

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE AND CRIME SCENES

The purpose of this order is to describe the policies and procedures for determining what constitutes a crime scene and recognizing and preserving physical evidence.

I. POLICY

A. IDENTIFYING AND PRESERVING THE CRIME SCENE.

It is the responsibility of the officer who arrives first to isolate and protect the crime scene from contamination until relieved by the direction of a superior officer. (See also DGO 6.01, Crime Scene Log)

B. CONTAMINATING THE CRIME SCENE. Officers shall not smoke, eat, use the restroom or telephone, or unnecessarily disturb the crime scene.

C. ESTABLISHING ROUTE INTO CRIME SCENE. The officer assigned to protect the crime scene shall determine a single route into the crime scene. The route shall be chosen so as to disturb the scene or the physical evidence as little as possible. This route shall be relayed to headquarters as soon as possible to prevent officers and emergency personnel from contaminating the crime scene.

II. PROCEDURES

A. RECOGNIZING A CRIME SCENE. A crime scene includes not only the area where the criminal act occurred, but also approaches and exits that the suspect(s) may have used, i.e., point of entry and exit. Not all evidence is visible. Contact the Crime Scene Investigations (CSI) unit if any questions arise as to the scope of a crime scene and/or physical evidence. It is the responsibility of the senior officer at the scene to notify Operations Center, when applicable, or Crime Scene Investigations, if there is a potential for recovering latent fingerprints or other physical evidence. If CSI is responding, the officer shall take steps to insure that the potential evidence is protected.

B. TYPES OF CRIME SCENES

1. **Major Crime Scenes.** A major crime scene is a location at which there is death, great bodily injury or a potential for a major investigation. Examples are:
 - a. Homicide.
 - b. Suicide.
 - c. Officer-involved shootings.
 - d. Felonious assaults in which death or permanent disability may occur.
2. **Non-Major Crime Scenes.** All other crime scenes are non-major crime scenes. These scenes may require the response of an investigative unit depending on the circumstances.

C. DEFINING PHYSICAL EVIDENCE. Physical evidence is anything that has been used, left, removed, altered or contaminated during the commission of the crime by the victim(s) or suspect(s).

D. PRESERVING PHYSICAL EVIDENCE AT MAJOR CRIME SCENES. Physical evidence shall not be touched, moved, or disturbed prior to the arrival of the CSI Unit, the Medical Examiner, or the investigators.

1. **MOVING EVIDENCE.** Officers shall not move evidence at a major crime scene unless the evidence is in danger of being lost, contaminated, or destroyed, or when a weapon must be secured in order to insure the officer's safety or the safety of others. *(The mere fact that a weapon is loaded and/or cocked does not in itself justify moving the weapon).*

If it is necessary to move evidence, carefully document its original position and condition. Notify the investigators upon their arrival, and record the details in your incident report.

2. **CONTAMINATING EVIDENCE.** Many items of physical evidence can be processed for latent fingerprints and/or examined for trace evidence. Use caution when moving evidence to ensure that such items are disturbed as little as possible and the evidence is preserved. If evidence must be moved, handle the item in a place least likely to leave your fingerprints or to contaminate possible latent fingerprints or other trace evidence. Instruct victims to avoid touching or moving such items until CSI arrives.

E. COLLECTING AND TRANSPORTING PHYSICAL EVIDENCE.

1. **RESPONSIBILITY.** At major crime scenes, patrol officers are not to collect evidence. At non-major crime scenes, when specialized units are not required, the responsibility for proper collection of physical evidence rests with the senior investigating officer present.

Many items of physical evidence can be processed for latent fingerprints and/or examined for other trace evidence. Use caution when collecting and handling evidence to ensure that such items are disturbed as little as possible and the evidence is preserved.

2. **UNDERWATER RECOVERY OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE.** See DGO 6.03, Underwater Recovery Unit.
3. **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS.** The legal requirements for evidence that will be introduced into court can be more stringent than the requirements for evidence that is used solely to justify an arrest. Officers shall, at all times, maintain the chain of custody.
4. **AMOUNT OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE TO BE COLLECTED.** It is often a difficult task to determine the amount of evidence that needs to be collected. However, it is important to gather potential physical evidence before it is lost or contaminated. Should questions arise as to the value of potential physical evidence, or the amount that needs to be collected, contact the CSI unit or the Operations Center.
5. **HOMICIDES.** Officers shall not move or collect evidence at the scene of a homicide, or other death cases, unless the evidence is in danger of being lost, contaminated, or destroyed, or when a weapon must be secured due to safety considerations. Officers may also move evidence when specifically instructed to do so by a member of the CSI unit, the Homicide Detail or the Medical Examiner's Office.
6. **BULLETS AND CARTRIDGE CASINGS.** At major crime scenes, officers shall not touch or remove bullets or casings unless directed to do so by a member of the CSI unit or by the inspector investigating the case.

At non-major crime scenes, officers shall handle the evidence with caution. Prior to moving any bullets or casings, the officer shall document the location and include that information in the incident report. The officer shall then transport the evidence in a

DGO 6.02
Rev. 10/01/97
Eff. 10/15/97

suitable container (preferably paper). When booking bullets or casings, mark the container and not the evidence to eliminate the possibility of destruction of minute evidence, such as stria, ejector, extractor, or magazine marks.

7. **GUNSHOT RESIDUE (GSR).** Where there has been a crime involving the use of a firearm, GSR samples may be taken to determine the presence of gunshot residue on the suspect's hands. In cases where GSR samples are to be taken, the subject shall be handcuffed with his/her hands apart, and not be allowed to use the washroom or go to the bathroom unescorted until the administration of the test. Long sleeve clothing may also be booked for later analysis of gunshot residue.
 8. **CLOTHING.** The victim's clothing may be essential evidence. Paramedics or medical personnel may cut off and discard this clothing in the ambulance or at the hospital. The investigating officer shall take custody of this clothing and notify the CSI unit only if he/she cannot book the clothing by the end of watch, because it must be air-dried due to the presence of body fluid or blood. All items suspected of containing blood or other body fluid evidence must be air dried before booking. The booking container should be labeled, "BIOHAZARD" and "FREEZER."
 9. **JEWELRY.** All jewelry (watches, rings, necklaces) shall be packaged in a "Property for Identification" envelope separate from other evidence.
- F. **11550 HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE VIOLATIONS.** (See DM-3, Driving Under the Influence and Under the Influence and DGO 6.15, Property Processing.)
- G. **PACKAGING EVIDENCE.** (See DGO 6.15, Property Processing and DGO 9.03, Mandatory Blood Tests for Drivers Under the Influence.)
1. **GENERAL GUIDELINES.** List all evidence contained in a property envelope, box or other container on the property envelope or property tag attached to the box or other container. Safely package sharp, fragile, or hazardous (including biohazardous) materials and label them as such. The officer booking evidence shall mark all evidence with his/her initials or star number, but only when such marking will not contaminate, alter or destroy the items of evidence. The officer shall mark the container into which those items are placed with his/her initials or star number, description of the evidence and the incident number assigned to the case. Do not mark items to be fingerprinted. Do not mark paint chips, bullets, cartridge casings, hair, fibers and other small or delicate items of evidence.

Should any questions arise as to the correct and safe procedures for the packaging of any physical evidence, contact the CSI unit or Operations Center.

2. FIREARMS.

- a. To be CSI processed: If potential evidence on a firearm is to be preserved for CSI processing (i.e. - latent prints, hair, blood, and/or fibers). **DO NOT UNLOAD, REMOVE MAGAZINE OR BOOK.** Do not mark. Contact CSI Unit.
- b. To be packaged by officer (no processing): package firearm and ammunition separately from other evidence. Handle firearm by checkered grips and/or trigger guard. Liquid paper (white-out) or indelible ink may be used to mark frame of weapon. Place ammunition in smaller separate envelope (do not mark slugs, recovered casings or live ammunition). **DO NOT PACKAGE/BOOK A LOADED FIREARM AS EVIDENCE.**

3. MONEY. Package money (U.S. and foreign currency and coin) in a green "Money for Identification" envelope separate from all other evidence or property with the amounts and totals written out on the appropriate lines.

4. BLOOD AND PHYSIOLOGICAL FLUIDS. (Also see Infectious Disease Control Manual, DM-4) The collection of blood and physiological fluids (semen, saliva, etc.), also referred to as body fluids, at crime scenes shall be the responsibility of the CSI unit.

5. QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS. Questioned documents are checks, credit card receipts, threat and extortion letters, robbery notes, suicide notes, business records, etc. When handling questioned documents, follow these rules:

- a. Do not allow the suspect to handle the questioned document.
- b. Preserve the questioned document for latent fingerprints and/or indented writing.
- c. Do not write on or mark the document in any way.
- d. Store and transport the document in an envelope. Use an envelope that is large enough to allow the questioned document to be stored in it without the need to make any new folds in the document. In order to prevent adding indentions to the document, write the description of the evidence on the storage envelope **before** placing the questioned document inside.
- e. Keep a record of each document, including the date, place, and person from whom it was obtained, and include this information in your incident report.
- f. Keep documents away from excessive heat, light, or moisture.
- g. Never attempt to reconstruct a torn or damaged document.

DGO 6.02
Rev. 10/01/97
Eff. 10/15/97

6. **FLAMMABLES.** Contact the Arson Task Force or Operations Center for assistance. (See DGO 6.15, Sec. III., C.)
7. **DESTRUCTIVE DEVICES.** Contact Explosives Ordnance Disposal (E.O.D.) or Operations Center. (See DGO 6.15, Property Processing and DGO 8.08, Bomb Threats, Destructive Devices, Explosions.)
8. **NARCOTICS/CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES.** Place the item of evidence in an envelope or plastic bag. Place your initials and star number on the envelope or plastic bag. Place the envelope or plastic bag in an "Analyzed Evidence" envelope. Seal the flap, write your initials and star number, then seal with transparent tape and sealing wax. Hand carry the "Analyzed Evidence" envelope to the Narcotics Drop at Room 435 of the Hall of Justice and place it inside. If the item is too large to be placed in the Drop (marijuana plants, kilos, etc.), contact the Operations Center or the Crime Lab. (See also DGO 6.15, Property Processing.)

When a container holding evidence needs to be fingerprinted, book the container to be fingerprinted separately from the narcotics evidence. **Do not mark the item(s) to be printed prior to processing for fingerprints.**

9. **POSSIBLY HAZARDOUS EVIDENCE.** If unknown liquids, fireworks, acids, or corrosives, need to be booked as evidence, contact CSI unit or Operations Center for assistance. (See also DGO 6.15, Property Processing and DGO 8.07, Hazardous Material Incidents.)
- H. **REQUESTING CRIME LABORATORY ANALYSIS.** The investigator assigned to the follow-up investigation shall request Crime Laboratory analysis. Submit such requests on the Request for Laboratory Examination form (SFPD 64). Hand-carry this form, along with a copy of the incident report, to the Crime Laboratory.
- I. **REQUESTING FINGERPRINT PROCESSING, COMPARISON AND EXAMINATION FOR INDENTED WRITING.** Fingerprint processing is normally requested by the investigator assigned to the follow-up investigation. Occasionally, patrol officers doing the preliminary investigation may request, or be directed by the investigator to request, fingerprint processing of physical evidence. To request such

analysis, complete the Latent Fingerprint Request form and forward the form to the CSI unit. Book the evidence in the usual manner, indicating on the evidence container that the item should be held for fingerprint processing. When you make a request for a CSI unit to respond to a station or detail to process evidence for fingerprints, **do not mark the item(s) to be printed. Place the item(s) in a secure location.** Complete and provide a Property for Identification envelope also. When CSI is through processing the item(s), the booking of the item(s) can be completed. Request that evidence be examined for indented writing **before** it is chemically processed for fingerprints.

- J. **DUI BLOOD AND URINE SPECIMENS.** (See DM-3, Driving Under the Influence & Under the Influence, DM-3 and DGO 9.03, Mandatory Blood Tests for Drivers Under the Influence.)
- K. **BLOOD AND URINE SPECIMENS RELATED TO HOMICIDES OR OTHER SERIOUS CASES.** The investigating officer or investigative section handling the investigation shall collect blood and urine specimens related to death or other serious cases. Hand deliver these specimens to the Toxicology Laboratory, located in the Medical Examiner's Office. When that office is closed, obtain from the station keeper at Southern Station the key to Room 11 in the Traffic Section, southwest corner of the first floor, in the Hall of Justice. In Room 11, log specimen(s) into the log book and deposit the specimen(s) into the slot in the locked box located in the refrigerator.
- L. **BLOOD SAMPLES DRAWN FROM VICTIMS OR SUSPECTS AT SFGH IN DEATH OR IMPENDING DEATH CASES. (FIRST BLOOD DRAWN SPECIMENS)** It is the responsibility of the investigator assigned to the case to arrange for these blood samples to be collected from medical personnel at SFGH as soon as possible after the samples are drawn. Since CSI personnel will normally be handling bloodstains from the scene in these cases, they shall not be assigned to collect the First Blood Drawn specimens to prevent any possible contamination of the bloodstains from the scene.

References

DGO 6.01, Crime Scene Log
DGO 6.03, Underwater Recovery Unit
DGO 6.15, Property Processing
DGO 8.07, Hazardous Materials Incident
DGO 8.08, Bomb Threats, Destructive Devices, Explosions
DGO 9.03, Mandatory Blood Tests For Drivers Under the Influence
DM-3, Driving Under the Influence and Under the Influence

PATROL OFFICER'S GUIDE

COLLECTION AND PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>COLLECTION</u>	<u>PACKAGING</u>	<u>PRECAUTION</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
BLOOD				
Dry stains	Book object on which stain is present. If not possible, call CSI Unit.	Each object wrapped separately in paper bag or envelope.	Do not touch stain. Do not wrap in plastic. <u>Wear gloves.</u>	Write "FREEZER" on outside of bag in large letters. Affix "BIOHAZARD" label.
Wet stains	Call CSI Unit for advice.	As above; allow to air dry thoroughly before wrapping.	As above.	As above.
Liquid blood	Call CSI Unit.			
CLOTHING AND SHOES		Wrap each item separately.	If bloodstained, see above.	Book shoes when footprints are observed at the scene. Booked suspect has no legal right to refuse.
DOCUMENTS/HOLD UP NOTES	Use tweezers, fingernails or gloves.	Property envelope. Do not fold document.	Preserve for prints. Preserve indented writing by filling out envelope before placing document inside.	Leave hold-up notes at the scene if the CSI Unit is responding; if not, book and complete Lab Request form SFPD 283.
FIBERS	Collect item on which fibers rest; other times call CSI Unit.	Place in piece of paper, tape securely. Put into property envelope.	Do not place tape on fibers.	

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>COLLECTION</u>	<u>PACKAGING</u>	<u>PRECAUTION</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
FIREARMS	In major cases, do not touch; call CSI Unit. In other cases, for fingerprints, handle by trigger guard or grips only.	Separate from other non-firearm evidence. Do not place tape on firearms or ammunition.	If prints are desired, weapon should be printed before it is unloaded or booked.	Before unloading, note position of safety; diagram location of rounds. Mark properly.
Bullets and casings	In major cases, do not touch; call CSI Unit. Major cases are those that involve injuries.	Property envelope	Make notes on exact location of recovery.	Mark properly.
Gunshot residue	Call CSI Unit.		Do not allow suspect to wash hands. Do not tell the suspect that his hands will be tested. Retain suspect's outer clothing.	This is a test to determine if a person has fired a gun. Suspect's hands must be examined within four hours of the shooting.
GLASS FRAGMENTS	From clothing: Carefully roll up and book garment. From hair: Comb hair over paper; fold and tape paper.	Property envelope	Collect and book separately a sample of broken glass from the scene.	
HAIR	Same as for fibers.	Same as for fibers	Do not place tape on hairs.	Collect and book separately a sample of suspect's hair by combing of head hair or cutting of hair from other parts of body.

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>COLLECTION</u>	<u>PACKAGING</u>	<u>PRECAUTIONS</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
LIQUIDS				
Alcohol	Pour generous quantity into clean bottle or jar or hand carry to Lab.	Cushion sample in a box. Include original container.		
Flammables	Contact Arson Task Force	Arson Task Force will provide metal container.	Contact Arson Task Forced	
NARCOTICS/ CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES		Book in Analyzed Evidence Envelope; seal with wax, hand carry to Narcotics Drop, Room 435.	No other types of evidence are to be placed in Narcotics Drop.	Oversized items should be hand carried to the Crime Lab or, after hours, to the Operations Center.
NARCOTIC CONTAINERS	If fingerprinting is necessary, remove narcotics and book container separately.	Property Envelope	If substance is dangerous, Crime Lab should remove contents.	
PAINT	If possible, submit object containing paint specimen. If not possible, call CSI Unit.	Cover area with paper and seal with tape.	Do not attempt to scrape off paint sample.	Paint transfers on vehicles are best collected by the Crime Lab or Hit and Run Section.
ROPE,TWINE,CORD		Bag or Property Envelope.	Do not untie knots. If necessary, cut in untied areas. Preserve hair and fibers entangled in cordage.	

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>COLLECTION</u>	<u>PACKAGING</u>	<u>PRECAUTION</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
SOIL	If possible, collect item to which soil is adhering. Otherwise call CSI Unit for advice.	Property Envelope		Collect standards from multiple locations at scene; diagram exact locations from which standards are taken. Collect about 1 tsp. at each location.
SEMEN STAINS	On clothing or bedding: fold so as not to crease stain. Other surfaces: call CSI Unit	Air dry. Wrap each item separately. Mark "FREEZER" BIOHAZARD" on envelope. Call CSI Unit	Do not touch stained area with bare hands. On bedding, write location of head and foot of bed.	If CSI Unit is responding to scene, do not handle evidence.
TAPE (adhesive, electrical, etc.)	Book item that is taped. If item cannot be booked, call CSI Unit.	Property Envelope or bag	Do not handle with bare hands; preserve for latent prints.	Latent fingerprints can be developed from the sticky side of tape.
TOOLS		Wrap working end of tool in paper and secure with tape.	Do not place tool near tool mark.	
TOOL MARKS				
Pry Marks	Call Crime Lab for advice.			Tool mark impressions are taken only when the tool has been recovered with or near the suspect, or if recovery in the near future is likely.
Door Knobs	If removed from door, collect and book. If attached tell victim to save.	Property Envelope		