photos on a digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) or a good quality point and shoot camera that records data on a removable storage device, such as an SD card.
- Utilize a dry erase board or plain piece of paper as a photo board.
- Take photographs at a 90-degree angle to the subject to avoid distortion. Utilize video to demonstrate information that cannot be captured in a still photograph (e.g., behavior or degree of lameness).
 - Ask people to remain silent while recording.
- Do not delete any photos/videos even if of poor quality or taken by mistake because it creates gaps in the metadata which may be called into question.
- Check photos as they are taken to ensure the photos depict the desired information and are in focus.
- Avoid background clutter which can distract from the photo.
- Avoid including the faces or identifying features (e.g., tattoos) of people handling the animal or in the background.

Reference

- Touroo R, Baucom K, Kessler M, Smith-Blackmore M. Minimum standards and best practices for the clinical veterinary forensic examination of the suspected abused animal. *Forensic Science International: Reports*. 2020 Dec 1;2:100150.

Minimum Forensic Exam Photo Series

See reference photos on the back of this handout

1. Photo Board: First photo of every series

- Information: case number, animal ID number, date, location, and name of photographer

2. Photo board and animal

- A lateral or front of body with face
- For a printable photo board template and other resources, visit ASPCApro.org/resource/sample-documents-cruelty-cases

3. Overall: Documentation of the entire animal

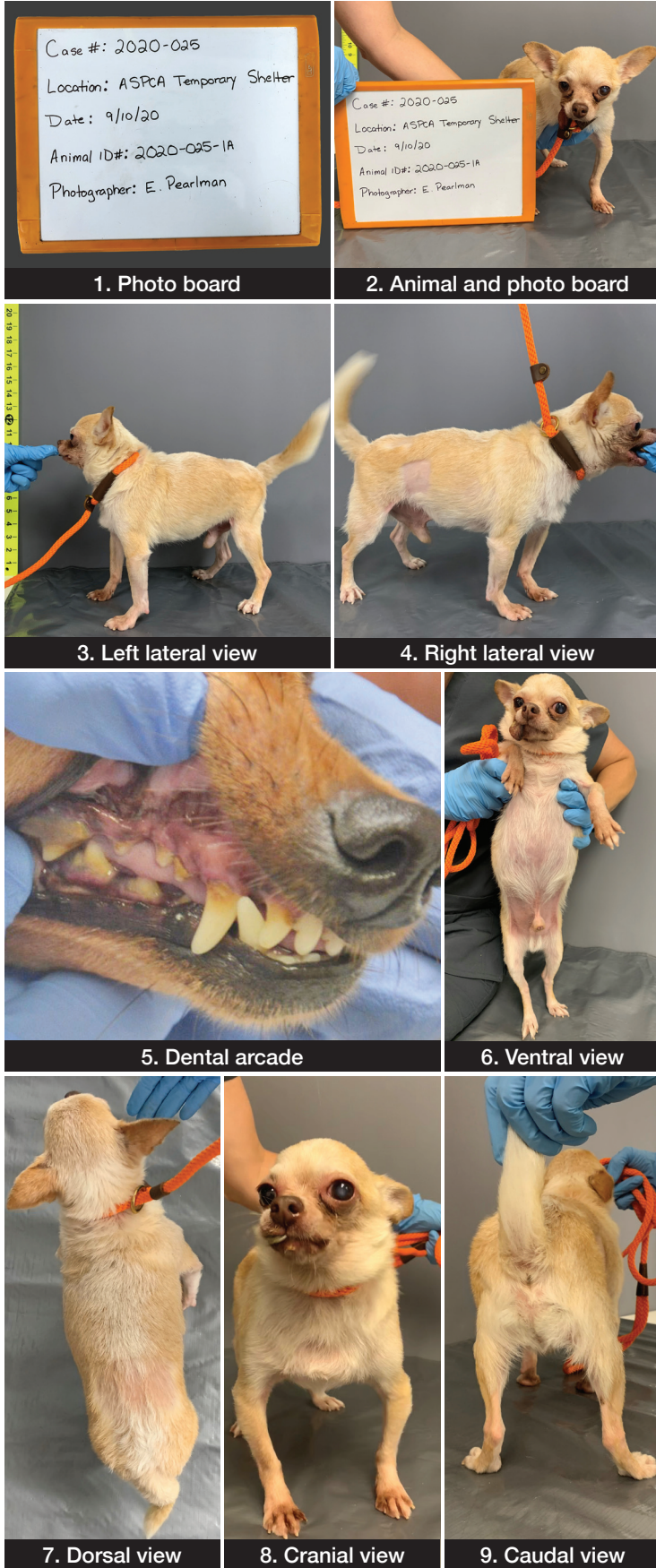
Photo board no longer needed in series

- Left lateral view (left side of body)
- Right lateral view (right side of body)
- Dental arcade (for age estimation)
- Ventral view (underside of body)
- Dorsal view (over the top of body)
- Cranial view (front of body including the face with chest and front aspect of front limbs)
- Caudal view (back side of body including the rump, tail, and back aspect of back legs)

4. Mid-range and Close-ups: Detailed photograph of an area of interest

- First photograph mid-range with an anatomical marker to allow for orientation of location
- Then, a detailed close-up photo of the area of interest
 - Take 1 photo without a scale
 - Take 1 photo with a scale

Minimum Forensic Photo Series



Progression for Close-up Photographs

