



POLICY/PROCEDURE NUMBER: 07-C.I.-004 Page 1 of 8 with three Appendices

SUBJECT: CRIME SCENE PROCESSING & THE COLLECTION AND PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 18, 2019 REVIEW DATE: December 18, 2020

AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: Physical Evidence Policy #200-14, issued April 17, 2000; February 8, 2007 version; January 27, 2010 version; February 16, 2011 version; January 8, 2014 version; January 7, 2015 version.

IACLEA STANDARDS: 14.1.1, 14.1.2, 14.1.3, 14.1.4, 14.1.5, 14.1.6

CSU POLICE SYSTEMWIDE POLICY: NO

APPROVED: Gregory L. Murphy, Chief of Police

I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for identifying, collecting and preserving evidence at crime scenes.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of this department to ensure that all crime scenes are processed thoroughly and that all evidence is properly collected to ensure its integrity and aid in the prosecution of offenders.

III. PROCEDURES

Crime Scene Processing

A. Crime Scene Processing Personnel

1. Qualified personnel trained in crime scene processing, equipment, and supplies shall be available on a 24-hour basis to process a crime scene/traffic collision.
2. Generally, the patrol officer assigned to completing the preliminary investigation report shall process a crime scene/traffic collision.
3. In the more difficult or higher profile cases (e.g., sexual assault; robbery; burglary with a high loss value; other UCR Part I crimes), the shift

supervisor will contact their respective Patrol Operations Lieutenant, Deputy Chief, or Special Services Captain in their absence, who will make the decision on whether to notify the Investigations Unit for its response to process the scene.

4. If the decision is made to notify the Investigations Unit to respond, the shift supervisor will contact a detective sergeant directly or at home if an incident occurs after-hours or on weekends. Patrol officers shall secure the scene in these cases until the transfer of responsibilities is established.
5. In the event that the Investigations Unit is not available to respond or in the case of a major scenes that go beyond the resources of this Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Crime Scene Unit (213-989-2163) is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and may be utilized at the discretion of the police operations commander, or in his or her absence, the Chief of Police.
6. For incidents involving homicides and officer involved shootings, the Los Angeles Police Department is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and shall be contacted to handle the scene per the Memorandum of Agreement (refer to *Policy/Procedure Number 05-O.A.-004: Memorandum of Agreement - LAPD, LASD, CHP, LAUSD, and UC*).
7. For traffic collisions involving a member of the CSUN Department of Police Services that results in serious damage or injury, or collisions of an extremely serious nature, the California Highway Patrol West Valley Area will respond and investigate the collision per a mutual aid request by a state agency. LAPD Valley Traffic Division is also available for assistance with such traffic collision investigations when requested per the Memorandum of Agreement (refer to *Policy/Procedure Number 05-O.A.-004: Memorandum of Agreement - LAPD, LASD, CHP, LAUSD, and UC*).
8. In all cases where a major crime scene exists, the shift supervisor shall notify their respective Patrol Operations Lieutenant, or Deputy Chief in their absence, and the Chief of Police making them aware of the incident.

B. Preliminary Crime Scene and Field Evidence Preservation

1. The first officer on the scene shall secure the scene, limit entrance to necessary personnel only, and document the names and time of those who enter and exit the scene. The shift supervisor shall determine whether the scene is to be processed by patrol personnel, department investigators, or other assisting agencies. The seriousness of the offense will be the deciding factor. In all major cases, as listed in section III (A) (3) of this policy, the Investigations Unit shall be notified to respond.
2. The officer responsible for scene integrity shall assume control of the scene and protect evidence through the use of natural barriers or crime scene tape.

C. Processing/Evidence Collection: Major Crime Scene

Personnel assigned to the incident shall be properly certified to process a crime scene and shall perform the following:

1. Conduct a preliminary scene survey.
2. Photograph the scene and any evidence.
3. Sketch and diagram the scene for any serious Part I crimes when a sketch may benefit the investigation (refer to section III (E) of this policy).
4. Process the scene for physical evidence to include fingerprints, shoe and tire impressions, tool marks, hairs, fibers, and trace or biological evidence.
5. Package, label and collect items of evidence (refer to *Policy/Procedure Number 06-C.I.-003: Property and Evidence Control Policy*).

D. Preliminary Scene Survey: Major Crime Scene

1. Certified crime scene personnel responsible for processing the scene shall conduct a preliminary scene survey once they have provided aid to the injured and determined that no suspects remain on scene. (See appendix C for list of certified CSUN Police crime scene processing technicians.)
2. Preliminary actions shall include:
 - a. Observe and record (look but do not touch).
 - b. Determine nature and extent of the crime scene.
 - c. Determine location of evidence and mark location with a numbered evidence tent marker if necessary (refer to section III (M) (1) of this policy).
 - d. Determine order of collection.
 - e. Establish best working route.
 - f. Duplicate movement of the perpetrator, without contaminating evidence, and plan the search accordingly.
 - g. Note all existing conditions.
 - h. Note items out of place or damaged.
 - i. Note relationship between items.
 - j. Create an initial rough sketch (in major crimes).

E. Photographing the Scene: Major Crime Scene

1. At the end of the preliminary scene survey, photographs of the scene shall be taken by assigned certified crime scene personnel. Photographs shall be taken with a department-issued digital camera. Conventional film photography is no longer authorized for use by this Department.

2. The photograph collection shall begin by photographing a completed “photo card” that includes the date, time, agency, case report number, and the name of the person taking the photographs (Appendix A).
3. Wide-range photographs from several different locations shall be captured, as well as photographs of the surrounding area.
4. Personnel assigned to photograph the crime scene shall keep a record of information on each photograph taken and shall enter that information in the “Photographs” tab of the case report within the Records Information Management System (RIMS) to include:
 - a. Date and time.
 - b. Person taking the photos.
 - c. A brief description of the subject in photos.
 - d. Case number.
5. Mid-range photography is utilized to orient the viewer as to the location of items of evidence in the scene.

Mid-range photographs should include two items of evidence into the field of view, if possible, then a common item such as a desk, chair, etc.
6. Close-up photography should be utilized to photograph items of evidence before they are moved. These photographs should be taken:
 - a. With a full field of vision with the item.
 - b. With a close-up shot of the item with a scale, such as a six-inch ruler or “L” shape ruler located in an Evidence Tent Marker kit.
7. At the end of the photograph collection, a second photograph shall be taken of the same “photo card” that certified crime scene personnel began with. Certified crime scene processors shall download all photographs taken into the case report.

F. Video-Recording the Scene: Major Crime Scene

1. In general, major crime scenes should also be video-recorded.
2. Department authorized crime scene processors shall video record the condition of the crime scene(s) in its entirety (starting with the outer perimeter moving inward), victims, suspects, injuries, and the collection of all evidence. A digital high definition video camera or high definition SLR digital camera with video recording capability may be utilized to capture video images.
3. The audio shall not be on when video-recording a crime scene.
4. It shall be noted in the incident report that the crime scene was video-recorded, the date and time, and the person recording. The video-recording will be entered into the department evidence system.

G. Crime Scene Sketch: Major Crime Scene

1. Detailed crime scene sketches are normally prepared only in major crimes as listed in section III (A) (3) of this policy. Crime scene sketches may be completed using a sketch pad, graph paper, or with the aid of a computer program.
2. Minimum details to be contained in the sketch includes:
 - a. Time and date of preparation.
 - b. Location of offense, measurement from landmark.
 - c. Location of items of evidence in the scene.
 - d. Location and names of victims, witnesses, and suspects.
 - e. Relationships of the crime scene to other rooms, buildings, roads, etc.
 - f. Name of person preparing sketch.
 - g. Direction of north.
 - h. What lights were on/off.
 - i. What windows were open.

H. Fingerprinting

1. Officers/investigators with training in latent fingerprint collection shall collect latent print evidence, with the exception of major crime scenes. In all major crime scenes, the certified crime scene investigator assigned to the crime scene shall process all latent print evidence.
2. Officers/investigators shall obtain elimination fingerprints from victims and other relevant persons whenever it is possible that these persons produced the lifted latent prints.
3. Officers/investigators shall decide whether to obtain latent prints from an item at the scene, or to package and request that the item be processed for latent prints at a later time.
4. Officers/investigators shall photograph items where they were found prior to collecting and processing the item for latent prints.
5. Smooth surfaces are the easiest to process for fingerprints and can easily be processed at the crime scene by officers/investigators.
6. Officers/investigators shall choose a fingerprint powder that is a contrasting color to the surface being processed.
7. This department primarily utilizes volcanic (oxide) & magnetic powder that is black, gray, and white.
 - a. Volcanic (oxide) powder is used on paper products, wood, painted non-metallic and painted metallic surfaces.
 - b. Magnetic powder is used on paper, wood, plastic, painted non-metallic, glass, porcelain, and china surfaces.

8. Fingerprint powder should be lightly applied utilizing circular motions with the brush to pick up the circular patterns of the fingerprint.
 9. The fingerprint should be lifted utilizing transparent tape applied evenly to prevent air bubbles. Once lifted the tape with the print should be placed on a lifter card.
 10. The card should be marked with the following information.
 - a. Location.
 - b. Case number.
 - c. Date and time.
 - d. Officer's name.
 - e. Sketch of the location where the prints were obtained.
- I. Marking Evidence
1. The officer/investigator collecting the item of evidence shall be the person responsible for marking or labeling the item at the time it first comes into custody.
 2. Procedures for marking items of evidence can be found in *Policy/Procedure Number 06-C.I.-003 (Property and Evidence Control Policy)*.
- J. Collection of Evidence from a Known Source
1. Evidence shall be collected from known sources for submission to the laboratory for comparison with physical evidence collected, e.g., elimination fingerprints from victims/witnesses, etc.
 2. Materials and substances such as hair, fibers, paint, glass, wood, soil, and tool marks shall be collected from known sources whenever available, e.g., the brush that the hair was taken from and samples from those who live/reside in the house.
- K. Collection of Evidence: Computer and Electronic Data Storing Equipment
1. When computer/electronic data storing equipment are determined to be evidence, the collecting officer/investigator shall immediately restrict access to the computer(s) and equipment.
 2. If the compute/equipment is powered "OFF," DO NOT TURN "ON."
 3. If the computer/equipment is "ON," photograph the screen/equipment, then disconnect all power sources. Unplug the power sources from the wall and the back of the computer. Do not power the computer/equipment off by pressing an "OFF" button or by using the computer's operation program (e.g., Windows).
 4. Place evidence tape over each drive slot. If there is a floppy disk, SD memory card, storage thumb drive, external hard drive, or CD/DVD-

ROM disc in the drive slot(s), leave these items in the drive slot and place the evidence tape over the drive slot(s).

5. Photograph the back of the computer/equipment with the existing cable connections.
6. Place an evidence tag on the computer/equipment and book the item(s) into the department evidence system.

L. Packaging of Evidence

1. Officers shall use department-approved property/evidence packaging supplies for packaging evidence.
2. Complete procedures for packaging of evidence can be found in *Policy /Procedure Number 06-C.I.-003 (Property and Evidence Control)*.

M. Evidence and Crime Scene Processing Equipment Available for Use

Equipment and supplies required for processing scenes, collecting and preserving physical evidence, and investigating traffic collisions are available to all officers either as part of portable evidence collection kits kept in the shift supervisor's office, or in the Investigations Unit office. This equipment includes:

1. Fingerprint kits containing volcanic and magnetic powders, brushes, tape, and fingerprint cards.
2. Collection materials such as cotton swabs used to collect biological fluids. Biological fluid detection devices such as an alternative light source (ALS).
3. Casting material to collect foot and tire impressions.
4. Digital still cameras and video cameras.
5. Measuring tapes, rulers, and evidence tent markers.
6. Packaging and collection materials such as paper bags, manila envelopes, plastic containers, evidence tags and marking pens.
7. Crime Scene/Traffic Collision Sketch Pad Folders

NOTE: Only those investigators/officers certified in crime scene investigation or who have received, at minimum, intermediate training in crime scene evidence processing are authorized to access/utilize the crime lab and associated equipment.

O. Required Documentation

1. The officer who processes the crime scene shall also be responsible for preparing the case report. The report shall include what specific forms of

processing occurred including whether photographs and/or sketches were made.

2. Each item of evidence recovered or seized, along with a complete description, shall be logged onto a Receipt for Property Taken into Custody record form (Appendix B) in the order that it was collected.
3. Once the processing of the crime scene is complete, the collecting officer/investigator shall book the items into the department evidence system and record said items into RIMS.
4. If no evidence was recovered after processing or if the scene could not be processed due to contamination, the reporting officer shall document this fact in the case report.
5. Complete procedures for the transferring of custody of evidence and the submission of evidence to a forensic lab can be found in *Policy/Procedure Number 06-C.I.-003 (Property and Evidence Control)*.

IV. APPENDICES

- A. Photo Card
- B. Receipt for Property Taken into Custody
- C. Certified Crime Scene Processing Technicians

Appendix "A"

DATE/TIME

AGENCY

CASE #

PHOTOGRAPHED BY

50% Cyan 50% Magenta 50% Yellow 50% Black White Cyan Magenta Yellow Black

Lynn Peavey Corporation 800-255-6499 #6677

Certified Crime Scene Processing Technicians

1. California State University, Northridge Police Department:

- **Lieutenant Mark Benavidez**
- **Lieutenant Rene Lino**
- **Sergeant Yolanda Abundiz**
- **Sergeant Randell Abney**

2. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department:

- **Crime Scene Unit 213-989-2163**