

ANJALI GUPTA
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
FORENSIC SCIENCE
BTIE, SAGAR

Methods of Crime Scene Investigation

It is difficult to explain to someone the exact processing that will be used at every crime scene. Each crime scene is different and may require a different approach to processing the scene. However there is a basic crime scene protocol that should be adhered to in all crime scenes. These basic steps or tasks are as follows:

1. Securing the scene.
2. Recording the scene.
3. Interview of witness.
4. Search for evidence.
5. Collection and packing.
6. Forwarding evidence to F.S.L.
7. Maintaining chain of custody.

Securing the Scene :

As mentioned above by locard's exchange principle about the cross transfer of evidence from or to the scene, victim and criminal so anyone entering the crime scene can alter the evidences at the scene. It is therefore the responsibility of the first officer arriving on the crime scene to take steps to protect and secure not only the immediate area of the crime but also the area to the greatest extent possible including possible entry and exit points, so it is necessary to block off an area larger than the initial scope of the crime scene with a view that the boundaries can be reduced in size if required. Not only does securing the scene preserve important evidence, but it also helps in the identification of potential suspects/witnesses by eliminating the possibility of these people leaving/entering before officials have the scene fully detailed. Investigator should take following steps while securing the crime scene:-

- Take control of scene on arrival.

- Assist the victim by giving medical attention.
- Search & arrest the suspect if still on the scene.
- Touch nothing unless it has be photographed , measured and documented.
- Protect the crime scene by using barrier tape, rope, police barriers, or some other means.
- Ensure adequate scene security.
- Care should be taken that within the boundaries people should not smoke, eat or drink
- Remove unnecessary individuals from the scene.
- Identify and the gather witnesses, if any.

Recording the scene :

The purpose of this step is to create a permanent record of the crime scene in its original state that will allow further to easily recreate an accurate view of the scene or of the evidences present which can aid in further investigation and also if required for presentation in courts of law. Recording can best be done in the form of photography, sketching, and notes.

Photography :

There are no best way to describe the story of the crime scene than a photograph. Crime scene photography is generally designed to create an accurate, detailed, and truthful image of the scene. Photographing can give the fruitful information only if it is done in an unaltered condition. Therefore pictures of every object should be taken from all necessary angles before touching or moving a single piece of evidence unless otherwise required in case of some injured person. The aim should be to record a maximum of useful information which will enable the viewer to understand where and how the crime was committed. All entry and exit points of the crime scene must be photographed to provide an idea on how one can have access to the crime scene. In crime scene photography there are three general positions or views which are necessary:-

- Taking overall view showing the condition of the entire scene including the doors and windows.
- Mid-Range photographs showing important objects and its immediate surroundings.
- A close up photograph showing the specific detail of the evidence taken in all necessary angles depicting the location and condition so that they be able to reproduce themselves in terms of size, shape and colour. One close up picture should be taken showing the item as it actually appear and another of the same item at the same place with a ruler.

Photograph of the victim's body position and location relative to the entire scene must also be taken from various angles. Evidences like injuries if any on the body and the weapon near by should also be considered.

Sketching

Photographs as one method of recording should also be supported by proper sketching of the scene. The goal is to demonstrate the overall layout of the crime scene or to identify the exact position of the deceased victim or evidence within the crime scene. Thus a sketch of the crime scene showing the detail of all important evidences with distance and location in relation to one another can be a good form of record. It may indicate details like height of the door frame, distance from the window to the door, distance of the weapon from victim, etc. Certain important points to be considered while making a sketch:-

- Sketch should be prepared at the site only and should not depend on the memory to be completed afterwards.
- The exact locations of objects are determined by distance measurements.
- Take all measurements with equal accuracy. The distance must be measured exactly by tape.
- Direction should be indicated with the help of a compass.
- The size and dimensions of the area or building should be measured.
- It should show and locate important objects at the scene.
- Do not include obviously irrelevant things in the sketch.
- Show the scale on the sketch.
- Objects are indicated by the assignment of letters, which are then referred to below the sketch with a description of the item.

Notes :

They include the detail description of the scene. Notes should cover the following aspects of the crime scene:

- Day, date, time and location;
- Who was present at the scene when the first officer responding arrived.
- General descriptions of the scene & its surrounding area.

- Weather and lighting conditions on arrival.
- Doors and windows opened or closed.
- Odour if any present.
- Note any furniture out of place to ensure the signs of struggle.
- Names of victim & witness with their statements.
- Location and condition of the evidences present.
- Detail note about the position and condition of the dead body, nature and number injuries if any.