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**Interview of witness :**

Crime scene investigation includes taking witness statements to corroborate with physical evidence collected at the crime scene. Investigator should look for possible witness that would help and provide more clues to the crime. They should be asked to recall everything observed during the incident and also for the identification of criminal.

**Search for evidence :**

Crime scene search is made to identify and secure the evidences and also to have some vision about the events that occurred. As recovering of physical evidence during investigation is one the most important aspect so for this a systematic search is highly important to ensure that no item of physical evidence is left. The choice of search methods employed will depend on the type of the crime, its location & size and the number of individuals present. Most commonly employed search methods are line or strip, grid, spiral, zone and wheel methods.

**Line** :-Usually used to cover large open areas. Searches line up parallel usually an arm distance away from each other and proceed their search along the tracks parallel from one side of the scene.

**Grid** :-Variation of a strip search method but also done in opposite directions. It is effective but time consuming.

**Zone** :- Crime scene is divided into small square areas or zones and each zone is examined thoroughly.

**Spiral**:-The search may start at some outer point and move along the path of the spiral till they reach the center of the crime scene.

**Wheel** :- Scene is marked as circle and the search starts from the centre and proceed along the radii of the circle.

While searching the scene any suspicious item should be treated as an evidence unless otherwise proved. Precautions like wearing gloves and protective clothings should be taken to avoid contamination of the scene. Along with the evidence collected control samples should also be taken.

## **Collection and packing of evidences :**

This is one of the most crucial steps in the investigation of the crime scene.

Keeping in mind the evidential value of every physical evidence it should be handled and packed carefully and properly.

If the evidence is altered or destroyed during the process making it inadmissible to the laboratory personnel and thus can't aid in the further investigation of the case.

Hence it would be fruitful if the methodology for the collection & packing of the physical evidence is such that its integrity is maintained so that evidence collected are also retained in its original condition as obtained at the crime scene.

Collection and packing of the evidences differ depending on the type of evidence and the substrate upon which it is found.

If the evidence is fragile or can easily be lost, the entire object should be collected and packaged, if size and circumstances permit.

Each different item or similar items collected at different location must be placed in separate containers to avoid cross contamination. Each item of evidence collected should be marked for identification by placing date, location, item and case number. Seal the container and it should be signed by the investigator.

Some commonly encountered evidences are collected and packed in following ways:-

- Blood stain if on large object, moistened the sterile swab with distilled water and swab the stained area. Take swab from the area close the blood stain also, both swabs should be air dried. Pack in the solid container, avoid plastic containers. If blood stain is on clothing, the stained area should be cut, air dried and packed in paper bags.
- Seminal Stains if wet the article should be air dried thoroughly, wrap the stained article in paper bags.
- Hair and fiber should be closely searched and whenever possible submit the article on which hair and fiber are found. If not possible individual fiber or hair should be picked with the help of tweezers and forceps and packed in separate envelopes. Control samples for hair should include combed and pulled hairs from the head and pubic region. These hairs should be placed in a clean folded piece of paper or an envelope.
- Documents should be packed in plastic sheet protector, they should not be handled with bare hands, and care should be taken not to mark, alter or deface it.

- Glass particles should be collected properly and carefully with the help of forceps, place them in solid containers, and never use loose envelopes.
- For clothing and fabrics do not expose the wet item to excessive heat. Allow the wet item to air dry naturally by hanging it on a clean hanger or on a clean surface. The clothing should be packed in a clean paper bag, don't use plastic bags.
- The articles containing the fingerprints and footprints must be touched as little as possible. Plastic impressions are usually photographed but may also be cast with a casting material to lift the impression. Latent fingerprint impressions require some sort of developing technique to be seen by the naked eye which are then lifted and photographed.
- Bite marks are found many times in sexual assaults and can be matched back to the individual who did the biting, for this they should be photographed with all necessary angles and view. If the bite mark has left an impression then may be a cast can be made of it.
- For paint fragments they should be collected in a paper packet and placed in an envelope.

Forwarding evidence to FSL :

After collection the packed should be properly sealed by the investigator and a sample of seal impression be also forwarded along with the exhibits to the laboratory by an authorized messenger . It should be accompanied by an authorized letter of the court requesting the laboratory for the examination of the exhibits. Control samples should also be sent along with the exhibits.

### **Maintaining Chain of custody :**

Continuity of possession or chain of custody must be established whenever evidence is presented in court as an exhibit. The court will require proof that evidence collected during an investigation and the evidence ultimately submitted to the court are one and the same. To prove that the integrity of the physical evidence has been maintained, a chain of custody must be maintained. This chain shows that who had contact with the evidence, at what time and under what circumstances.

Thus following types of information is needed to establish the chain of custody:-

- Name or initials of the individual collecting the evidence and each person subsequently having custody of it.
- Date when it was collected and transferred.
- Case number and type of crime.
- Victim's name.
- Brief description of the item.

This information serves to prove the chain of custody to the court and assists in admitting the items into evidence.