



CRIME SCENE PROCESSING

Directive: 9-104

Date of Issue: July 2013 Amends/Cancel: Chapter X Sec 1H

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Directive is to establish policy and procedures in regards to Crime Scene Processing.

II. POLICY

- A. All personnel employed by DGS-MCP will be responsible for the proper and professional handling of crime scenes. All physical evidence will be properly identified, collected, preserved and processed for analysis.
- B. Supervisors will ensure that crime scenes are not unnecessarily disturbed or contaminated until such time as the scene has been processed and all evidence collected, or the criminal investigator responsible for the investigation of the case has arrived and taken control of the scene.
- C. The investigative efforts of patrol officers, detectives and laboratory technicians are viewed as mutually supportive and interactive. All personnel will fully cooperate with the investigator(s) and/or evidence technicians so as much pertinent evidence may be obtained from crime scenes as possible and to provide the maximum opportunity for a successful investigation.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Evidence

- 1. As used in this order, evidence refers to tangible, physical evidence that can be seen or touched. (e.g. documents, weapons, latent prints)
- 2. Anything that can be used to any degree to prove or disprove the existence or non-existence of a fact or point in issue.

B. Chain of Custody

- 1. The continuity and custody of items collected as physical evidence from the time of collection to the time of disposal.
- 2. The chain of custody must be established in order to prove that the items or materials offered as evidence at trial are the same items or materials collected at the crime scene or from the suspect or other individual.

- C. Crime Scene – The area immediately surrounding the location where a crime has occurred, including those adjacent areas where evidence may be present.

D. Crime Scene Processing – The specific actions taken at the scene of a crime or accident, including, but not limited to:

1. Taking of photographs;
2. Preparing of a sketch of the scene;
3. Collecting and preserving physical evidence.

E. Evidence Technician – A police officer or civilian who is responsible for processing a crime scene and has been trained to identify, recover and preserve physical evidence.

F. Major Crimes – Including but are not limited to murder, rape, robbery, life threatening assaults, arson, kidnapping, officer involved shootings and any other life threatening injuries or death.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Duties and Responsibilities

1. The first duty of law enforcement officers at the scene of any emergency is to care for the injured. However, Police Officers will approach the scene cautiously, maintain cover and concealment, and exercise any and all appropriate officer survival techniques if perpetrators are still present or believed to be nearby. As soon as officers are able to do so, emergency care will be provided to anyone needing these services.
2. Provided that the crime scene has been checked and found safe, the first officer on the scene will take all possible steps to secure the scene and prevent any tampering with, or contamination or destruction of the scene. Additional officers responding to the scene will assist by securing the scene, locating and identifying witnesses, etc.
3. Whenever DGS-MCP investigators or investigators from allied agencies are called to the scene, the investigator in charge will make any necessary decisions concerning the processing of the scene. An evidence technician should process all major crime scenes.
4. Patrol Officers will not relinquish custody of crime scenes, within the jurisdiction of DGS-MCP, without being directed to do so by a DGS-MCP supervisor.
5. Once the custody of the scene has been relinquished to an investigator from an allied agency DGS-MCP may still be responsible for the security of the scene. Patrol Officers will continue to assist in securing the scene as long as is needed if requested to do so by an investigator.
6. When the offense is considered a major crime a member of DGS-MCP CID will be notified. Upon arrival DGS-MCP CID may determine the investigation should be forwarded to allied law enforcement.

7. When CID is not needed on a crime scene, the Patrol Officer makes the decision whether to process the scene. Whenever an officer is in doubt concerning the processing of a crime scene, the supervisor will be consulted before a decision is made.
8. Detachment Commanders or their designees will ensure that fingerprint kits, cameras, film, and other supplies used to process crime scenes are in supply and readily available when needed by officers under his or her command.

B. Evidence Collection and Processing Techniques

1. All evidence must be collected legally in order to be admissible in court.
2. At the time it is found, evidence should be photographed exactly how it is found.
3. When evidence is found, it should be displayed to another officer, if possible, so that both individuals may testify as to the location it was found and the condition of the evidence at that time.
4. All evidence should be fully described in the officer's notes and the location where the evidence was found should be documented.
5. A sketch should be made of the crime scene, in addition to any photographs that may have been taken.
6. All articles of evidence should be carefully marked for identification and handled in accordance with the established Property and Evidence Procedures.
7. The chain of custody will be maintained and documented with respect to each piece of evidence.

C. Protecting/Securing the Crime Scene

1. Entrance to and exit from the crime scene will be limited to one door, if such a restriction is possible.
2. Only those authorized persons who have a legitimate investigative or supervisory role will be allowed to enter the crime scene.
3. The name, rank, identification number and employing agency will be obtained and recorded of all persons that enter the crime scene, as well as the time that they entered and the time that they left.
4. Too many persons at a crime scene can lead to the destruction or removal of potential evidence. The senior ranking officer at the crime scene will ensure that the crime scene is protected and controlled properly.