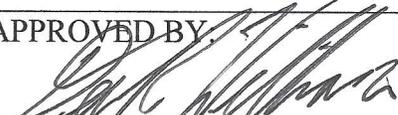


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	TITLE: Crime Scene Preservation And Evidence Collection		
	APPROVED BY:  Dean R. Williams, Commissioner		DATE: 11/29/18
ATTACHMENTS / FORMS: (None.)		AUTHORITY / REFERENCES: 22 AAC 05.155 AS 33.30.011 AS 33.05.010 AS 33.30.021 AS 33.16.180 AS 44.28.030 AK Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory, Crime Scene Procedure Manual, eff. 02/20/2018. Anchorage Police Department, Patrol Uniformed Investigator Guide. Palmer Police Department, Standard Operating Procedures, Evidence Collection And Preservation.	

POLICY:

- I. It is the policy of the Department of Corrections (DOC) to have in place procedures for the preservation of crime scenes and the proper collection and preservation of evidence.
- II. It is the policy of the Department that the officers / Institutional Investigators follow proper methods of locating, collecting, and preserving evidence in such a manner that chain of custody and the integrity of the evidence is preserved for the Alaska State Troopers (AST) and / or DOC Professional Conduct Unit (PCU) Investigators.
- III. It is the policy of the Department that reported crimes occurring in DOC institutions will normally be investigated by AST or PCU Investigators. However, circumstances may require Institutional Investigators to perform advanced investigative functions at the direction of AST or PCU Investigators, such as, but not limited to: securing and / or processing crime scenes; collection of control samples; collection and packaging of trace or biological evidence; and submission of evidence for laboratory analysis.

APPLICATION:

This policy and procedure will apply to all Department employees.

DEFINITIONS:

As used in this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

Chain Of Custody:

A chain of custody is the series of documented links which account for the time between when the evidence was

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obtained and presented in court. The links are persons who handled the evidence, and where and when they did so.

PROCEDURES:

- I. Responsibilities Of First Officer / Institutional Investigator On Scene:
Responsibilities of first officer / Institutional Investigator on a crime scene may include:
 - A. Respond to the scene promptly and safely.
 - B. Protect the scene to prevent the destruction or contamination of evidence.
 - C. Prepare the original offense report.
 - D. Locate items of evidence.
 - E. Locate witnesses.
 - F. Photographing and sketching the scene when appropriate.
 - G. Collection of evidence as appropriate.
 - H. Preservation and packaging of physical evidence as appropriate.
- II. Crime Scene Processing Equipment:
 - A. The officers trained in DOC Institutional Investigation shall maintain complete evidence collection kits.
 - B. Officers / Institutional Investigators responding to a crime scene will decide if additional equipment and / or resources are needed for preserving or processing a scene.
- III. Procedures For First Officer / Institutional Investigator On Scene:
The following procedures should be followed by the first officer / Institutional Investigator on the scene:
 - A. Officers / Institutional Investigators shall not rush into the crime scene. Rushing into the scene may result in accidental destruction or contamination of evidence.
 1. Officers / Institutional Investigators must first render aid to a victim at the scene, unless the officer / Institutional Investigator must immediately protect themselves from a suspect still at the scene.
 2. After rendering aid to an injured person and isolating a suspect, if necessary, an officer / Institutional Investigator will take care to preserve and protect the crime scene in a manner least destructive to the evidence.

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3. If an officer or Institutional Investigator identifies a possible inmate suspect, the suspect should be isolated in a single-occupant cell without delay, and if appropriate, strip searched. Officers should note any spontaneous statements the suspect may make and assure that the suspect has no verbal or visual contact with any other inmate until they have been questioned.

B. The officer / Institutional Investigator must request a supervisor if assistance or specific equipment is needed or if the crime warrants supervisor attention.

IV. Protecting The Scene:

A. The first officer / Institutional Investigator on the scene shall establish a perimeter around the scene and direct assisting officers / Institutional Investigators to help secure the scene.

B. Crime scenes may be secured by the following methods:

1. Other officer(s).

2. Locking the room, area down in such a way as to prevent any unauthorized access.

3. Barricades, rope or crime scene tape to define an area to be protected.

4. Entry logs used to control access:

All persons entering the scene will be listed on a crime scene entry log (or equivalent), detailing why they entered the scene and what they did there. Officers entering a crime scene are required to document their observations and actions while in the scene.

V. Scene Notes And Reports:

The officer's original notes and tape recordings are the most readily available record of the crime scene. The officer must refer to those notes to complete all other finished reports required of actions taken on the scene of the crime. A report is an impartial recording of complete and pertinent facts, relevant to the investigation or incident being reported. It should achieve the following:

A. Provide all relevant information in a readily understandable form.

B. Provide only necessary and accurate details which will enable further investigation without duplication.

C. Provide facts in a clear and concise, and chronological form as to help establish or disprove the elements of the offense.

D. Be written in the form of the first-person perspective.

VI. Preliminary Scene Survey:

Actions at the crime scene may include the following:

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- A. Observe and record (look but don't touch).
- B. Determine nature and extent of crime scene.
- C. Determine location of evidence.
- D. Determine order of collection.
- E. Duplicate movement of a perpetrator, and plan search accordingly.
- F. Note all existing conditions (lighting, environment).
- G. Note items out of place or damaged.
- H. Note relationship between items.
- I. Initial rough sketch should be considered.

VII. Crime Scene Sketch / Diagrams:

Detailed crime scene sketches / diagrams normally are prepared only in major crimes. Minimum details to be contained in the sketch may include:

- A. Time and date of preparation.
- B. Location of offense.
- C. Location of items of evidence in the scene, including all furniture.
- D. Location and names of victims, witnesses, and suspects.
- E. Relationship of the crime scene to other rooms, buildings, or roads.
- F. Name of person preparing the sketch.
- G. Direction of north.
- H. What lights were on / off.
- I. What windows were open.
- J. Radio / television, on or off.
- K. Temperature / thermostat setting.

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VIII. Photographing The Scene:

At the end of the preliminary scene survey, overall photographs of the scene should be taken.

A. Overall photos should be taken from several different locations.

B. If an interior scene, a wide-angle lens should be used.

C. Photograph the surrounding area thoroughly.

D. Consider following up with a videotape of the scene.

E. Information to be Recorded on Photographs:

The officer / Institutional Investigator processing the scene will maintain a record describing the photos taken at the crime / incident scene. Information recorded when taking the photos will be recorded on a Department photo log sheet.

F. Mid-Range Photography:

1. Mid-range photography is used to orient the viewer as to the exact location of items of evidence in the scene.

2. If possible, the officer / Institutional Investigator should attempt to include two (2) items of evidence into the field of view. If this is not possible, then a common item (desk, bed, table, etc.) should be included in all the mid-range photos.

G. Close-Up Photography:

Before an item of evidence is moved, a close-up photograph should be attempted to be taken as follows:

1. Fill field of vision with item.

2. Place one (1) of the plastic evidence markers in the photograph as an aid in later determining what photo your looking at in relation to your log.

3. Take one (1) close shot of item with a scale. A ruler in the evidence collection kit can be used for this purpose.

4. The officer / Institutional Investigator can also place a strip of masking tape across the face of the ruler, making sure not to cover the measuring increments. Information to be written on the tape may include:

a. Item number.

b. Case number.

c. Date.

d. Officer's initials.

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IX. Evidence Location / Measurements:

Before collecting any item of evidence, its location in the crime scene must be accurately determined and recorded.

X. Evidence Item Collection:

When collecting items of evidence, the officer / Institutional Investigator should consider:

- A. Using tongs or tweezers where possible. Avoid touching the item of evidence with bare hands or anything that might contaminate the item.
- B. Proper order of collection:
 - 1. The officer / Institutional Investigator should collect perishable evidence first.
 - 2. If destruction of evidence is not a concern, then the officer / Institutional Investigator should work their way through the scene, collecting in a logical sequence, trying to avoid disruption of other items of evidence.
- C. Collection of known samples: The crime laboratory can only compare known items with those showing similar characteristics. Enough specimens or controls must be submitted for comparisons of such items as hair, fibers, glass, soil, and tool marks.
- D. Documentation of each item collected: All items of evidence that are collected by the officer / Institutional Investigator processing the crime scene will be listed on a DOC property form. In your report and on the DOC property form the following information will be noted for each item listed:
 - 1. A complete description of the item (including make, model, and serial numbers, if any).
 - 2. The source (from whom or location from which the item was obtained).
 - 3. The name of the person collecting the item.

XI. Evidence Marking:

- A. In many instances marking and labeling of evidence may represent a single process. In instances where the evidence is large, complete identifying data may also be recorded directly on the evidence. This will include the officer's name, date, time, location of recovery, item / tag number, and case number.
- B. In other instances, the small size or nature of the item collected will not permit complete information noted directly on the item. In these instances, the container or attached tag should be marked.
- C. The crime scene search officer / Institutional Investigator should establish the habit of marking similar items in the same location, for example: on the trouser band; under the right front pocket of the trousers;

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or on the right-hand side of the knife.

- D. Instruments which may be used for marking physical evidence include permanent markers (felt tip pens), scribes (diamond tip or awl), or, where labels are used, ball point pens.
- E. The officer / Institutional Investigator collecting the item of evidence will be the person responsible for making or labeling the item at the time it first comes into custody.
- F. Each officer / Institutional Investigator or investigator should develop their own identifying mark. Normally it shall be their initials but may be some other mark.

XII. Evidence Item Packaging:

1. The collecting officer / Institutional Investigator should choose a container suitable to the type of evidence they intend to package. Considerations in choosing the proper container include:
 - a. The size and weight of the item.
 - b. Whether the item is moist (which could rot or deteriorate if packaged in plastic or an airtight container).
 - c. Wet (soaked) items must be packaged in plastic then air dried in a controlled environment for repackaging.
2. The officer / Institutional Investigator should avoid any contamination of evidence by packaging all items separately.
3. Fluids or stains shouldn't be allowed to touch and should be carefully rolled in paper.
4. Pack the item to minimize interior movement within the package.
5. Firearms will always be unloaded first using care not to disturb any latent finger prints on the ammunition or weapon.
6. Drugs should be weighed and may be sent to the State Crime Lab for processing.
7. Seal the package with tape.
8. The collecting officer / Institutional Investigator should initial across the seal.
9. The officer / Institutional Investigator will attach the evidence tag to the exterior of the package.
10. All required signatures will be on the evidence tags and evidence form(s) before it is placed into secured evidence storage facility.

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11. All Digital evidence will be submitted to the appropriate evidence drive and documented when completed / uploaded.

XIII. Latent Fingerprints:

When processing the crime scene for latent fingerprints, the officer / Institutional Investigator shall take the following into consideration.

1. The size of the item to be dusted.
2. The type of surface.
3. Potential for destruction if moved. If movement or transporting the object will destroy latent prints, the object should be processed at the scene.

XIV. Overall Measurements:

Obtaining of wall, room, and building measurements is one of the last operations to be performed in the processing of the crime scene. The overall measurements are vital in the production of the final crime scene sketch but must be obtained last so as not to destroy or damage items of evidence.

XV. Final Organized Search:

A final, thorough, search may be conducted at the crime scene in case evidence was overlooked. Wherever possible, the use of a fresh officer / Institutional Investigator on a final search is preferred.

XVI. Evidence Preservation And Laboratory Submission:

A. Responsibility for Requesting Lab Examinations:

1. Under most circumstances, the responsibility for the submission and request for lab examination will be by the AST or a PCU Investigator. In some cases, misdemeanor crimes, C felonies, etc., submission and request for lab examination may be done by the officer / Institutional Investigator with the guidance of AST or PCU Investigators.
2. In those cases where there may be more than one officer / Institutional Investigator processing the scene, one (1) officer / Institutional Investigator will be appointed to take custody of all evidence collected and to be responsible for the submission of same to the laboratory for analysis.

B. Preservation of Perishable or Deteriorating Items:

1. When a rapidly deteriorating item of evidence has been collected (for example, a liquid sample of semen, a blood-soaked shirt, etc.), it may be transported to the laboratory the same day.
2. Any time an officer / Institutional Investigator transports a perishable item to the laboratory for immediate analysis, the laboratory should be called first, so they will be ready to receive the item.

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3. In those cases where immediate transport to the laboratory is not possible the item should be air dried (no more than one (1) week) and transported to the lab.

C. Non-perishable Items of Evidence:

Avoid contamination and package properly.

D. Some items submitted to the lab may be accompanied by a known specimen, so a comparison can be made. The investigating officer / Institutional Investigator on the case may be requested to obtain any required known specimens, following legal procedures, and submitting them, along with the items of evidence, to the lab for analysis and comparison with the guidance of AST or PCU Investigators.

E. The request for laboratory examination form:

1. Any evidence submitted to the State crime laboratory will be accompanied by a completed *Request for Laboratory Service Form* which is available at the SOA State Crime lab web site (<https://dps.alaska.gov/Comm/CrimeLab/Home>). The laboratory will automatically supply written results on all requested examinations.

2. The investigating officer / Institutional Investigator is responsible for completing the request form with the guidance of AST or PCU Investigators.

XVII. Legal Requirements:

A. Officers / Institutional Investigators should understand several important legal principals regarding the use of physical evidence. As noted above, officers / Institutional Investigators must exercise a chain of custody of all evidence.

B. Officers / Institutional Investigators shall rigorously maintain a chain of custody and shall always remain mindful of constitutional safeguards.

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