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Forensic Dental Photography

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11.1 Introduction

The concept of accurate forensic photography has established itself as a crucial part of forensic investigation as a means of documenting evidence. Historically, photography has been the most significant method of preserving the physical evidence of patterned injuries in skin. The need to accurately photograph injury patterns as they appear on skin is paramount to the odontologist, pathologist, law enforcement, and the legal system. Since vast amounts of time often elapse between the commission of crimes and the trial of the perpetrator, photographs frequently are the only permanent record of the injuries to the victims. Therefore, it is imperative that the forensic investigator be able to properly photograph injury patterns as a means of preserving such evidence.

This chapter is better understood if the reader has a good grasp of photographic terminology and the skills for operating basic camera equipment. It is not the authors' intent to attempt to cover basic photography. There are many publications that can provide the necessary background to improve one's understanding of the photographic principles described in this chapter.

Two readily available and easy reading books are *Basic Photography* by Michael Langford¹ and *The Basic Book of Photography*, Fifth Edition, by Tom Grimm.² This chapter will provide an overview of the various techniques utilized by the forensic dental photographer to properly record injuries using advanced photographic methods. It will also present the historical photographic techniques utilizing traditional film and the exploding era of digital imaging.