

SUBJECT: CRIME SCENE MANAGEMENT/EVIDENCE PRESERVATION	SECTION: 307.02
REVISED: NOVEMBER 21, 2003	PAGE(S): 2

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for the management of a crime scene and the preservation of evidence.

CRIME SCENE MANAGEMENT

- A. Law enforcement will be in charge of a crime scene.
- B. It will be the responsibility of the law enforcement to determine if the scene is safe for entry of fire/EMS personnel.
 - 1. In the absence of being notified, fire/EMS units should not assume that the scene is safe and take precautions to protect themselves. Fire/EMS units should stage one block away at the minimum.
- C. All fire/EMS personnel should be aware of the important evidence that can be damaged or destroyed upon entering a crime scene.
 - 1. Fire/EMS personnel shall consult with law enforcement before disturbing items that may be evidence of a crime scene.
 - 2. All involved should take precautions not to disturb crime scene evidence, (e.g., weapons, bloodstains, vehicles, skid marks, etc.) or other evidence that can be vital to investigators to reconstruct the crime or accident scene.

EVIDENCE PRESERVATION

- A. At any scene where criminal activity is suspected, the rescuer should:
 - 1. Immediately notify law enforcement, if they are not already present.
 - 2. Take precautions not to remove, move or otherwise disturb anything in the environment.
- B. In situations where sexual assault is alleged by the patient, or suspected, the rescuer should:
 - 1. Immediately notify law enforcement, if they are not already present.
 - 2. Not allow the patient to wash, shower, or change clothing.
- C. In situations where criminal activity is suspected and the patient must be removed to perform critical patient care activities, the rescuer will note the patient's location and position on the patient care report.
- D. When removing clothing from patients of gunshot wounds, stabbing or other assaults:

1. Do not cut garments through or near the bullet or stab wound holes if it can possibly be avoided. The bullet/stab wound hole, powder particles or powder smudges around the hole can have considerable investigative value as evidence and should not be modified.
 2. Where clothing is bloody, do not allow blood and debris on one area or garment to another area or garment if it is avoidable. Do not roll garments up in a ball. Never put wet or bloody garments in plastic bags. They should be allowed to dry. If absolutely necessary, carefully place garments in paper bags (one bag per one item).
 3. Handle clothing as little and carefully as possible. Powder flakes from gunshot wounds may fall off of them, decreasing the value of powder-deposit examination.
- E. Try to start IV's above the hands, if the patient actually fired, or may have fired the weapon. If time permits, consider bagging the hands with paper bags.
- F. When in doubt as to how to proceed, yield to the law enforcement agency on the scene.

RESPONSIBILITY

- A. It is the responsibility of all personnel to be aware of the important evidence that be damaged or destroyed upon entering a crime scene.
- B. Law enforcement shall be in charge of a crime scene.