
	<u><b>SUBJECT</b></u>  <b>CRIME SCENE PROCEDURES</b>		<u><b>NUMBER</b></u>  <b>402/12</b>
	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>  <b>08-25-09</b>	<b>AMENDS:</b>  <b>07-10-08</b>	<b>RESCINDS:</b>
<b>DISTRIBUTION: Administration, CID, Patrol, Communications, Clerical,</b>		<b>REFERENCES:</b> <b>CALEA Chpt. 42 / IACLEA Chpt. 42</b> <b>TPCFA 7.09.1, 7.10.1</b>	

**.10 INTRODUCTION**

- A. The purpose of this procedure is to outline the duties of the Officers who respond to the scene of a crime. These guidelines are intended to eliminate the problem of destruction of physical evidence.
- B. This procedure covers the general duties of Officers at a crime scene. It does not provide for the highly specialized area of collection of physical evidence by the assigned investigators, nor does it prescribe follow-up procedures.
- C. The value of physical evidence is determined by how useful it is in verifying that a crime has been committed, identifying the person or persons responsible, and exonerating all other persons who may be under suspicion.
- D. To realize the potential of physical evidence, the Police Officer joins the prosecutor to discover the facts so that none of the facts presented in the trial may be open to reasonable doubt.
- E. In order to discover the facts of a crime through the use of physical evidence, a certain quantity and quality of evidence needs to be collected.
- F. The scene of any crime is evidence. The first Officer to arrive at the scene of a crime automatically assumes the responsibility of securing the crime scene area from unauthorized intrusions.


**.20 DIMENSIONS OF A CRIME SCENE**

- A. No set of definite rules can be applied to defining the dimensions of the scene of a crime. However, the best physical evidence is normally found at or near the site of the most critical action that was taken by the criminal against the property or the victim. While it is entirely possible that the dimensions of a crime scene will be large, there are usually priority areas readily apparent to the trained investigator, which should be given immediate protection.
- B. The success of any investigation that involves a definable crime scene depends on the initial observations and actions of the first Officer to arrive at the scene. While the circumstances of the particular case govern the actions taken by the Officer to protect and preserve the physical evidence, he refers to the guidelines under Section .30 for additional instructions.

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**.30 OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. The Patrol Officer assigned to the call follows these guidelines:
1. Proceed to the scene as soon as possible after being notified of its occurrence.
  2. Use caution when entering so as not to destroy any evidence.
  3. Pursue and apprehend the perpetrator if he is still at the scene or visible fleeing the scene.
  4. Provide for aid for the injured.
  5. Ascertain the extent of the crime and determine:
    - a. If the call is a true emergency situation;
    - b. If other responding Officers may slow down;
    - c. If there is a sufficient number of Officers at the scene to simultaneously aid the injured and secure the scene, and immediately notify the Dispatcher if additional help is needed.
    - d. The amount of time lapse involved.
    - e. The description of the actor, his means and direction of flight and whether or not he is armed. This information is relayed to the Dispatcher.
  6. Secure the crime scene by preventing unauthorized and unnecessary persons from entering the crime scene area.
  7. Until arrival of supervisory personnel, the Officer assigned to the call takes charge and directs other Officers to protect the scene.
  8. Locate, identify, separate and interview witnesses.
  9. Initiate the proper report that described the offense and include:
    - a. Any vehicles, persons or suspicious activities, possibly related to the offense, which were observed on the way to the scene;
    - b. Time of arrival at the scene;
    - c. The names of all Officers present;
    - d. Initial observations of the Officer including any register statements made by the actor or any dying declarations made by the complainant.
    - e. Physical conditions of the premise or scene, including weather, lighting, doors open or closed, windows open or closed, or discarded articles, disarrayed furniture, and/or unusual odors.
  10. Continue protection of the crime scene and physical evidence by maintaining the integrity of the evidence by properly handling any object of evidentiary value

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(including forged documents). The Officer does not handle any item of physical evidence unless it is absolutely necessary to take custody of any item to prevent its loss or destruction. The Officer then marks the location where the evidence is found, marks the item with his initials, and gives the item to the assigned Investigator, if one is assigned to the call. If the Investigator takes possession of an item, he places it in the property room; otherwise, it is the Officer's responsibility to do so.

- B. The assigned Investigator assigned to the call follows these guidelines:
1. Proceed to the scene upon notification.
  2. Survey and consider the crime scene to determine:
    - a. Type of crime committed.
    - b. Whether he has the proper equipment and the capability of correctly collecting the evidence.
    - c. If he needs assistance, he should notify the Dispatcher to send the needed equipment and/or personnel.
  3. If necessary, photograph the crime scene.
  4. If necessary, sketch the crime scene.
  5. Search, recognize and record the location, via measurements, of items of physical evidence.
  6. Systematically collect all evidence.
  7. Develop and lift latent prints:
    - a. By collecting items that may have latent prints unsuitable for development by dusting for latent prints. Those items are taken to the latent print processing room and printed. In the special case of motor vehicles, impoundment may be considered when the vehicle is involved in a major crime such as murder, rape, and robbery.
      - I. A latent print investigation and search for items of physical evidence is not a vehicle under poor lighting conditions, adverse weather conditions, or any situation which makes the gathering of prints difficult or impossible.
      - II. If the assigned Investigator thinks that he cannot properly process the vehicle, he informs his Supervisor of the circumstances, and the Supervisor determines if the vehicle

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is to be removed to a secure area of the Police Department, isolated from public access, and guarded.

- III. If the Supervisor decides to remove the vehicle, it is secured and removed to the maintenance facility to a secure area that can be guarded.
  - IV. If the latent prints are developed, the Investigator obtains elimination prints from persons present at the crime scene who are not suspects. This procedure for obtaining elimination prints applies to those cases for which the Investigator believes the elimination prints would be an investigative aid in that they eliminate all unnecessary latent print examinations.
- b. Properly handle, mark, and transport the physical evidence to the property room of the Police Department where it is impounded. The Investigator is responsible for the collection and preservation of all physical evidence.
  - c. If necessary, diagram the crime scene, using the information from the sketch made at the scene.
  - d. Prepare the necessary supplemental report describing actions taken and naming any Officer who assisted.
- C. Investigators assigned to the Investigation Division are in charge of any major crime scene, and are responsible for the supervision of all Officers at the scene.
- 1. Proceed to any major crime scene, or any crime scene where supervisory presence is requested;
  - 2. Consider and survey the crime scene to determine:
    - a. If there are sufficient Officers at the scene;
    - b. The dimensions of the crime scene, and best method of protecting it;
    - c. If the Dispatcher has notified surrounding jurisdictions;
    - d. If the proper quadrant has been established and Officers assigned are working it properly;
    - e. If the proper information regarding the actor(s) has been broadcasted to the Officers working the quadrant;
  - 3. Assign Officers to specific duties required to correctly protect and process the crime scene.

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4. Remain at the scene as long as necessary to insure proper protection of the area, and supervise subordinates in the performance of their assigned functions.
5. After photographs, fingerprints and other physical evidence are secured, and after the Medical Examiner, if involved, are completed, determine if the news media may be briefed if they are at location of a crime scene.
6. Prepare a supplemental report describing actions taken, and name the Officers present at the scene and the duties assigned to each.
7. Provide for transportation of witnesses if necessary.


D. The assigned follow-up Investigator(s) should:

1. Proceed to the crime scene when notified to do so.
2. Obtain initial information from the Patrol Officer responsible for preparing the offense report.
3. Survey the crime scene to determine if their presence in the crime area is necessary:
  - a. If necessary to enter, use caution as to avoid contamination of the crime scene area.
  - b. Avoid handling, or otherwise altering, any objects before the crime scene is processed, always is informing the Investigator assigned to processing what was moved.
4. Identify and interview witnesses outside the immediate crime scene area.
5. If written statements are necessary, make arrangements for the witnesses to give their statements.
6. Prepare the proper supplemental report describing their actions.

#### **.40 SPECIFIC CRIME SCENE PROCEDURES**

A. Homicide scenes where the victim is obviously dead.


1. The Bexar County Medical Examiner's Office has delegated the authority that it receives from the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure to move the body of a human being from its original position of death, without his consent. Homicide victims will not be moved.
2. Personnel authorized to enter the area of the crime scene include:

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3. Additional Officers necessary to secure and protect the crime scene;
  - a. First Officer to arrive;
  - b. The assigned Investigator;
  - c. The assigned uniform Patrol Sergeant;
  - d. The assigned follow-up Investigator;
  - e. The investigators from the Bexar County Medical Examiner's Office.
  
4. In the special case of, and upon discovery of, a "mysterious" homicide or one in which no witnesses or suspects are apparent, or where it appears that a solution to the crime may rest heavily on the development of physical evidence to identify a criminal actor or actors, the only Officers authorized to enter the crime scene are those specifically charged with processing the area for physical evidence. After the scene has been processed, other Officers may be allowed to enter.

**B. At violent crime scenes:**

1. Any time the Officer thinks the victim is alive; he calls for emergency medical assistance.
2. Personnel authorized to enter the crime scene are:
  - a. All persons authorized under this procedure.
  - b. Trained medical personnel.
3. The reporting Officer should:
  - a. Make note of the original position of the victim.
  - b. Make note of any physical evidence that may be accidentally moved by medical personnel or anyone else.
  - c. Observe medical personnel to ensure that:
    - I. They do not contaminate the crime scene by discarding any of their supplies or equipment in the area.
    - II. If it is obvious that physical evidence must be moved to prevent its loss or destruction or to properly treat the victim, the Officer marks the location of the evidence and takes custody of it. He later marks the item with his initials and gives it to the Investigator assigned to the call.

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- d. Relate to the assigned Investigator and any supervisory personnel, the following:
  - I. Any changes in the victim's position.
  - II. Any physical evidence that the Officer found necessary to pick up, the location where it was found, and any other alterations of the crime scene area.

**C. Robberies of Businesses**


1. Use caution and assume that the suspect is still at the scene.
2. Determine if the suspect is still at the scene. If he has fled, obtain a description of the suspect, means and direction of flight, weapon used, time lapse, and any other pertinent information.
3. Give the Dispatcher the above information.
4. Protect the crime scene by:
  - a. Safeguarding all entrances and exits that may have been used by the actor and allowing no unauthorized persons near areas where the robber may have been.
  - b. Isolating the area where the actual robbery took place. (Example: Teller window in a bank or checkout counter in a store.)
5. Show the assigned Investigator areas in the premise where the actor may have touched something.

**D. Burglaries**

1. An Investigator is dispatched on all burglary calls.
2. It is the responsibility of the investigating Officer to request an Investigator if a call turns out to be a burglary after being dispatched as some other offense.
3. An Investigator is cancelled only under the following circumstances:
  - a. The investigating Officer at the scene determines that the offense of burglary has not been committed and an Investigator is not required for any other purpose.
  - b. A Supervisor at the scene determines that it is impossible to lift prints or obtain other evidence.

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- c. The owner advises the investigating Officer that he does not wish for the premise to be printed.
- 4. The investigating Officer in the body of his report will document In All instances in which an Investigator is cancelled.
- 5. The reporting Officer informs the complainant that he should not handle any object that may have been touched by the perpetrator, as the suspect's fingerprints may be destroyed before the Investigator arrives to print the premise.
- E. When an Officer encounters a burglary of a safe, he isolates and secures the immediate area surrounding the safe, and the entrance and exit points.
- F. Burglary of a vehicle:
  - 1. Assigned Investigator is called to print the vehicle under the following circumstances:
    - a. The reporting Officer thinks there is a possibility of developing latent prints.
    - b. An arrest is made on the offense.
    - c. Theft involves loss of objects of high monetary value.
    - d. There is a strong indication of a specific suspect in the case.
    - e. The complainant wants the vehicle printed.
- G. Immediate notification of the Criminal Investigations Division that an offense has occurred takes place in the following situations: all felony offenses against the person such as murder, criminal attempt to commit murder, robbery, sexual assault; sex offenses involving juvenile victims; or major thefts, burglaries, and any felony investigation in which an arrest has been made.
- .50 Shift Supervisors of the Patrol Division will be assigned the duties of processing certain crime scenes and assisting Criminal Investigation Division with major crime scenes. The Shift Supervisor's Patrol vehicle will be equipped with a Latent Print kit, Evidence Collection kit, and Digital Camera and Field Narcotics Test kit.
- .60 During the off-duty hours of Criminal Investigation Division personnel, Shift Supervisors will handle collection and documentation of evidence for the following types of crimes scene:
  - A. Thefts
  - B. Burglary - Vehicle
  - C. Burglary - Coin-Operated Machine

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- D. Burglary - Residence
- E. Burglary - Building
- F. Forgery - Check
- G. Forgery - Document
- H. Criminal Mischief
- I. Field Narcotics Testing
- J. Deaths (Natural)
- K. Assaults

All crime scene investigations conducted by Shift Supervisors will be conducted in accordance with this Department's Policy and Procedure.

- .70 If due to manpower shortage or close proximity to the end of the shift, it is not practical for a Shift Supervisor to work a crime scene, Criminal Investigations Division personnel will be contacted to work the crime scene. Anytime a Shift Supervisor encounters any type of difficulty in working a crime scene, he will contact C.I.D. for assistance.
- .71 Shift Supervisors will not be on an "on-call" status while off duty for crime scene investigation unless arrangements have been scheduled through the Patrol Division Commander.
- .80 The on call Criminal Investigator will be notified by the Shift Supervisor on any questionable crime scene and all cases involving sexual assault, suicide, homicide, robbery, aggravated robbery or assault or aggravated assault on a Police Officer.