

Geneva Police Department GENERAL ORDERS		CRIME SCENE AND EVIDENCE PROCEDURES	
<input type="checkbox"/> new: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> rescinds: Policy & Procedure 51.1 – 51.5 <input type="checkbox"/> amends:		cross-reference: G.O. 727; G.O. 905 NYS Manual for Police	
effective date: 1.5.05		issue/amend date: 11.08.10 / 10.27.11 / 9.8.20	
		Accreditation/Recognition standards: C.A.L.E.A.: 83.1.1 NYS L.E.A.P.: 51.1; 51.2; 51.3; 51.6	

I. PURPOSE	The purpose of this General Order is to establish and describe policies and procedures for processing crime scenes and the collection and preservation of evidence.
II. DEFINITIONS	<p>A. <u>Crime Scene:</u> For purposes of this order the term “<u>crime scene</u>” refers to any location or area where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A crime has occurred or where evidence of a crime or its perpetrator(s) may be located; 2. A motor vehicle or other type of accident has occurred; or, 3. Any other event or incident investigated by the Department has occurred. <p>B. <u>Evidence Technician:</u> A Police Officer that has been trained to collect and preserve physical evidence and who has successfully completed the <i>Police Crime Scene and Evidence Specialist Course</i> administered by the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).</p>
III. POLICY	It is the policy of the Geneva Police Department to, whenever possible, detect, collect, process and preserve physical evidence in order to enhance investigations.
IV. SCOPE OF ORDER AND ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIAL	<p>A. This Order is intended to provide a summary of basic crime scene and evidence procedures. It is beyond the scope of this Order to provide detailed procedures and guidelines on the processing of crime scenes and the collection and preservation of evidence. Comprehensive information is contained in the <i>New York State Manual for Police and Evidence Technicians’ Crime Scene Investigation Book</i>. A <i>Manual</i> is available to all Officers with one being located in the Communications Center and another in the Sergeants Office.</p>
V. EVIDENCE TECHNICIANS AND EQUIPMENT	<p>A. The Department will provide suitable training to ensure that qualified Evidence Technicians are available to process crime scenes and perform other duties related to the collection, preservation, and analysis of evidence.</p> <p>B. Evidence Technicians will be provided with equipment and supplies for processing crime scenes for the following purposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recovery of latent fingerprints; 2. Photography; 3. Sketches and diagrams; and 4. Collection and preservation of physical evidence.

**V. EVIDENCE
TECHNICIANS
AND EQUIPMENT
(cont.)**

**VI. CRIME SCENE
PROCEDURES**

C. The Department will also provide cameras for photographing minor crime scenes and basic supplies for collecting and packaging evidence in cases that do not require an Evidence Technician.

A. Major Goals of a Crime Scene Search

1. Identification and collection of physical evidence.
2. Reconstruction of the crime scene and events of the crime.
3. Identification of perpetrator(s) and linkage of perpetrator(s) to the crime scene or crime itself, and elimination of innocent parties as suspects.
4. Development of probable cause for arrest and evidence to support conviction.

B. Responsibility for Crime Scene

1. The first Officer to arrive at the scene of a crime shall have primary responsibility for the protection of the crime scene and the collection and preservation of evidence unless relieved by an Evidence Technician or member of the Detective Bureau or otherwise directed by a Supervisor.

Note: If Officers determine that an item requires special processing for which they are not equipped or experienced, they shall request the assistance of an Evidence Technician or carefully collect the item and submit it into evidence for processing. A memo will be left for the Lieutenant/Detective Bureau (LT/DB) regarding the processing of same.

2. The assigned patrol Officers and Supervisors must be able to evaluate crime scenes and decide what can be processed by non-Technician Officers and what requires an Evidence Technician. Factors to consider include but are not limited to:
 - a. Severity of the crime.
 - b. Capabilities and training of the Officer.
 - c. Time required for processing the scene.
 - d. Perishability of evidence.
 - e. Complexity of evidence collection.
3. Qualified Evidence Technicians will be available on a 24-hour basis to process crime scenes or perform other necessary evidence work. In the event a serious crime or other event requires immediate crime scene or other evidence work that is beyond the capability of patrol Officers to provide, and no Evidence Technician is on-duty and available, the on-duty Supervisor will notify the LT/DB to request assistance.

VI. CRIME SCENE PROCEDURES (cont.)

C. Duties of First Responding Officers

1. Be alert to the possible presence of the suspect(s) at the scene or in the vicinity and take appropriate steps to provide for the safety and security of responding Officers and other persons.
2. Locate victim(s) and arrange for necessary emergency medical care.
3. Identify, secure, and protect the crime scene.

Note: Officers should recognize that the “crime scene” may extend beyond the point of the actual crime or event. Points of entry or exit, or the area of approach and/or escape from the scene may also contain valuable evidence. These areas should also be secured and searched.

4. Identify witnesses.
5. Identify suspects.
6. Maintain control of the crime scene by preventing unauthorized or unnecessary access.

Note: For major crime scenes a log will be maintained identifying all persons entering a secured crime scene area and noting the times of entrance and exit from the scene, and the purpose for being there.

7. Determine what additional resources will be needed.
8. Document observations and actions.

D. Preliminary Survey of Crime Scene

1. The preliminary survey is the phase of the crime scene investigation during which the situation is assessed and a plan is developed. Depending on the seriousness of the crime and the complexity of the crime scene this may be done by the Supervisor, the responding patrol Officer or by Evidence Technicians.
2. The purposes of the preliminary survey include:
 - a. Establish control over the scene.
 - b. Delineate the location(s) and extent of the search area.
 - c. Identify and resolve legal issues. For example, a search warrant may be required to conduct a crime scene search. For more guidance on this see ***G.O. 712, Warrantless Searches and Seizures, §IV (7)(d)***.
 - d. Determine personnel and equipment needs.
 - e. Identify and protect potential evidence.
 - f. Develop a plan of action for the crime scene search.
4. To accomplish a preliminary survey, it will generally be necessary to conduct an initial walk-through of the scene to observe conditions. Care must be taken not to disturb potential evidence during the walk-through. The walk through should be limited in personnel and such shall be documented.

VI. CRIME SCENE PROCEDURES (cont.)

E. Supervisory Duties at Major Crime Scenes

1. The on-duty patrol Supervisor or other available Supervisor will respond to major crime scenes (e.g., homicides, serious injury or fatal motor vehicle accidents, armed robberies, use of deadly physical force by a police officer, etc.). The duty Supervisor will be responsible to ensure proper crime scene procedures are followed until relieved by Detective Bureau personnel and/or Evidence Technicians.
2. The duties of the Supervisor at major crime scenes include:
 - a. Communicate with the first Officer(s) on the scene for information.
 - b. Determine crime scene perimeter.
 - c. Ensure protection of crime scene.
 - d. Conduct or direct preliminary survey.
 - e. Determine objectives of crime scene search, personnel needs, and equipment needs.
 - f. Assign specific duties.

F. Crime Scene Search Techniques

1. Due to the variety of circumstances that will be encountered at crime scenes it is beyond the scope of this order to provide detailed information on crime scene search techniques. The following are examples of techniques that shall be used as applicable:
 - a. Detailed search of scene;
 - b. Photographing (including OSCR) and/or video taping of scene;
 - c. Measurements;
 - d. Sketching and/or diagramming the scene;
 - e. Check for latent fingerprint evidence;
 - f. Evaluation of physical evidence; and
 - g. Collection, recording, marking, and security of physical evidence.

G. Crime Scene Photography and Video Taping

1. Whenever practical, crime scenes should be photographed by an Evidence Technician. Photographs shall be taken in accordance with procedures established in the *New York State Manual for Police*, Part II, Article 12, Section "A". In order to ensure the admissibility of photographs in court, the photograph(s) must:
 - a. Be relevant and material to the point in issue.
 - b. Not appeal to the emotions or tend to prejudice a jury.
 - c. Be free of distortion and not misrepresent the scene or object depicted.
 - d. Be a true and accurate representation of the scene at the time the photograph was taken.
 - e. Have an unbroken chain of custody from the time the photograph(s) are downloaded until the time the photograph(s) is presented in court.

VI. CRIME SCENE PROCEDURES (cont.)

2. Officers photographing crime scenes must document and be prepared to offer testimony as to:
 - a. The date and time the photograph(s) is taken.
 - b. Type of camera used.
 - c. Use of lighting.
 - d. The camera location and the direction the camera was facing at the time the photograph(s) was taken.
 - e. A description of the scene photographed.
 - f. The steps used in transporting, processing and storing of the photographs.
3. An Evidence Technician will be required to take photographs at the following incidents:
 - a. Serious felony cases (e.g. homicide, robbery, rape, kidnapping, assault, etc.);
 - b. Suicides;
 - c. Fatal or serious personal injury accidents, fires or other incidents;
 - d. Injury to an Officer; or
 - d. Any disaster, catastrophe, or severe weather that is causing emergency conditions.
4. In addition to photographs, Officers may also use videotape to record crime scenes. Videotape shall not be used as a substitute for still photographs and shall be taken without sound. When taking photographs or videotape, Officers shall, as part of the photographic record, include the date, time, location and Control Report No. (CR #) of the case under investigation.

Note: At major crime scenes (e.g., homicides/possible homicides, serious injury/fatal motor vehicle accidents) the first responding officer(s) should photograph and/or video tape the scene immediately if equipment is readily available and it is feasible to do.
5. Along with digital SLR photographs, Evidence Technicians will utilize the OSCR 360 on any incident indicated in §VI (G)(3). OSCR will be used as an overall photograph with the 360-degree digital recording capabilities and the SLR tasked with detailed evidence (close-up photos) to scale.

H. Release of Crime Scene

1. Upon completion of the crime scene search the responsible personnel should conduct a final survey of the scene and a review of the search to ensure that all possible evidence has been identified, located, and collected.
2. Personnel responsible for the crime scene should consult with investigating Officers to determine whether new information has been acquired that would make additional crime scene search techniques necessary.
3. The final decision to release the scene will be made by the Supervising investigating Officer. In the case of a major crime scene this decision will be made by the responsible Detective Bureau Supervisor.

VI. CRIME SCENE PROCEDURES (cont.)

I. Documentation Requirements

1. Personnel processing crime scenes will fully document their observations and actions taken in a Supplemental Report.
2. Evidence Technicians processing crime scenes will fully document their observations and actions in an Evidence Technician Report. A copy of the report shall be forwarded to LT/DB.
3. All digital photographs taken will be logged in the VeriPic Digital Photo Manager on various computers throughout department.

J. Evidence Storage of Digital Storage Devices

1. Only those who have been trained and are set up as users by the VeriPic system administrator for VeriPic's Digital Photo Manager will be allowed to view and search the photos in the database. Each authorized user can access the database from computers that are connected with the server through a wired network.

Note: All active digital photographs shall be stored on a server's hard disk. The server shall be kept in a locked room and maintained by the IT department. The hard disk used shall have suitable redundancies to prevent hard disk crashes.

2. Management and archiving of images will be maintained in a manner to avoid loss of the image or data and maintaining the integrity of the image using only devices and methods approved by the Police Department.
3. The hard drive containing the database and images must be backed up to a storage device on a regular basis. (Incremental backups on a daily basis and full backups weekly)
4. All "Original" and "Copy" disks will be marked with the date, case number, disk number (1 of 1, 1 of 2, 2 of 2, etc.) description (Crime Scene images, evidence images, etc.) and the name of the individual performing the archive process.
5. The individual recording the images to disk is responsible for verifying that each image on that disk belongs with that case.
6. A "Copy" disk will be transferred to the assigned Detective or Officer when requested.
7. All photos that are tied to an arrest will be uploaded to the DA's PCMS software within 10 days after the arrest. A copy of all photographs tied to an arrest will be submitted to the DA's Office at their request.

K. Definitions

1. **Archive Image** – Either the primary or original image stored on media suitable for long-term storage. This will be recorded image on the VeriPic secure database or a CD-R/DVD/R or some other equipment.
2. **Copy Image** – A reproduction of information contained in a primary, archive or original image, irrespective of media.

VI. CRIME SCENE PROCEDURES (cont.)

3. **Digital Image** – An image that is stored in numerical form readable by computer, camera or other device.
4. **Duplicate Image** – An accurate and complete replica of an original image, irrespective of media.
5. **Hardcopy** – A printed representation of the original image.
6. **Image Processing** – Any activity that transforms an input image into an output image without changing the number of pixels. Note: Image processing does not mean that the input image is overwritten during the process.
7. **JPG or JPEG** – (Joint Photographic Experts Group) This digital file scheme utilizes a lossy image compression process to reduce the size of the image.
8. **Lossless** – A lossless digital file is a file compression process that utilizes an algorithm that discards no information. It looks for more efficient ways to represent an image, while making no compromises in accuracy.
9. **Lossy** – A lossy digital file algorithm accepts some degradation in the image in order to achieve small file sizes. In the lossy process, minuscule degradation occurs to the digital image that can't be restored to its original quality, but this loss is not visible to the naked eye. A lossy algorithm might lose color information at a lower resolution than the image itself since the eye is not so sensitive to changes in color of a small amount. The loss only occurs if an image is opened in a program and "Saves".
10. **Original Image** – An accurate and complete replica of the primary image, irrespective of media, that is stored or retained in a manner that preserves the integrity of the file or image in an unalterable form. An "original" of a photograph includes the negative. If data is stored in a computer or similar device, any printout or other output readable by sight, shown to reflect the data accurately, is an "original". For film and analog video, the primary image is the original image.
11. **Primary Image** – Refers to the first instance in which an image is recorded onto any media that is a separate, identifiable object or objects. Examples include a digital image recorded directly into a computer, onto a compact flash card, or a photographic negative/positive.
12. **TIFF** – (Tagged Image File Format) This is a standardized image file exchange format. It is widely supported by both hardware and software manufacturers and is platform independent. Can be lossless or lossy.
13. **VeriPic Digital Photo Management System with Authentication** – Computer software used to manage photos and authenticate that a photo has not been altered prior to entering the computer and then using encryption to store it so that it can't be altered without detection.
14. **Working Image** – Any image subjected to processing.

**VII. EVIDENCE
HANDLING AND
LABORATORY
SUBMISSION
PROCEDURES**

- A.** Evidence collected by the Department may require further testing and evaluation which necessitates the shipping of the evidence to another location. The shipping and submission procedures will be established by the specific laboratory and in accordance with established departmental directives. *See G.O. 905 Property and Evidence Management § XI (E).*

Approved By

MICHAEL J. PASSALACQUA
CHIEF OF POLICE