

Forensic Photography

With patient consent, the FNE will take digital photographs of genital and non-genital injuries or other findings. Because a two-dimensional photograph may not always be a 100% representation of a three-dimensional finding at the time of the exam, the FNE shall use the medical forensic chart as the primary source of documentation.

Photographs will be stored maintaining proper chain-of-custody and patient confidentiality, including HIPAA. Patient photographs will be shared, with patient consent, with the medical forensic chart when it is requested by the patient, law enforcement, prosecutors, civil attorneys, advocates, or other providers.

Genital photographs are not routinely provided when record requests are filled. In the event that an attorney or other requestor is in need of genital photos, it is DCFNE's policy to discuss the request with the patient prior to fulfilling the request.

DCFNE utilizes forensic exam photographs for educational, peer review, and quality improvement purposes.

Equipment

- Digital single-lens reflex (SLR) camera (stored lens-up in the camera bag)
- Macro lens
- Battery charger and extra battery
- Memory cards
- Tripod
- Scale

Outline of Photographic Documentation Order

1. Patient Identifier: hospital patient label
2. Orientation Image: full-length photo of the patient appropriately draped/clothed
3. Face photo: frame filled with only the patient's face, no smiling
4. Injury/finding specific image: image depicting one injury/finding where the body location can be identified
5. Injury/finding specific close-up image without a standard
6. Injury/finding specific close-up image with a standard: ABFO ruler
7. Patient identifier: hospital patient label

Photography Guidelines

All patients must provide written and verbal consent before any photographs are taken. The first and last picture taken during an examination (i.e. bookends) will be a photograph of a label

that includes the patient's name. The second picture will be of the patient's face; remind the patient not to smile.

All non-genital photographs of findings will include, at minimum, 3 pictures of each injury or finding (rule of thirds):

1. Midrange photo, identifying the location of the patient's body.
2. Close-up photo of the finding without a measuring instrument.
3. Close-up photo of the finding with a measuring device or an object of known size in the photograph.

Additionally:

- Use a plain background, preferably not white or dark.
- Maintain a 90-degree angle to the finding.
- Photograph systematically: head to toe, anterior to posterior, proximal to distal.
- **Photographs should be taken of the genital area even if there is no visible injury or findings.** This affords the opportunity for peer review and quality improvement to be completed at a later time.

Deleting Photographs

No pictures will be deleted from the camera/memory card prior to uploading.

Storage

After all photographs are completed, the memory card will be removed from the camera, placed in the card reader, and uploaded into the patient's electronic medical record, in FeMR. An electronic copy of the photos will be stored with the patient's chart on a HIPAA-compliant, secure cloud-based system, FeMR.

After completion of uploading photography, the memory card will be restored to its original use, by manually reformatting the SD card.