

Crime Scene Management

Facilitator Guide

Session Overview

Introduction & Learning Objectives	05m
Overview of Crime Scene Investigation	15m
Discussion - Responding to a Crime Scene	10m
Discussion – First Responder Responsibilities	10m
Discussion – Managing the Crime Scene	10m
Break	10m
Discussion – Witnesses & Searches	10m
Discussion – Locard’s Law	15m
Discussion – Trace Evidence	15m
Wrap-Up / Questions	10m
End of Session / Break	10m

Learning Objectives:

- List the responsibilities of the first officer to arrive at a crime scene.
- Describe why it is important to arrive at a crime scene rapidly and safely.
- Describe, in order, the three priorities of responding to a crime scene.
- List the roles associated with crime scene investigations.
- Explain the “Golden Rule” of crime scene investigations.

Total Session Time: 2 hours

This particular session focuses on:

- *Crime Scene Management – Initial Response and Security*
- *Roles in a Crime Scene*
- *Locard’s Principle of Exchange Theory*

Facilitators Needed: 1 (CI)

Locations:

- *Classroom*

Materials Needed:

- *None*

Students Should Already Have: ***[THUMB DRIVE]***

- *Crime Scene Checklist*



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SAY TO CLASS

Throughout the Criminal Investigation sessions, you will learn about the different roles and responsibilities involved in successfully investigating a crime scene. Your work will help to prepare you for your first investigation when you get on patrol.

The role of a police officer at a crime scene is very vital. More cases are lost because of the response of the initial responding officer than in court; don't be that officer that taints an investigation because of an improper response.



NOTE TO FACILITATOR -

Introduction - Spend 15 minutes discussing what criminal investigations is all about.

- What is a crime scene?
- Why are criminal investigations so important?
 - Almost every call we handle as police involves some sort of criminal investigation.
 - A majority of investigations are lost during the first hour of the initial officer's response, not in court.
- Overview of the investigative process.
 - Reporting the crime, initial investigation, case screening (do we continue with investigation), follow-up investigation, case preparation, and prosecution.

(Hess, K. & Orthmann, C., 2010)



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SAY TO CLASS

1) Dispatch & Call Response:

There are two ways that you will respond to calls. Most of the time officers are sent to calls via the 9-1-1 system by dispatch. You will be given some of the vital information which has been collected by the 9-1-1 operator; this gives you a heads up before you arrive. You should know who to contact, what the suspect looks like, and some of the information about the incident.

The second way is to on-view a crime in progress, such as people fighting, robbery in progress, or burglary in progress. Sometimes you observe an incident which is taking place close by. This kind of situation might require immediate intervention.

As the **first responder** to the scene, the first mission in your response should be to recognize, identify, and control any dangerous situations (**MAKE THE SCENE SAFE**). Making the scene safe happens before any investigative steps take place.

As soon as you are dispatched, you should begin taking detailed notes about the call. Every call could develop into a major case. Your notes should include, at minimum:

- Date and time reported,
- Who reported it,
- Type of incident,
- Location / brief description of the area



IMPORTANT POINT

For crime scene notes *about evidence* to hold up in court, they must meet three criteria:

- A. Made at the scene,
- B. Verified at the scene,
- C. Made while looking at the object



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2) Medical Aid:

After making the scene safe you will **render first aid** if necessary; this may include calling for medical aid or using your personal first aid skills. The victims' need for medical treatment takes precedence over our need to preserve the crime scene.

A crime scene can be contaminated by medical personnel but there are ways to mitigate the contamination. You might want to lead the medics to the victim and instruct them what evidence to watch out for. Teach the medical people that you work with how to preserve vital evidence such as gunshot and stab wounds. In this case you would have them cut the clothing around the bullet or knife holes. While the medical personnel are working on the victim, delegate someone to stand nearby with a trash bag to collect any medical waste before it contaminates the crime scene. If the trash hits the ground it is now part of your crime scene; document it in the report

3) Managing the Crime Scene:

When you are the Officer in Charge (OIC) you may have the responsibility to manage the scene, which means that you will call in additional resource that you need to help process the crime scene. These resources include but are not limited to, other officers, forensics personnel, detectives, K-9, medical aid and tow trucks, to name a few. As the OIC you will have the responsibility of delegating task to the additional personnel who are assisting you in processing the crime scene. You may be giving direction to senior personnel, but as the OIC it is your scene and you are in charge until relieved by someone of a higher rank such as a sergeant or detective.

As the OIC, you may have several tasks going on at the same time, which is OK. You should allow the other officers to do their jobs and report to you. Try not to keep resources at the scene any longer than you need them, as your scene is not the only show in town.

Here are some common roles during crime scene investigation:

1. Photographer
2. Crime scene sketcher
3. Evidence collection
4. Scene security
5. Interviewer



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BREAK

4) Witness Contact:

After the scene has been rendered safe and secured, you can now work to **identify and apprehend the offender**. You will need to contact or delegate an officer to contact anyone that witnessed the incident. The goal is to get them identified before they begin to wander away from the scene. You cannot legally keep them at the scene without their cooperation, so you should, at a minimum, try to get their contact information (name, address, and telephone number) so they can be contacted later. If possible speak to witnesses while they are still at the scene, as this is the time when the incident will be fresh in their minds and they have not had the opportunity to speak with other witnesses and contaminate their recollection of the events.

You will want to get as much information as possible about the suspect. Ask about the description of the suspect, direction of travel, mode of travel, address, associates, and any location he/she could be found. Get this information out to fellow units as soon as possible.

5) Securing the Scene:

After you render the scene safe, it is time to secure the scene to help insure that the scene does not become contaminated or tampered with. To help with this task, you should establish boundaries which enclose the scene and keep unauthorized people away from your scene. This will give you room to work. These boundaries are called "evidence lines" and "safety lines."



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An **evidence line** is used to enclose the immediate crime scene. This is done using crime scene tape, and the evidence line should be large enough to enclose the entire scene and give the investigators room to work. It is easier to downsize an evidence line than it is to expand it later, so make sure the scene is surveyed thoroughly prior to setting up the evidence line. If the evidence line is too small, evidence may be destroyed or contaminated by people outside of the evidence line. The **safety line** is outside of the evidence line. There should be room in between the evidence line and the safety line to keep unauthorized people away from the crime scene. This buffer zone can be used to stage personnel who are going to work in the crime scene but are waiting for their turn. Outside of the safety line the media and general public would be allowed to move freely.

At a crime scene you may need to set up an area for the media to stage and give them access to a person who is qualified and authorized to speak with them. This person could be a Public Information Officer (PIO) or a supervisor.

There are several groups that might contaminate a crime scene if not controlled. These groups include fire personnel, media, administrators, other officers, and curious onlookers. As the OIC, the crime scene is yours to control. You should take as much time as you need but no longer.

On large crime scenes you will need the assistance from other officers and specialty personnel. Give these people direction and allow them to do their jobs. If you get to a crime scene and you are in over your head, call for help from someone that has expertise that you do not have such as the Washington State Patrol Crime Scene Response Team (CSRT). Don't keep these resources at the scene any longer than is needed.



IMPORTANT POINT

The Golden Rule: No evidentiary item is to be moved until it is marked, photographed, and sketched.



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Locard's Exchange Principle (AKA: Locard's Law)

The principle is named for Edmond Locard, who founded and directed the first forensic laboratory, the Institute of Lyon's (France) Institute of Criminalistics (1910-1951). He worked on criminal identification methods including poroscopy (the microscopic examination of fingerprints); analyses of body fluids, hair and skin; and graphometry (handwriting analysis). Locard is known for his advancement of the science of fingerprints. Locard's law is known as the theory of *transfer* and *mutual exchange*.

Examples of Trace Evidence:

- Clothing—fibers dropping, shedding from you, type of garments worn
- Skin- small pieces are always dropping from a body (rub your face and then look at hand/shirt)
- Hair left behind



NOTE TO FACILITATOR -

Ask the students if there are any questions.

Advise the students that this is only the beginning of their crime scene investigations sessions. In later sessions, they will go over greater details of scene investigation and evidence collection. Those skills will later be applied to practical scenarios.



BREAK/END OF SESSION

