

## **GENERAL ORDER 83.2.1**

### **Crime Scene Processing/Evidence Handling**

**GENERAL ORDER CROSS-REFERENCE: 83.1.1**

#### **SUMMARY**

Outlines the responsibilities of an officer responding to a major crime scene and the steps an officer or investigator should take in processing the crime scene. Establishes a procedure to identify, recover and preserve physical evidence obtained at crime and accident scenes.

#### **DISCUSSION**

None.

#### **POLICY**

##### **I**

The first officer arriving at the scene of a major crime shall be in charge until relieved by a supervisor or by personnel from the Department's Investigations and Records Division. The officer shall protect the crime scene by:

1. Notifying their supervisor of the nature of the incident and request additional personnel as needed.
2. Excluding all unauthorized persons.
3. Cordon off all areas which might contain physical evidence pertinent to the investigation.
4. Starting a crime scene personnel log to record the date, time and identity of all persons allowed access to the crime scene.
5. Where their services are required, the officer in charge shall notify the Oregon State Police crime detection laboratory supervisor so that appropriate personnel can be dispatched to assist in the investigation. When it is determined that these specialists are required, they shall be notified within the hour. The members on scene shall follow the specialists' instructions on how to proceed until the specialist(s) arrive. The officer in charge shall cooperate and coordinate crime scene activities with laboratory personnel.
6. In the event that the crime being investigated involves the death of a human being, the officer in charge shall notify the on-call Lane County Medical Examiner representative

and the District Attorney's office prior to moving the body.

7. Where evidence will consist of a large number of items, the officer/investigator in charge may request supervisory authorization to contact the Department property control personnel to respond and assist in gathering and seizing evidence. The officer in charge of the scene shall coordinate crime scene activities to facilitate the collection of evidence.

## II

Once the crime scene is secured and sufficient personnel are on the scene to control access, a police officer or investigator shall be assigned to coordinate the processing of the crime scene. The officer/investigator shall consider the following techniques:

1. Obtain a search warrant to search any building, vehicle or person where a court order is necessary to process the crime scene.
2. Determine whether the Oregon State Police crime lab shall be contacted for assistance at the crime scene.
3. Contact the District Attorney's office for prosecutor assistance at the scene.
4. Determine the type of photography equipment that may be necessary to record the crime scene.
5. When the officer/investigator in charge of the crime scene determines that it would aid the investigation and prosecution to obtain a diagram of the scene, the officer/investigator may diagram the scene himself or contact a member of the department with expertise in the use of computer diagramming to obtain the necessary diagram.

## III

Processing of physical evidence at crime scenes is generally conducted by the investigating officer. Property personnel and/or crime laboratory personnel will respond upon request when deemed necessary by a supervisor. Investigating officers are responsible for processing the crime scene for latent finger and/or shoe prints. Surfaces conducive to receiving latent fingerprints shall be examined and processed in a manner appropriate to the surface material. Latent fingerprints should be photographed prior to "lifting" when using fingerprint powders. Photograph and collect all physical evidence pertinent to the investigation. Springfield Police Property personnel are responsible for the submission of evidence to the State Police Crime Laboratory and Identification Division for examination.

In processing crime scenes particular attention should be made with regards to the collection of DNA.

At major crime scenes, all crime scene personnel shall:

1. Check in with crime scene security officer to be logged on to the scene.
2. Contact officer/investigator in charge for brief statement of facts.
3. Contact team members for allocation of duties.

The procedures used for processing should be considered prior to implementation in order to appropriately sequence the activities so as not to overlook, destroy or otherwise contaminate potential items of evidence. The introduction of chemicals to conduct some type of test may preclude the value of that item of evidence for other testing. Consideration should be given to how to process a particular item to maximize its potential as evidence.

Generally, the progression of processing of a crime scene includes: 1) security of the crime scene; 2) general photographs of the entire scene; 3) searching for evidentiary items; 4) photographing specific items of evidence where such is located for individual identification and relative to other objects in the scene; 5) diagram or sketch of the crime scene; 6) any applicable processing of evidentiary items at the scene; 7) seizure and marking of evidentiary items; 8) appropriate packaging and recording of items seized and; 9) transportation to and lodging in secure storage (evidence locker).

The person processing the scene shall make a complete report of the crime or accident scene processing including: date and time of arrival at the scene; location of the crime; name of the victims, if known; name of suspect, if known; action taken at the scene, including photographs taken, measurements taken (yes or no), and a listing of physical evidence recovered; and case number.

Other information that should be included when a crime scene specialist is involved is the date and time a request for service was received, the name of the investigating officer, the disposition of the physical evidence and crime scene measurement information.

General photographs and/or video recording shall be completed prior to processing the crime scene or removing any items.

The date, time, location, and case number shall be recorded for any photography or videotaping conducted. Video recording may supplement but shall not replace still photography.

Specific photographs of scene, victim and items to be seized shall be completed as that area of the scene is processed and the item(s) are moved/removed.

A scale should be included in the field of view when objects are photographed, so that their exact size can be determined. Should there be some reason not to include a scale in the photograph, the dimensions of a fixed object in the scene could be taken to provide a scale of reference.

Methods used in the collection of physical evidence should be designed to preserve the condition of evidence in the process of collection, prevent the introduction of foreign materials to it, and ensure as complete a sample as possible and practical. Some kinds of physical evidence, such as liquid blood samples, must be placed in proper containers and delivered promptly to the laboratory or placed in the Department's refrigerator. Clothing which is wet or bloody should be air dried and packaged in paper bags. Other items possibly supporting latent fingerprints must be protected from any movement or action that might destroy or contaminate the prints. For specific handling requirements refer to G.O. 83.1.1.

A sufficient sample of evidence should be seized to ensure that comparison and identification efforts are not impeded in conducting laboratory analysis on this evidence.

Any item(s) of evidence seized shall be accompanied by a copy of the Department evidence report or voucher listing: a description of the item (including make, model number, and serial number, if any); source (from whom or location which obtained); and name of person collecting the item or items. Items of evidence shall be marked for identification so as not to damage or contaminate the evidence at the time of seizure.

The physical materials collected at the scene and related sites shall be delivered to property/evidence until such time as it is transferred to a laboratory for analysis, a courtroom, or other designated location.

A system shall be maintained which preserves documentation of any transaction in which the evidence changes hands.

Depending upon the magnitude of the crime, a survey of the scene may be needed. The survey may be as simple as a notebook sketch (not to scale) by the investigating officer or diagrams prepared by specially trained investigators.

Security shall be maintained on the crime scene until such time as it is of no further value to the investigation and is released to a responsible party or secured.

#### IV

Under no circumstances will Department members use tobacco products, consume food or beverages or otherwise contaminate the crime scene.

Protective barrier clothing shall be worn when handling biological or chemical materials.

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Richard L. Lewis  
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