

California State University
NORTHRIDGE
Department of Police Services
University Police Division



LESSON PLAN

SUBJECT: The First Responder – Patrol Crime Scene Investigation

LENGTH: 30 minutes

PREPARED BY: Officer Rene Lino

DATE PREPARED: November 13, 2009

APPROVED BY:

Rene P. Lino, Chief

DATE APPROVED: 11-13-2009

I. Performance Objectives/Job-Related Objectives:

The purpose of this training is to enable officers to recognize, document, collect and preserve physical evidence. In addition, understand the relative value of physical evidence used to associate, incriminate or exonerate an individual.

II. Type of Instruction:

Officer Lino will review the fundamentals of crime scene investigation with officers. The officers will complete two practical exercises of collecting and processing evidence.

III. Course Outline:

A. The First Responder – Recognizing Evidence

1. The initial evaluation begins when the first officer enters the crime scene. Has a crime been committed?
 - a) Approach the scene with caution.

- b) Make sure there are no suspects present.
- c) Saving lives is the *first* priority and takes priority over everything else.
- d) First aid must be given even if it means valuable evidence might be lost or destroyed.
- e) If emergency personnel are needed they should be instructed how to enter the crime scene without disturbing it unnecessarily.
- f) Once aid has been rendered, determine if additional help is needed (ie. Additional officers, CSUN PD Detectives, LAPD or LASD Crime Lab – see policy 07-C.I.-004).
- g) Officers should be aware of the importance of evidence, its varied forms and how evidence will aid in the reconstruction of a crime scene.
- h) Immediately “lock down” the scene and establish a perimeter which encompasses the scene and any possible evidence around the area.
- i) Set up an additional perimeter outside of your crime scene perimeter to keep the media and onlookers out of the immediate area.

B. The First Responder – Documentation

1. The first officer on-scene must start the documentation process.
 - a) Start an entry/exit log and identify a least destructive path in/out of the crime scene.
 - b) Only allow individuals directly responsible for processing the crime scene and/or handling the investigation into the crime scene. All other department officials MUST be kept out.
 - c) Everyone who enters the scene MUST be signed in on the form. Provide a reason why the person is entering the scene. Document the time the person exits the scene and if that person removes evidence from the scene.
 - d) Take notes! Notes require the specialist to document observations and actions in writing. It is not unusual to find that a seemingly insignificant item or observation at a crime scene will later become a key point to an investigation.

For example: Note the temperature of a room. This can assist the Coroner Investigator with the estimated time of death.

Notes are necessary to write a detailed and accurate report. Notes can be referred to during courtroom testimony. Notes should be accurate and clear enough so that another person could easily write your report if you were unable to or so that another person could easily testify in court on your behalf.

C. The First Responder – Evidence Collection

1. Before searching your crime scene, begin formulating a plan of action.

- a) What is evidence?
- b) Where will you begin?
- c) Is there perishable evidence present?
- d) Is the weather a factor in collecting evidence? If so, start outside first and work your way indoors.
- e) Are there additional crime scenes (i.e. vehicles, residence, hospital, etc.)
- f) A systematic search of the crime scene should be conducted.
 - Lane search: shoulder to shoulder or arms length distance.
 - Spiral search: start in the middle and work your way out in a circular motion.
 - Quadrant search: squares and grid.
- g) Notify a department K-9 Handler to determine if they can assist with an article search for evidence.
- h) Do NOT disturb any evidence (only when assisting a designated crime scene investigator). Mark ALL evidence with designated markers. All markers MUST be facing the same direction (i.e. north, south, west, and east) for photo purposes.
- i) Photograph the evidence before collecting (use designated measurement devices – see policy 07-C.I.-004)
- j) Use department methods for collection and packaging of evidence (see policy 07-C.I.-004 and 06-C.I. – 003).
- k) Always double check your crime scene before taking it down.

D. The First Responder – Preservation of Evidence

1. Preservation is done in a variety of ways... photographs, sketches, impressions and of course, collecting the item itself and properly packaging it.
 - a) Photographs: follow department methods (see policy 07-C.I.-004).
 - b) Sketch: follow department methods (see policy 07-C.I.-004).
 - c) Impressions: follow department methods (see policy 07-C.I.-004).
 - d) Collection: follow department methods (see policy 07-C.I.-004).
2. Contamination Prevention Methods
 - a) During evidence collection use clean or disposable cutting/handling instruments.
 - b) Wear gloves and change them often.
 - c) Never use plastic bags for evidence packaging.
 - d) Always use paper bags or paper envelopes since paper is porous, this allows for the air inside the bag/envelope to breathe.
 - e) Label the bag/envelope: follow department methods (see policy 06-C.I.-003).

- f) Items that are wet to be examined for biological evidence must be fully dried before packaging (see policy 06-C.I.-003).
- g) Always wash your hands after processing any crime scene.

E. The First Responder – Releasing the Scene

Note: you only have one chance at processing a crime scene.

- a) Methodically walk through the scene to ensure that all the evidence has been located and collected.
- b) Make sure you have all your equipment.
- c) Make sure the team members agree that it is clear to release the crime scene.

F. Two practical exercises:

- Fingerprint collection exercise.
- Mikrosil casting exercise.

V. Closing

A. Questions & Comments