

"CRIME SCENE PRESERVATION"

Series II Video 6

Program Overview
Training Guide
Test Questions and Answers

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Program Overview
Training Guide

Objectives

- to make a crime scene safe
- to provide medical attention to the injured on scene
- to preserve evidence at crime scene
- to avoid contamination of that evidence
- to limit access to crime scene
- to carefully collect, document, and log in all presumed evidence
- to find out what *truthfully* happened at a scene

LEGAL RIGHT FOR OFFICER TO BE AT CRIME SCENE

1. Public place: such as tavern, parking lot, or gas station
2. Owner of property invites officer on or inside premises
3. Emergency circumstances: such as a crime in progress on premises
4. Legal search warrant

Possible Crime Scenes

Traffic scene that involves

- * *serious injury or death*
- * *someone leaving the scene of an accident*
- * *someone suspected of driving while intoxicated*
- * *vehicular assault*

Assaults

Burglaries

Robberies

Homicides

Suicides (treat as homicides until investigation suggests otherwise)

Sudden Deaths in which healthy individuals die unexpectedly

* *in bed*

* *in cars*

Accidental Deaths such as

* *utility worker killed while working*

* *person falls down stairs and dies*

Once First Responder has determined that a situation is a crime scene. . .

I. Make sure the crime scene is safe for officers, victims, suspects, witnesses, and bystanders

- * Call for backup
- * Secure and retain any weapons on the premises
- * Pat down and handcuff possible suspects for your and their safety
- * Ask about any other weapons or people on or around premises such as workers, children, etc.
- * Clear and secure premises with any handcuffed suspects always in sight
- * Call for support: supervisors, detectives, evidence technicians, paramedics, medical examiners, and coroners

II. Provide medical attention to the injured

- * Depending on company policy, officers might stop arterial bleeding or begin CPR until medical assistance (fire department or paramedics) arrives on the scene

III. Preserve evidence at crime scene

- * Watch where you are stepping.
- * Place plastic bags or some paper over shell casings or weapons or other possible evidence.
- * Stage yourself at the door until detectives in charge and/or evidence technicians arrive.
- * Once the detective in charge or evidence technician arrive, relate any pertinent information and turn scene over to the investigator.

VI. Carefully collect, document, and log in all presumed evidence.

- * Photograph and/or videotape the crime scene and all possible evidence.
- * Take a photograph of the house, business, or place of business to document where you are and the address.
- * If the departmental budget allows, take more photograph than you think you need.
- * If photographing evidence such as footprints, bloodstains, weapons, or shoes, take picture with ruler for dimensions and perspective. Then take another one without the ruler so that a prosecutor or defense attorney will not ask what you are hiding beneath that ruler.
- * If possible, do not touch dead victims or clean their bodies. You might be removing important evidence.
- * Document all evidence. Either the investigating detective or evidence technician should be in charge of collecting evidence.
- * Make certain that you keep an accurate and limited chain of custody.
- * You can make Xeroxed copies of money, jewelry, weapons to avoid later accusations. Also count money in front of another officer as a witness.
- * You can put money in a non-interest bearing account for later when you have return it to the owner.
- * Keep all evidence in secured and accessible evidence lockers
- * Do not release the crime until you are certain that you have search for, collected, and documented all possible evidence. A suspect, property owner, or judge might let you have access to that crime again. Also, someone might contaminate evidence you overlooked or forgot about.

Smaller departments might request the help of the Highway Patrol or State Investigation Teams that may have the experience and more advanced equipment to help in the investigation of a crime.

INTERVIEWS

- * If possible, try not to interview possible suspects at the scene of a crime. Take them back to the station and interview them in a controlled environment.
- * Videotape, audiotape, or written document of an interview can help to corroborate crime scene evidence and becomes evidence in a case.
- * If a possible suspect or victim blurts out information at crime scene, carefully document. These remarks are part of *Res Gestae* (what happens or spontaneous utterances--"I shot her" or "My husband shot me.").
- * You cannot arrest a person unless you have probable cause or witnessed the perpetrator in the act of a crime.
- * When videotaping interviews with witnesses or possible suspects, record the time and date (clock and calendar on wall or on videotape) and ask permission of person to taped interview.
- * If you have someone that you suspect of the crime, then you must "Mirandize" that person, informing them of their rights to remain silent, that anything they say might and will be used against them, that they have the right to a lawyer. If accused suspect requests a lawyer, then stop the interview immediately.

ALERT, Inc., would like to thank the Maryland Heights, Florissant, and Richmond Heights P.D.'s, and Ed Nowicki and Attorney Mark H. Neill for their professional assistance in making this videotape and training guide.

Departmental policies and legal counsel, however, should dictate officers' procedures on crime scenes.

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Test Questions

1. Name the four legal rights you have to be on a crime scene:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

2. Treat all suicide scenes as _____ until the investigation suggests otherwise.

3. A traffic scene in which a driver leaves the accident could be a crime scene.

True

False

4. A victim's dying confession could be part of _____, spontaneous utterances.

5. The major problems of contamination of a crime scene would be which of the following:

- a. Victims
- b. Other officers
- c. Paramedics
- d. b and c

6. What is the primary concern of the First Responder coming upon reaching a scene?

7. If you have to use the telephone at a crime scene, put on rubber gloves to avoid smudging fingerprints.

True

False

Test Answers
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1. a. public place
 - b. owner of property invites officer in
 - c. emergency circumstances
 - d. search warrant
2. homicides
3. True
4. Res Gestae
5. d. (b and c)
6. *safety* of officers, victims, suspects, witnesses, and bystanders
7. False, don't use it at all
8. b. at the station
9. True
10. truthfully
11. count, copy
12. one
13. d. (all the above)