

5. Create low, oblique lighting with an off camera flash or a flashlight.

**3D (impressed) Impressions** should have a minimum of four photos taken with the flash 3-4 ft. from the impression. Four different positions should be taken to surround the impression since each flash highlights the impression differently.

This is critical with snow impressions.



The correct flash angle will depend on the depth of the impression and should be visibly tested at 10, 30 and 45 degrees prior to photography.

**2D (flat) Impressions with residue** should be photographed using the same technique as 3D Impressions.

The best flash angle for a dust impression is almost parallel to the surface.



Lighting from multiple angles is important so individualizing characteristics can be visualized in the examination.

6. Set camera to the highest quality setting (RAW, if available).



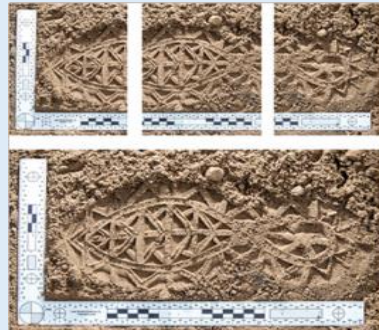
RAW

JPEG

7. Manual flash settings may need to be used if auto flash results in the image being too dark or too light.

8. Focus the camera on the bottom of the impression and select an appropriate aperture (F-stop) for the greatest depth of field (e.g. F=11-16).

9. If a low quality digital camera is used, take additional, focused close-ups of the impression in overlapping thirds.



Submitted photos that do not adhere to the above guidelines may limit a complete and thorough forensic examination.

Madison Crime Lab: 608-266-2031  
Milwaukee Crime Lab: 414-382-7500  
Wausau Crime Lab: 715-845-8626

## Footwear Impression Preservation, Documentation and Collection



## Find a Footwear Impression at your Crime Scene?

Follow these easy steps for best evidence preservation.

### 1. Preserve the Impression

- Secure the scene to protect the suspect impression from being destroyed.

- Protect the impression from the weather while preparing the camera and collecting casting/lifting materials.

- DO NOT remove embedded debris from the impression.

### 2. Properly Photograph the Impression

Remember, you are not just photographing the impression to document the pattern, but also to highlight any cuts, stone holds and characteristics that are individualizing to make an identification!

### 3. Collect the Impression (see insert)

### 4. Submit Evidence to the Lab for:

- Comparison to known standards
- Search of unknown impression through databases for Investigative Leads

## Photo Equipment

- Camera
  - A digital SLR camera with off camera flash & shutter release is recommended
  - Use the highest mega pixel camera available for best results
- Tripod
  - L-scale, or two flat rulers to run the length and width of impression

## Photographing the Impression

1. Document the location of the impression at scene. Do Not Remove Any Embedded Debris from Impressions!
2. Place the L-scale/rulers next to the impression.



Above image does NOT have the scale on the same plane.

Ensure that the scale is placed at the same depth as the impression, without disturbing the impression itself.



Above image DOES have the scale on the same plane.

Scaling at the same depth, and correct angle of the impression is critical to our examinations. Lack of a proper scale will limit our conclusions!

3. Position the camera on a tripod directly over the impression.

Any photo taken at an angle may create distortion of the impression and make it difficult to determine accurate size for the comparison.

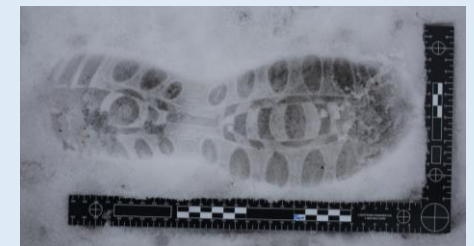


4. Position the camera to fill the frame with the impression lengthwise.

INCORRECT:  
Not filling the frame



CORRECT



To accurately examine the shape & size of small individual characteristics, the correct angle and filling of the frame are crucial.

Proper photography is vital!  
Collection of an impression may yield additional detail that is not observed in an image.

To accurately examine the shape & size of small individual characteristics, the correct angle and filling of the frame are crucial.