

# International Society of Polygraph Examiners



## Standards of Practice

Statement of Purpose: A properly administered polygraph examination by a competent polygraph examiner using a valid testing and analysis protocol is the most accurate means known to science for determining whether a person has been truthful. To promote the highest degree of accuracy, the International Society of Polygraph Examiners establishes for its membership the following Standards of Practice.

1.Guidelines: Statement of Purpose: A properly administered polygraph examination by a competent polygraph examiner using a valid testing and analysis protocol is the most accurate means known to science for determining whether a person has been truthful. To promote the highest degree of accuracy, the International Society of Polygraph Examiners establishes for its membership the following Standards of Practice. In addition, all examinations are required to be conducted in compliance with governing local, state, and federal regulations and laws.

1.1 Guidelines are the recommended practices for the preparation, conduct, analysis, documentation and reporting of polygraph examinations based upon best practices. Deviations from these guidelines are subject to review and could result in disciplinary action, including revocation of membership from the Society.

### 2. Referenced Documents

#### 2.1 ASTM Standards

E1954 Practice for Conduct of Research in Psychophysiological Detection of Deception

E2000 Guide for Minimum Basic Polygraph Training and Education

E2063 Calibration and Functionality Checks Used in Forensic Psychophysiological Detection of Deception (Polygraph) Examinations

E2439 Instrumentation, Sensors and Operating Software Used in Forensic Psychophysiological Detection of Deception (Polygraph) Examinations

E2229 Interpretation of Psychophysiological Detection of Deception (Polygraph) Data

E2062 PDD Examination Standards of Practice

E2031 Quality Control of Psychophysiological Detection of Deception (Polygraph) Examinations

### 3. Definition:

3.1 Polygraph examination: A psychophysiological detection of deception interview and testing process encompassing all activities occurring between a polygraph examiner and an examinee during a series of interactions that include a proper pretest interview, recording of physiological data, analysis of test data, and the rendering of a professional opinion.

3.1.2 An Evidentiary Examination is one where the written and stated purpose agreed to by the parties involved is to provide a diagnostic opinion as evidence in a pending judicial proceeding.

3.1.3 A Paired Testing Examination concerns two or more individuals regarding a single central contested fact to

which all of the examinees know the actual truth. Paired-testing is used by voluntary stipulation between the testifying parties to resolve disputed facts.

3.1.4 An Investigative Examination is intended to supplement and/or assist an investigation and for which the examiner has not been informed and does not reasonably believe that the results will be used as evidence in a court proceeding.

3.1.5 A Screening Examination is conducted to investigate whether an examinee has withheld important information regarding past behaviors encompassed by the relevant questions that cover specified periods of time. Screening examinations may be designed to investigate single or multiple types of behavior. Screening Examinations are utility tests designed as a screening method and not a specific issue examination. Therefore, to maximize accuracy and utility, a specific issue test should be conducted when significant responses appear using this process. When such responses are present to any relevant question on the screening test, the response should be explored further with the examinee and tested using a single-issue comparison test format. Opinions that an examinee has been deceptive should result only from the analysis of a specific issue test.

#### 4. Location and Test Conditions

4.1 The testing environment shall be free from distractions that would interfere with the examinee's ability to appropriately focus on the issues being addressed. The examination site should be reasonably free from distractions that would interfere with the conductance of a proper examination. This is not intended to address examinations conducted for demonstration purposes.

#### 5. Preparation

5.1 Prior to an examination the examiner should review all available information concerning the issue to be resolved.

5.2 No examination shall be conducted unless the instrument meets the manufacturer's specifications.

5.3 Where permitted by law, Evidentiary Examinations and Sex Offender Examinations should be recorded by audio or audio/visual means in its entirety. Any stops or pauses in the recording must be fully explained on the recording.

5.4 All polygraph files, data, reports and recordings shall be retained and maintained for a minimum of one year, or longer if applicable by law.

5.5 All instruments shall consist of a minimum of two separate respiratory components to record patterns in thoracic and abdominal activity, an electro-dermal component to record reflecting relative changes in the conductance or resistance of current by the epidermal tissue, a cardio component capable of recording cardiovascular activity including changes in relative blood pressure, pulse rate and pulse amplitude, and a separate data channel specifically designed to record physical body movements which would cause possible distortions. Other physiological data may also be recorded during testing, but may not be used to formulate decisions of truthfulness or deception unless validated in replicated and published research.

5.6 An examiner should not conduct more than five polygraph examinations on a calendar day.

#### 6. Pretest Practices

6.1 The examiner shall adhere to the following practices:

6.1.1 Properly verify the correct identity of the examinee to the extent possible.

6.1.2 Properly explain to the examinee their rights concerning the examination and have the examinee sign a consent form prior to testing.

6.1.3 During the pre-test phase the examiner will ensure that the examinee is mentally and physically capable of testing to the extent legally practicable.

6.1.3.1 Mental, physical, and medical conditions of the examinee should be reviewed and recorded.

6.1.3.2 If at any time the examiner believes that the examinee is not suitable for testing, the examination will be immediately terminated.

6.2 All examinations shall be conducted in compliance with governing local, state, and federal regulations and laws.

6.3 The examiner shall treat the examinee in a professional manner and display an objective attitude.

6.4 Sufficient time shall be spent with the examinee to allow him or her to discuss the issues to be tested and to fully explain his or her position.

6.5 The examiner shall formulate all test questions and allow sufficient time to introduce each test question to the examinee in a manner which complies with the technique being used and recognized best practices.

6.6 Sufficient time shall be spent to ensure the examinee recognizes and understands each question as well as understands the polygraph process and that total cooperation is required.

## 7. In-test Practices

7.1 Examiners shall use techniques and formats that have a minimum of two published peer reviewed research studies independent of each other, one of which should preferably be a field study identifying the procedure used, accuracy of the process and the error rate, when administering Evidentiary Examinations. For field study guidance, see Guiding Principles and Benchmarks for the Conduct of Validity Studies of Psychophysiological Veracity Examinations Using the Polygraph. European Polygraph, Vol. 4, Nr. 4(14), 2010.7.2. A continuous recording shall be made and maintained of the data produced during the in-test phase. All test data must be accounted for prior to rendering a professional opinion.

7.2 Questions shall be asked in a way that ensures responses are not influenced by the way the question is asked.

7.3 Question intervals shall allow for a reasonable recovery. A minimum of twenty-seconds between the answer of a test question to the commencement of the next question that follows it, not to exceed thirty seconds and such timing should be consistent.

## 8. Evaluation Practices

8.1 The examiner shall use evaluation methods for which he or she has been properly trained and that are appropriate to the testing technique being utilized.

8.1.1 Acceptable evaluation methods are those which have known error and accuracy rates established by peer reviewed research.

8.2 A professional opinion based on the results of a multi-faceted or multi-issue Investigative or Screening Examination should be reported using the terms Significant Response, No Significant Response, Inconclusive or No Opinion (SR, NSR, INC, or NO).

8.3 A professional opinion based on the results of a single issue Evidentiary, Paired or Investigative Examination should be reported as Deception Indicated, No Deception Indicated, Inconclusive, and No Opinion (DI or NDI, INC, or NO).

8.4 Test results of recognition should be reported as Recognition Indicated, No Recognition Indicated, or No Opinion (RI, NRI, NO).

8.5 The examiner shall maintain all records of test data analysis for a minimum of one year, or as applicable by law.

8.6 The examiner shall not disclose the results of the examination until the data obtained has been adequately and sufficiently analyzed.

8.7 Examiners shall run a sufficient number of charts and collect enough physiological data suitable for evaluation in compliance with the technique being utilized.

8.7.1 All suitable physiological data will be evaluated when formulating an opinion.

## 9. Post-test Practices

9.1 Following the collection and analysis of all physiological data, the examinee should be informed of his or her results unless it is otherwise mandated by a court of law or agreed otherwise by the examinee. Exception is made when the attorney representing the examinee requests that no post-test interview be conducted and the results be provided only to the attorney.