



RICHMOND POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER



Subject: CRIME SCENE PROTECTION		Chapter 7	Number 3	Pages 6
References: CALEA Standards: 42.2.1a-d, 83.2.1a-b, 83.2.6	Related Orders: 07-01, 07-09, and 07-24	Effective Date: 09/17/2026 Revised by: Review Prv. Rev. Date: 04/12/2023		
<i>If any provision of this General Order conflicts with any collective bargaining article, the collective bargaining agreement shall govern.</i>				
Chief of Police: 				

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines for protecting crime scenes.

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGE

This policy is due for triennial review. This directive has been updated to clarify the titles and roles of law enforcement personnel involved in crime scene protection procedures. Revisions are denoted in bold and italicized text.

III. POLICY

It is the policy of the Richmond Police Department to establish proper procedures for crime scene protection to ensure efficient and effective criminal investigations. This directive does not list the Department's direct investigative functions in each specific category, such as homicide, rape, robbery, etc., but **it** identifies those elements common to most investigations.

The success or failure of a criminal investigation depends significantly upon the thoroughness and immediacy of the preliminary investigation. What the officer does or fails to do in the earliest phase of the investigation may determine whether the perpetrator is identified and apprehended or goes undetected. Positive and effective police action in this vital stage is also essential in deciding the case's outcome in court.

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guidelines and timelines outlined in this General Order. Failure to comply will result in appropriate corrective action. Responsibility rests with the Division Commander to ensure that any policy violations are investigated, and proper training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated.

This directive is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability. It should not be construed as creating a higher standard of safety or case in an evidentiary sense concerning third-party claims. Violation of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis

of a complaint by this Department and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

V. PROCEDURE

A. The First Officer on the Scene shall:

1. Arrive at the scene of a crime as soon as possible and observe, record, and/or document all pertinent conditions, events, and remarks;

[CALEA 42.2.1a, 83.2.1a]

2. Locate and assist victim(s):

- a) Determine the condition of any victim(s) and summon medical personnel if necessary. When applicable, give first aid until assistance arrives; and,
- b) Obtain dying declarations, if appropriate - dying declarations may be used as evidence if adequately obtained from the victim. For dying declarations to be admissible, the victim must be cognizant that they are dying and **have** no hope of recovery at the time of their statement. Officers must ask the following questions:

(1) "What is the name of the person who did this to you?"

(2) "How did you get your injuries?"

(3) "Describe the person who did this to you."

(4) "Do you believe that you are dying?"

3. Determine the nature of the offense and notify an immediate supervisor or have the **Department of Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response (DECPR)** inform the supervisor, as appropriate;
4. Furnish **DECPR** with descriptions, the direction of **travel**, and other relevant information concerning the wanted person(s) or vehicles;

[CALEA 42.2.1a]

5. **If possible**, avoid touching, handling, or stepping on evidence left by the perpetrator. Remember that nothing is too small or insignificant to have value. Any officer who enters the crime scene may be required to release any personal property that may be of value to the investigation, i.e., shoes for shoe print comparison;

[CALEA 83.2.1a, b]

NOTE: Officers shall **not use** marking devices and not add or remove any item from the crime scene.

6. Prepare **and fully complete** the PD-094, Crime Scene Integrity Roster, and turn same over to the assigned detective before leaving the scene;

[CALEA 83.2.1b]

7. Prevent the obliteration or deterioration of tangible clues. Preserve the area to permit the investigative team freedom of movement and afford protection against the destruction or contamination of evidence by both authorized and unauthorized personnel;

[CALEA 83.2.1**b**]

8. Protect the crime scene:

[CALEA 42.2.1c, 83.2.1**a**]

- a) First, determine the exact focal point or area of the crime scene;
- b) Secure the primary focal point of the incident and extend the protection area to include all evidentiary areas. When the crime scene is located outdoors, use crime scene tape to secure the area, including barricading the street if necessary;
- c) Maintain the crime scene in the same physical condition as the perpetrator left it;
- d) Keep unauthorized persons out of the crime scene area, including all other police officers; and,
- e) Require all authorized persons entering the crime scene to enter and exit from the same location and in the same direction and manner.

9. Secure each witness:

[CALEA 42.2.1b, d]

- a) Obtain complete identification of all witnesses;
- b) Obtain written statements from witnesses;
- c) Do not permit witnesses or other bystanders to wander about inside the protected area;
- d) If possible, keep witnesses at the scene separate from each other, and detain them until an investigator(s) arrives at the scene; and
- e) Maintain positive interaction with witnesses and solicit their support in determining the facts of the case.

10. Take immediate action to effect a lawful arrest, or detain the individual as appropriate, if the perpetrator is still at the scene; and,

[CALEA 42.2.1d]

11. Prepare an Incident-Based Report.

- B. First Supervisor on Scene shall:

1. Contact a **DECPR** supervisor at [REDACTED] and provide a brief synopsis and available phone number *when an "All Page" notification is required (see G.O. 02-06, Watch Commanders and Notification)*;
2. Advise the appropriate detective sergeant of the situation at the scene; and
3. Maintain command of the scene until the investigating detective responds and makes arrangements for continued scene protection.

[CALEA 83.2.1b]

C. Detective Sergeant shall:

1. Contact the investigating detective and advise them of the situation at the scene; and,
2. *If Forensics is needed, contact a Forensic Supervisor.*

D. Forensics **Supervisor** shall:

Contact the on-call **Forensics investigators** and advise them of the situation at the scene.

E. Assigned Major Crimes Division Sergeant or Assigned Detective shall:

1. Arrive at the scene as soon as possible;
2. Upon arrival, interview the first officer on the scene and the supervisor on the scene to establish the facts of the case, record their time of arrival, the time of the original call and the names of all persons present at the crime scene;
3. Take complete charge of the investigation and make arrangements with the patrol supervisor on the scene to continue the protection of the scene until the investigation is complete;
4. View the immediate scene to determine the resources that are needed to conduct a thorough investigation;
5. In cases where immediate Forensic assistance is required, notify Forensic personnel within one hour of the detective's arrival on the scene;
6. Notify the Medical Examiner in all death cases;
7. Notify the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office;
8. Interview all witnesses, and victims, if possible, as soon as possible. If applicable, a recording device shall be used at the scene to record any statements. Witnesses and/or victims may be brought to the Major Crimes Division for more formal interviews;
9. Relay any additional information for the ALL-UNIT BROADCAST on suspect(s) to the **DECPR** as soon as possible;

10. Where required by law, obtain a search warrant or consent to search before searching for or collecting evidence;
11. Direct and assist the Forensics investigator(s) with the crime scene work. The investigating detective shall view the crime scene completely after the *Forensic* detective has established a safe route, made notes, and observed the evidence collected;
12. In death cases, follow procedures and guidelines outlined in General Order 07-09, Death Investigation Reporting, Notification of Death And Emergency Messages;
13. After leaving the scene, prepare an Investigative Report when appropriate;
14. Complete a follow-up investigation (as referenced in General Order 07-01, Preliminary and Follow-Up Investigations); and,
15. Prepare a case file.

F. **DECPR** Supervisor shall:

1. Broadcast direction of *travel* and other relevant information concerning wanted person(s) or vehicles via ALL UNIT BROADCAST; and,
2. Act as a liaison between on-scene officers and supervisors to relay pertinent information.

G. Forensic Unit personnel shall complete the following; when applicable:

[CALEA 83.2.1*b*, 83.2.6]

1. Proceed to the scene as applicable;
2. Upon arrival, take complete charge of the crime scene, including making arrangements with the patrol supervisor on the scene to continue the protection of the scene until processing has been completed;
3. Conduct a preliminary survey by obtaining known facts and observing the complete scene;
4. Make a narrative description;
5. Photograph the complete scene;
6. Measure and sketch the crime scene and all evidence;
7. Evaluate and recover all physical evidence;
8. Evaluate and recover fingerprint evidence;
9. Conduct a detailed search;
10. Collect, record, mark, and preserve all evidence; and,

11. Conduct a final survey to ensure the conditions of the crime scene are thoroughly documented.
- H. All personnel shall adhere to guidelines, procedures, and responsibilities outlined in General Order 07-24, Public Information Requests, regarding releasing public information regarding crime scenes.

VI. FORMS

[CALEA 83.2.1**b**, 83.2.6]

- A. PD-094, Crime Scene Integrity Roster
- B. Incident Based Report (IBR)