

Scene examination

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Policy statement and principles

What

What is a crime scene?

A crime scene is any place where it is believed an offence has been committed and evidence (whether tangible or intangible) can be obtained from that place to support an investigation.

Scenes are likely to include:

- the place where the offence occurred or where the body, property or associated evidence was found
- the victim (the body itself in cases of homicide)
- all people who are associated with the crime, whether living or dead, may be considered as crime scenes
- any vehicles used by the suspects
- suspects themselves
- the victim's and suspect's home and workplace
- any place where an exhibit connected to the offence is found.

What is crime scene examination?

Crime scene examination uses evidence (whether tangible or intangible) at the crime scene and deductive and inductive reasoning to gain knowledge of the events and circumstances connected to the crime. It reconstructs what took place in a particular area and finds evidence connecting that activity to particular people, places and objects.

Why

Crime scene examination (which can include the victim(s) and suspect(s)) is carried out to:

- establish if a crime has been committed
- establish the crime's key elements and provide facts for the basis of an inquiry
- identify the suspect
- collect evidence that could establish whether contact with the victim or scene has occurred
- identify people associated with the crime
- exonerate the innocent
- corroborate or contest witness' and victims' accounts
- verify confessions and admissions
- exclude possible defences
- corroborate or exclude other evidence relating to the crime or incident.

How

Crime scene processing incorporates a number of separate activities. It is multidisciplinary and Police adopt an integrated approach ensuring holistic forensic examinations, which include but are not limited to:

- photography
- fingerprints and DNA, and
- physical evidence recovery for forensic examination.

There are specific roles and responsibilities of various employees involved at crime scenes:

- freezing, controlling, guarding and preserving the scene and potential evidence
- planning crime scene searches and developing examination strategies
- the collection of all potential forensic evidence and recording of examinations and exhibits
- ensuring the integrity of evidence collected is maintained.

Overview

Introduction

This chapter provides guidelines and outlines minimum standards for crime scene processing. It may be applied, with modification, to any crime scene, including high volume and serious crime scenes.

The chapter outlines:

- the roles and responsibilities of employees involved at crime scenes, and
- procedures for:
 - controlling and preserving the scene
 - developing examination strategies
 - planning crime scene searches
 - the collection of all potential forensic evidence and recording of exhibits
 - ensuring the integrity of evidence collected is maintained.

The guidance is not intended to be prescriptive. No two crime scenes are the same, so your initiative, flexibility and planning skills will be tested to the limit at times.

Audience

The intended audience for this chapter is all employees involved in the investigation of crime or the supervision or management of such employees.

Related information

This chapter must be read in conjunction with:

- relevant forensic-related chapters (see the [Forensics and Crime Scenes](#) page which includes links to and information about physical evidence such as fingerprints, blood patterns, DNA, bite or footwear marks or impressions)
- [Forensic contacts and services](#)
- [Part 3 - Homicide and serious crime scene management](#)
- information in specific offence related chapters, e.g. [Arson \(fire and explosion investigations\)](#), [Burglary and allied offences](#)
- [Exhibit and property management](#)
- 'Hate crimes and hate incidents' chapter for information about recognising, recording and dealing appropriately with **hate crime**, **hate incidents** and **hate speech** within the context of scene attendance, investigations, applying proportionality and using discretion.

Roles and responsibilities

Examination teams

A well-trained team, coordinated and properly equipped, is the key to effectively recovering admissible forensic evidence. Key tasks at crime scenes are:

- scene attendance
- crime scene management
- photography and video recording
- crime scene recording
- crime scene examination
- exhibits recording and recovery.

These tasks may be conducted by the same person or by a multi-disciplinary team depending on the:

- circumstances and severity of the crime
- experience and skills of the individual
- availability of appropriately trained individuals and equipment.

Responsibilities

This table outlines the responsibilities of employees undertaking key tasks at crime scenes. It also gives examples of the roles usually responsible for carrying out these tasks.

| Task and examples of who may be responsible | Responsibilities of person undertaking this task |
|---|--|
| Scene attendance May be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- first and later arrivals at the scene- a crime scene examiner [e.g. Scene of Crime Officer (SOCO), CIB] | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Preserving own life- Saving life- Apprehending offender- Detaining witnesses- Preserving the scene, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- clearing people from the scene- preventing scene contamination- establishing boundaries, scene headquarters and safe arrival and assembly points- guarding and controlling the scene. <p>The actions of the first arrivals at the scene have a vital effect on the inquiry and the forensic evidence capture potential. The first officer's primary objectives are preserving life and to protect the scene from interference, contamination and destruction.</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Crime scene management</p> <p>May be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - scene team leader/coordinator - <u>O/C</u> scene - crime scene manager/ <u>SOCO</u> <p>In serious and complex cases co-ordination of the multidisciplinary forensic team and subsequent examination may be delegated to the forensic team coordinator/adviser.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Freezing, controlling, guarding and preserving the scene and ensuring it is safe - Briefing staff on their duties and crime scene risks - Coordinating and overseeing the crime scene examination - Providing the communication link between the scene and the <u>O/C</u> investigation - Ensuring the scene is photographed, fingerprinted and examined by specialists before it is searched - Establishing a common approach path between the Police cordon and scene's focal point - Conducting a <u>reconnaissance</u> to gain an overall picture of the scene and testing possible reconstructions - Planning a <u>strategy</u> for forensic examination - Uplifting, inspecting and ensuring delivery of labelled exhibits to the exhibit recorder - Proving relevant exhibits in court. |
| <p>Photography, 360 virtual reality photography, and video recording</p> <p>A Police Forensic Photographer must be used for all serious incidents s6(c)</p> <p>See the Photography (Forensic imaging) chapter for more information.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Photographing and video recording crime scenes to permanently record their appearance post-incident and before Police examinations - Photographing physical evidence and exhibits in situ before removal or sampling - Preparing logs and reports accurately reflecting the photographer's activities within the scene. |
| <p>Crime scene recording (including notes and sketch plans)</p> <p>Completed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>OC</u> scene - Scene of Crime Officer (SOCO) - Fingerprint Officer - Serious Crash Investigator - external experts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recording and documenting the scene and the position of associated evidence. - Digital notebooks are not being used for serious crime scene recording currently. |
| <p>Crime scene examination and evidence recording and recovery</p> <p>Will be primarily undertaken by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - O/C Scene - Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>SOCO</u> - Fingerprint Officers - <u>ESR</u> scientists or other external forensic science service providers or experts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying, collecting and evaluating forensic evidence and intelligence - Conducting an initial assessment and calling in <u>ESR</u> and other specialists when necessary - s6(c) - Identifying appropriate forensic recovery techniques for specialist samples and deciding the priorities for examination - Developing and implementing a forensic strategy in consultation with the <u>O/C</u> case. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Exhibits recording Undertaken by O/C Scene, and/or exhibits recorders. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recording exhibits in NIA Forensic Examination, NIA PROP, or IMT (for serious crime scene) as appropriate. Refer to Exhibit and Property Management chapters and Part 16 Exhibit management in homicide or serious crime investigation. - Receiving exhibits and ensuring they are labelled, numbered, recorded, stored and secured - Delivering exhibits for examination or analysis - Preparing exhibits for presentation in court - Ensuring that continuity chain of evidence is maintained. |
| Managing and examining the deceased Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - O/C body - OC Scene - Forensic Pathologist - Forensic Photographer - Fingerprint Officer - ESR scientist - SOCO. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guarding the body with dignity and respect and preserving associated samples and exhibits - s6(c) - Proving the continuity of the body from the scene to the mortuary - Following the sudden death procedures or the People in Police custody / Deaths in custody procedures and arranging: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identification and body examination - post-mortem examination - disrobing the body - fingerprints to be taken. |
| External forensic specialists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing expertise or specialist techniques otherwise not available within Police. |

Components of crime scene examination

Forensic teamwork

A team approach to crime scene examination ensures appropriate experts provide scene management, coordination and specialist knowledge and skills. Consider all forensic disciplines so there is comprehensive knowledge of the forensic scientific support available to meet the spectrum of current investigative needs.

Early consultation and co-operation with specialists at the scene:

- is essential in clarifying the sequence of events and maximising evidence recovery and its potential significance
- can be cost-effective as appropriate items are selected for sequential treatment at an early stage in the investigation (allows firmer interpretation of subsequent results as well as anticipating possible lines of defence).

Always involve the forensic team in the development of a [forensic examination strategy](#). If samples are gathered in isolation, vital evidence can be destroyed if one type of evidence is collected to the detriment of another.

Preservation

Preserving the crime scene and integrity of evidence cannot be over-emphasised. All forensic aspects of the case, including linking the suspect to the scene, hinge on the preservation of the evidence.

You often only have one chance to collect the evidence. Get it right first time.

Documentation

Documentation is the hallmark of professionalism. Base all scene reports, including post-event history and scene examination details purely on the facts.

Given the volume of physical evidence normally recovered during a serious scene examination:

- carefully manage the chain of evidence / continuity of evidence and associated disclosure issues with care
- keep complete and accurate examination reports and exhibit schedules.

Details of a forensic scene examination **must** be recorded in the [NIA Forensic Examination](#) node attached to the [NIA DOCLOC Occurrence](#).

Communication

Communication is the key to an evidentially successful scene examination and the subsequent presentation of reliable, accurate forensic related information to investigators and courts of law. This includes the communication of the expectations of the scene examination (objectives, resources available, parameters and depth of examination required).

For serious crimes, the [O/C](#) case should establish clear lines of communication between a single point of contact within the incident room or operation headquarters and the forensic service providers.

What information does each group need?

| Scene examination team members need to know what... | Investigating officer and intelligence unit need to know... | Scientists (when evidence is submitted to ESR) need... |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the investigative needs are before attending the crime scene?- needs to be proved?- needs to be eliminated?- we already know, and- what more is needed? | <p>the findings from the scene examination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- any relevant forensic information and its evidential significance (particularly important for interviewers). | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- case background- clear instructions on the purpose of examination- what exhibits or examinations should be prioritised. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- health and safety risks associated with the crime scene | | |

Flexibility

The significance of forensic material may change over the course of the investigation. The O/C case should regularly review all test results and observations in discussion with the forensic examination team as they may become critical at a later stage of the inquiry. (Ensure discussions are formally documented).

Forensic team members must be flexible to adapt to changing requirements and improvise as necessary. There must be discussion, co-operation and co-ordination between all forensic disciplines.

Procedures for examining serious crime scenes

Team approach

The forensic examination of a serious crime scene should be conducted by a team representing all forensic disciplines co-ordinated and managed by a crime scene manager or co-ordinator. Early attendance of specialists will ensure the scene and associated evidence is protected and the maximum potential forensic evidence is recovered from the scene.

This topic outlines initial and subsequent actions to ensure control, preservation and the collection of all potential forensic evidence at serious crime scenes.

Scene examination process

This table outlines the process for examining crime scenes. Not all steps will apply to every case and they may not always apply in this order.

Consider using a Hazard Board listing the known hazards and the personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements at the scene.

| Step | Action |
|------|---|
| 1 | Ensure your own safety and then give priority to preserving the life of any victim(s). Ensure any necessary medical attention is provided. |
| 2 | <p>Follow the procedures in Initial response to homicide or serious crime (Part 1 of Homicide and Serious Crime Investigations in the Manual). Remember to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- record full details of people in the scene on Police arrival (witnesses, victims, etc)- clear people from the scene and define and establish boundaries to protect the scene from interference or destruction of evidence- establish a scene headquarters and a safe arrival and assembly point- freeze, guard, control and preserve the scene. <p>The actions of the first officer at the scene vitally affect the inquiry and forensic evidence capture potential.</p> |
| 3 | Establish a common approach path to the scene. Take care not to use the route taken by the offender. Consider the path less travelled. |
| 4 | Carefully enter the scene taking care to avoid contaminating or destroying evidence. Consider using stepping plates , and the hot, warm and cold zoning method . |
| 5 | <p>If it is an outside scene, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- how to contain the area and protect it from elements, tide, animals, etc- if additional equipment / services including generators for lighting, caravans / tents for staff areas and equipment storage may be needed. |
| 6 | <p>Make a reconnaissance, a preliminary inspection of the scene, without disturbing evidence, in order to obtain an overview of the scene scope.</p> <p>For outside scenes, depending on location and the crime's severity, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- aerial photography using Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) to show the whole location- conducting the reconnaissance by air when the search area is large. |
| 7 | Carry out an initial assessment of the crime scene and develop a preliminary reconstruction . |
| 8 | Plan a strategy for a forensic scene examination (plan of action). |
| 9 | Brief staff. |
| 10 | Photograph and fingerprint the scene and collect other forensic evidence according to your strategy. |
| 11 | Make appropriate records with a scene log (who, what, where, when, why, how) and a sketch plan. Note anything and everything that could be potential evidence. |
| 12 | Search approaches, entry and exit points, and seats of activity. |
| 13 | Carry out further reconstructions when required, according to the evidence located. |
| 14 | Call for assistance and specialist attendance when necessary. |

Reconnaissance

A reconnaissance is:

- the preliminary inspection or survey made to get an overall picture of the scene without disturbing the evidence

- an assessment providing information allowing you to make or formulate:
 - a [preliminary reconstruction](#)
 - an [appreciation](#) and plan of action.

Making a reconnaissance

Follow these steps to ensure a reconnaissance is effective.

| Step | Action |
|------|---|
| 1 | Gather all available information from the staff present and from preliminary interviews with the complainant and witnesses. Always consider the safety of you and your team in all actions taken. |
| 2 | <p>Create a common approach pathway and look over the whole area without touching or disturbing it. This requires concentration so do not allow any interruptions. Consider using s6(c) that are not immediately visible. Use the appropriate protective clothing to minimise s6(c)</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - s6(c) |
| 3 | <p>Sketch the scene and briefly note anything of significance. Keep the details brief during these initial stages. The sketch will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - help form a plan of action - be a reference for staff briefings - record the allocation of staff to search areas. |
| 4 | Note and be prepared to cope with anything that may damage or affect evidence, for example, changes in the weather, tide or river flow. s6(c) |
| 5 | Reconsider and confirm (or if necessary extend) the scene's boundaries. Consider the priorities of the scene examination. Note climatic and lighting conditions that may influence scene examination priorities. |

Reconstruction (preliminary and further)

Note: Make a preliminary reconstruction (see below) as soon as sufficient information is available and further reconstructions whenever new information is obtained. Only finalise a main reconstruction after all information is gathered. Ensure the preliminary construction is undertaken with an open mind, based on facts rather than speculation. Keep guess work in your mind, rather than committed to your notes. The key aim of preliminary reconstruction is to assist in planning and prioritising your main examination.

A reconstruction is a theory about what took place in a given area over a relevant period of time and how it is likely to have happened. It is formed by logically piecing together all information gained from examination and enquiry.

Follow these steps to make a reconstruction after the interpretation, recording and collection of evidence is completed.

| Step | Action |
|------|--|
| 1 | Assess all information, including witnesses' statements, staff' job sheets, and inventories. Do not make a final reconstruction until all the available facts are considered AND you have gained permission to do so from O/C Investigation. There may be more than one theory and additional or different information may alter the reconstruction. |
| 2 | Question the significance of all physical evidence found and details noted at the scene and make deductions from these. |
| 3 | Assess photographs, plans and maps. |
| 4 | Consider the scene's physical aspects at the time of the crime, e.g. lighting, weather, access and security, and the presence or absence of vehicles, traffic or people in the area. |
| 5 | Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- what happened and how the activity occurred- if there is a unique modus operandi. |
| 6 | Consider specialist and other opinions and test their theories. |
| 7 | Experiment with theories at the scene to check their feasibility. Always keep an open mind and ensure that you evaluate every possible scenario which will avoid the risk of developing 'tunnel vision'. |

Making an appreciation

An [appreciation](#) consists of:

- Aim
- Factors
- Courses Open
- Plan (examination strategy).

Make an appreciation, either mentally or in writing to assist in choosing the best course of action. After considering your primary aim, consider all known and assumed factors.

A factor is a tangible or intangible consideration that can affect the outcome of the examination. Factors can include considerations such as:

- staff availability and any limitations in time and daylight hours
- weather conditions and protecting the scene
- seriousness of the offence
- type and size of the area
- what communication, equipment, transport and specialists will be required
- logistics, such as meals, toilet facilities and accommodation
- priorities, e.g. where to search first or deterioration of exhibits
- your powers to search, e.g. is a [search warrant](#) or [production order](#) required under the Search and Surveillance Act 2012.

Courses open - consider different methods to approach and execute the examination. This displays your flexibility and consideration when weighing all the factors involved.

The plan of action is the final decision on how the examination will be conducted.

Refer to [Homicide and Serious Crime Investigations](#) > [Part 1 Initial response to homicide or serious crime](#) for further information on making an appreciation.

Modus operandi

Modus operandi is the Latin term meaning "method of operation". s6(c)

Modus operandi (MO) examples

| Type of case | MO examples |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Burglary | - s6(c) |
| Rape | - s6(c) |
| Aggravated robbery | - s6(c) |

Developing an examination strategy

Investigators begin developing and documenting a forensic examination strategy (plan of action) as soon as they arrive at the scene. An examination strategy allows scene examiners to target their examination in line with the investigation's priorities at an early stage.

The examination strategy must be continually reviewed throughout the investigation to keep abreast of any developments and any changes to the examination strategy documented.

Examination strategy aims

The aims of the examination strategy are to:

- set objectives
- identify resources to implement the strategy
- appoint the forensic examination team, including a scene manager / co-ordinator to manage the forensic strategy on a day-to-day basis and be responsible for its delivery
- develop a scene examination plan
- monitor forensic actions
- ensure exhibit reviews are conducted in support of interview strategies and lines of inquiry
- prioritise [sequential examinations](#), including fast-tracking examinations and standard submissions with internal and external forensic service providers (see [Forensic contacts and services](#) for further information).

What should be included in the examination strategy?

Make sure the examination strategy covers:

- s6(c)
- a logical and systematic search method, s6(c)

- likelihood of evidence deteriorating,
- any specialists required
- individual tasks and area of responsibility for each team member. It is better to assign one member to one area to ensure that nothing is overlooked through distraction or mistake. Mark divisions of these areas on your sketch plan
- the appropriate PPE requirements
- the recording system to be used, such as Forensic Examination, PROP, or IMT (for serious crime scene) or searchers' job sheets.

Examination strategy examples

See:

- [Examination strategy example](#)
- [Scene forensic strategy document](#).

Briefing staff

Initial briefings for scene control hand overs should consist of (but not limited to):

1. Situation
2. What has been done
3. What is being done
4. What needs to be done.

Regularly brief staff giving:

- a summary of the situation and all background information
- relevant health and safety considerations, including risks and controls
- the aim of the examination, plan of action and how it should be executed
- an outline of tasks and areas of responsibility for each O/C, officer and group
- information on:
 - timing
 - boundaries
 - scene security
 - when conferences will be held
 - what to do if they find an exhibit (refer to relevant chapters in the '[Crime scenes and forensics](#)' section in the Police Manual)
- administrative and logistic details
- signalling and communication arrangements, **and**
- brief the investigation O/C and 2 I/C of key evidence from the scene.

Use maps, sketch plans, diagrams and photographs while briefing, if possible.

Searching scenes

Search patterns

The scale, timing, and type of scene search, depends on circumstances and the availability of resources. However, a small-scale search will be conducted as part of most crime scene examinations.

Determine the search pattern or method used after assessing the scene and considering:

- nature / severity of the crime
- nature of the physical evidence
- location and nature of the scene e.g. rural areas, industrial sites, public areas
- known facts
- known risks, including weather and potential environmental hazards
- consulting with experts, e.g. [ESR](#), Fire Service, other government departments.

This table describes common search patterns.

| Search type | How the search is started |
|---------------|--|
| Grid search | Divide the scene into grids and search each square within the grid. |
| Lane search | Divide the scene into lanes and search each lane. |
| Spiral search | Start from a central point and search spiralling outwards. |
| Zone search | Divide the scene into zones (e.g. rooms or paddocks) and search each zone. |

Planning the search

Ensure you have legal authority to search. You may need to obtain a search warrant specifying the evidence you are seeking. (See '[Search warrants](#)' in the Police Manual).

Conduct the examination in the best possible conditions (e.g. daylight) and protect the scene from adverse weather. The nature and size of the scene should determine the numbers of searchers required. Before searching for evidence and potentially destroying other evidence, identify the examination and search priorities and determine when the search should take place.

Conducting the search

For information about:

- how to conduct the search, refer to the 'Part 7 - [Methods for searching places and vehicles](#)' Police Manual chapter
- what to look for when searching crime scenes, see the [Checklist: What to look for at scenes](#) in this chapter.

Preserving scene and evidence integrity

Chain of evidence

The 'chain of evidence':

- includes the receipt, control, security, continuity and co-ordination of all exhibits and their subsequent movements and examinations. The chain must be accurately recorded for each exhibit in Forensic Examination, PROP, or IMT (for serious crime scene) as appropriate.
- demonstrates all individuals who have had custody of the exhibit and the integrity and storage of that exhibit (in serious scenes, exhibit details must be recorded as directed by the OC Investigation in IMT).

All exhibits must be collected, packaged, stored, submitted for further examination (if applicable) and presented in line with good practice (see relevant chapters in '[Crime scene and forensics](#)', '[Exhibit and property management](#)', and '[Part 16 Exhibit management in homicide or serious crime investigations](#)' in the Police Manual). This protects the integrity and admissibility of the evidence from the crime scene to the court room.

Contamination

Contamination is when 'evidence' has been added to an exhibit post-incident. This could be deliberate or inadvertent and could adversely affect the laboratory examination, findings and interpretation of the examination results.

Potential contamination of physical evidence can occur at the crime scene, during collection, packaging and storage, and during further examination away from the scene. Police services must get personnel and equipment into a scene and exhibits out with the minimum of post-incident contamination. As personnel and equipment attend many scenes, sometimes on the same day, the risk of cross-contamination is always a threat to forensic evidence. All serious scene equipment and individuals must be decontaminated between scenes and records kept showing this.

Risk of contamination higher with small samples

s6(c)

Minimising contamination risks

To minimise cross contamination risks follow these steps.

| Step | Action |
|------|--|
| 1 | Preserve and control the scene. |
| 2 | Use clean stepping plates and adopt a decontamination zone (hot, warm, cold) approach. |
| 3 | To avoid contamination, minimum protective clothing must include gloves and surgical facemasks . Disposable overalls, double gloves, shoe covers and surgical facemasks are the preferred standard. To avoid DNA contamination, remove the outermost gloves and replace them between handling each exhibit. |
| 4 | Use new, clean recovery equipment and packaging materials. Sterile containers are required for some evidence types. |
| 5 | Keep accurate scene activity and exhibit seizure records. |
| 6 | Keep records of personnel attending and examining scenes. |
| 7 | Avoid having the same staff examine associated serious crime scenes (including the victim) and the suspect. Use different staff to deal with suspects and victims. The person dealing with the suspect should not have been to the scene or dealt with the victim. |
| 8 | Ensure exhibit integrity , continuity and anti-contamination procedures with correct recording, packaging, sealing and labelling. |
| 9 | s6(c) |
| 10 | Ideally, the O/C Exhibits should maintain a neutral presence by remaining at the Police station. Exhibits should be brought to him/her in a secure state before any official hand over is granted. |

Sequential examinations

If a number of different examinations or treatments are to be carried out (either for different forensic evidence types or sequential treatments to enhance one evidence type) there is a danger the evidence and / or the actual item will be contaminated, jeopardised, compromised or destroyed.

Consult the relevant experts s6(c)

to ensure all potential evidence is collected and evidence examined in the correct order. Make decisions based on the relative evidential importance of the analysis to the inquiry.

Recovering, preserving and packaging evidence samples

Refer to the '[Forensic evidence](#)', '[Exhibit and property management](#)', and '[Part 16 Exhibit management in homicide or serious crime investigations](#)' chapters in the Police Manual for detailed information about recovering, preserving and packaging specific types of forensic samples with integrity.

Stepping plates

Stepping plates (held in all districts) should be used when entering a major scene, especially if it is likely foot traffic may interfere with evidence.

Plates have these advantages over plastic or paper rolled onto the floor:

- they protect and cover evidence with minimal disruption
- paper or plastic has a large contact area and walking on it causes it to move and damage potential evidence such as shoe impressions, trace evidence and blood patterns
- evidence is difficult to see because it is covered
- evidence can be stuck to paper and plastic when its lifted and lost.

You still need to determine a common approach path and use protective clothing. Take care using the plates as they can slip on smooth surfaces.

Clean plates to avoid contamination

The plates should be carried to and from the scene sealed inside two large black polythene bags (i.e. double wrapped) and carried in their standard container. The stepping plate containers or bags must not be taken into the crime scene hot zone. After use, the plates are replaced in the polythene bags and brought back to the station/lab for cleaning. Most districts have professional cleaning services to ensure the plates are cleaned and sterilised to a high standard. At the very least, if cleaned at the station, the plates are to be double wrapped and sealed in two new large black polythene bags.

If plates are to be cleaned by Police staff, always wear gloves and PPE. Thoroughly clean plates between scenes by:

- hosing them down
- soaking in diluted 10% bleach solution for 10 minutes and rinsing with water
- drying the plates prior to repacking.

Maintain records and an audit trail regarding the use and cleaning of stepping plates.

Decontamination zones

Decontamination zone model described

To prevent contamination, the decontamination zone model should be used for all major and serious crime scenes.

| Zone | Description |
|-----------|--|
| Hot zone | That part of the crime scene most requiring examination and evidence collection. |
| Warm zone | A transition zone to enable scene examiners to put on and take off protective clothing, access equipment and process exhibits. |
| Cold zone | A place within the outer cordon for meetings, meals, scene guards etc. |

Refer to images of zone models.

Benefits of the zonal system

The major benefits of the zonal system are that it:

- establishes a set procedure for evidence and personnel protection
- controls access to the scene
- gives you a framework for accounting for your processes
- ensures liaison between specialist staff and consistency in contamination minimisation.

Warm zone

The warm zone is often a tent with the floor covered with a new disposable tarpaulin. The tent should have two doors providing for movement between cold and warm as well as between warm and hot zones.

This table shows areas within the warm zone and the functions carried out in each.

| Area within zone | Functions or purpose |
|--|--|
| <p>Transition area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish as close as possible to the hot zone - Must be clearly marked. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enables scene examiners to exit from the hot zone without removing their protective clothing to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access equipment stored in the warm zone and return to the hot zone - transfer exhibits from the hot zone to a temporary holding area within the warm zone - discard rubbish - remove and store protective clothing. - Provides a place where examiners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can change their clothing - should cross as they put on protective footwear (this keeps the scene clean of dirt and debris that might be tracked into the hot zone). - Keep a clipboard in this area to log movements into the hot zone. |
| <p>Wash -up station and rubbish bins</p> <p>Establish close to the transition area</p> | <p>Allows rubbish to be conveniently discarded from the transition area into bio-hazard containers accessible by all.</p> |
| <p>Designated areas for examiner's own protective clothing and equipment (e.g. <u>CIB</u>, Photography, <u>SOCOs</u>, Fingerprints, <u>ESR</u>)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Store protective clothing in paper sacks or cardboard boxes (easily purchased as ready to assemble units). - In dirty scenes it may be desirable to regularly discard protective clothing following exiting from the hot zone. <p>Note: Wherever possible, do not take equipment carry cases into the hot zone.</p> |
| <p>Exhibit transit and processing area</p> | <p>Enables <u>O/C</u> Scene to collect together and document exhibits prior to transfer to the police station, Fingerprints Section or ESR laboratory.</p> <p>Note: Exhibits should be suitably packaged and sealed in the hot zone. However, should the exhibit require photographing or further examination, then packaging and sealing can be completed in the warm zone.</p> |
| <p>Exhibit examination and photography</p> | <p>Set up a table covered with white paper for the preliminary examination and photography of exhibits (use appropriate procedures where trace or fragile evidence is an issue). Package each exhibit in the white paper after examination. Place new paper on the table for each exhibit.</p> <p>Note: This area can also be established in the transition area of the warm zone.</p> |
| <p>Secondary warm zones</p> | <p>If the nature of the scene makes it difficult to fulfil all the functions of the warm zone in one place, consider establishing secondary warm zones bordering the hot zone. Use these to store equipment and exhibits if it makes the scene examination more efficient without compromising the integrity of the evidence being collected.</p> |

Disposal of used equipment

Used scene forensic protective equipment (e.g. gloves, disposable overalls, masks, shoe covers) should be disposed of as biohazardous waste by a reputable company or incinerated. If there is a possibility of trace evidence transfer to the protective clothing, when appropriate, retain the items as exhibits.

The crime scene coordinator / manager is responsible for supervising the disposal of equipment and must certify it has taken place.

Logging movements

Log movements into zones as follows:

| Movements into... | Action |
|-------------------|--|
| Hot zone | Each examiner must log their movements in and out of the hot zone. Hang a clipboard for this purpose near the transition between the warm and hot zones. |
| Cold zone | Scene guard logs movements in and out of the cold zone. |

Dress to protect evidence and to manage health and safety risks

The need for evidence protection changes as the scene examination's focus becomes established and proceeds through to its conclusion.

In consultation with relevant experts, the crime scene coordinator should establish and document a dress code that:

- reflects the standard of protective clothing appropriate for that investigation stage (e.g. there may be less demands of the scene or a drop in the concentration of scene examiners)
- is clearly communicated to all relevant parties
- is clearly displayed in a notice in the warm zone.

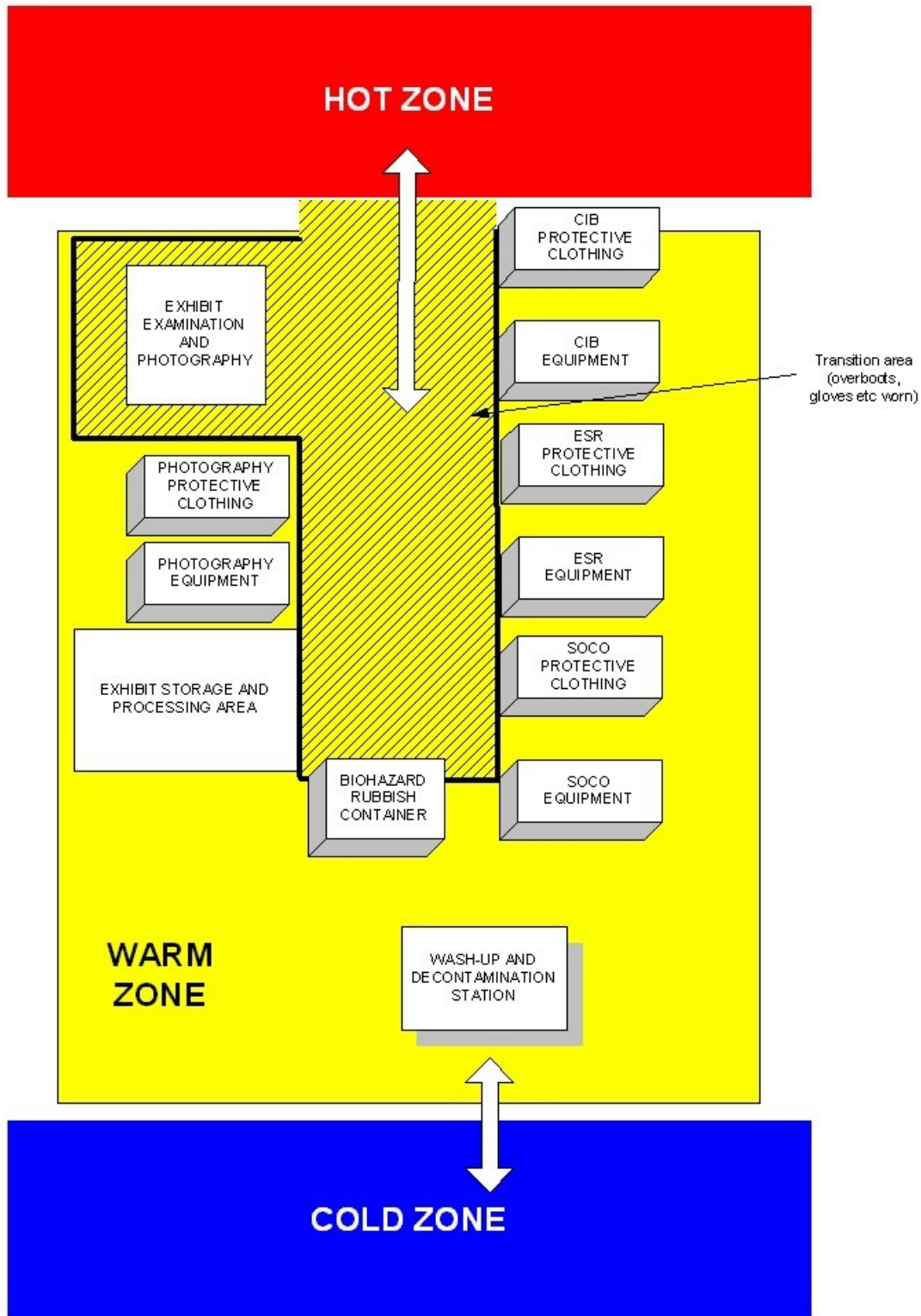
Dress code and scene access example

This table gives an example of appropriate dress codes and access to scenes during scene examination stages.

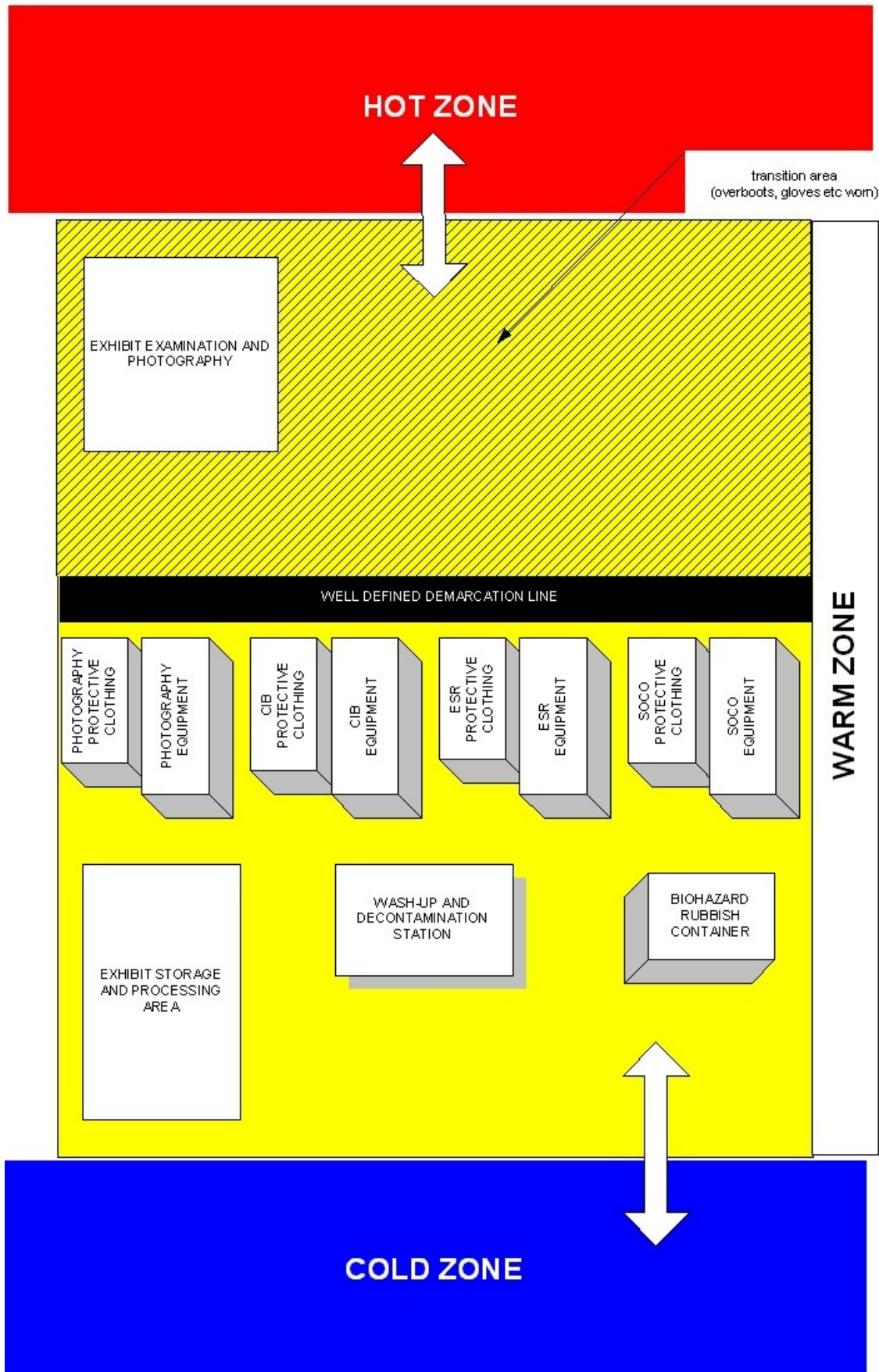
| Level | Stage of scene examination | Dress of the day | Access to hot and warm scene zones | Access to cold scene zone |
|-------|--|---|---|--|
| 1 | No scene protection measures taken. | Disposable overalls, gloves and shoe covers or protectors. Masks and haircaps may be required. | No access by any personnel, except for the purpose of establishing scene protection measures. | Access to any relevant inquiry staff and approved additional personnel |
| 2 | Basic scene protection measures (boundary tape, stepping plates etc.) in place. Evidence collection about to start or in process. | Disposable overalls, gloves and shoe covers. Masks and haircaps may be required. | Access restricted to essential scene examiners, noted by scene log. | |
| 3 | Ground/floor access areas searched and all relevant evidence collected s6(c) Trace evidence collection complete. | Disposable overalls, gloves and shoe covers. | Access restricted to essential scene examiners, plus approved additional personnel (e.g. lawyers, senior Police). | |
| 4 | Remaining evidence collection and scene examination complete. | No minimum standard - appropriate protection of personnel in 'dirty', bloody scenes recommended. | No access restrictions. | |

(See also [Hazard management and safety at crime scenes](#))

Zone example 1



Zone example 2



Exhibits

Packaging

Follow these steps to package exhibits as they are taken.

| Step | Action |
|------|--|
| 1 | <p>In serious crimes, exhibits must be photographed in situ before uplifting.</p> <p>Package, seal and label exhibits as soon as they are taken.</p> <p>Check the relevant section in the 'Crime scenes and forensics' chapter of the Police Manual for additional advice about special packaging requirements for some types of evidence to ensure it is not compromised.</p> <p>Note: Where possible, take the packaging to the item and not the item to the packaging. Do not reuse packaging and other containers. Refer to the chapter 'Packaging, handling and storage of exhibits' for the range of exhibit packaging items available.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Securely seal all packaging and containers with adhesive tape on all edges and sign across the tape. (Staples should not be used). Ensure the packaging is appropriate for the item. For example, items for fingerprinting should be packaged so that the item surface does not rub against the inside of the package.</p> <p>Do not reopen after sealing until examination stage.</p> |
| 3 | <p>The finder of the exhibit must record the exhibit in Forensic Examination, PROP, or IMT (for serious crime scene) as appropriate and label the exhibit package with the exhibit number generated from that application.</p> <p>Further information can be added to the exhibit package, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- description of item collected- location of the item- time and date found / collected- name of person from whom exhibit was seized (if applicable)- by whom collected. |
| 4 | <p>Store and transport control samples and items from each suspect / victim / scene in separate outer containers (e.g. large paper sacks). Refer to the 'Packaging, handling, and storage of exhibits' chapter or CheckPoint / Property and Exhibits / Packaging Exhibits for the correct packaging for different types of exhibits.</p> |
| 5 | <p>If the item is damp or wet and requires drying to avoid mould and loss of DNA, place the item in a paper sack, then place the papersack in a Biohazard plastic bag. The exhibit must be dried or sent to ESR within 24 hours. Refer to "DNA evidence at crime scenes" chapter.</p> |

Serious crime scene exhibit recording

The IMT application must be used for all serious crime scene exhibits.

Follow the procedures for exhibit recording in '[Part 16 Exhibit management in homicide or serious crime investigations](#)' (part of the Homicide and Serious Crime Investigations chapters). Exhibit Register Schedules can be generated through IMT.

Non-serious and volume crime exhibit recording

Use the PROP and or Forensic Examination applications to record for non-serious crime and volume crime scene exhibits.

Whatever the numbering system is used, it must:

- be consistent for the duration of a case
- use unique numbers and eliminate the chances of duplication of numbers

- be simple, efficient and meaningful
- be easy to delegate
- cover all exhibits including medical examination kits, reference blood samples and photographs.

Recording crime scenes

Tools for recording crime scenes

A comprehensive record, including notes, photographs and sketches of a scene examination is a pre-requisite to the subsequent reporting, evaluation and presentation of the information developed during an investigation.

Recording methods include:

- documentation and notes
- sketch plans
- photography
- video recording
- 360° photography
- photogrammetry (forensic mapping)
- 3D laser scanning
- aerial (RPAS) photography.

Documentation and notes

Effective documentation of the crime scene begins when officers are first briefed with their tasks.

Scene notes:

- provide a repository for details, a basis for the report and supplement sketches and photographs
- contain regular appreciations to display the note-taker's decision-making process
- reflect the 'when', 'who', 'what', 'where, and 'how' of the investigation
- serve as documentary evidence for the investigator, especially in court
- may assist in answering questions and corroborating other forms of documentation (photos, sketches) and testimony or statements.

Notes must be legible, accurate and relevant. Alterations should be crossed out with a single line, then initialled and dated.

s6(c)

What should notes cover?

There are no set absolute procedures for crime scene note taking but this table outlines some minimum requirements.

| Subject /type | Examples of what to cover |
|---|---|
| Notification information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case (event) file number related to job - Mode (phone, personal contact, e-mail, Comms entry) - Dates and times - Information received (type of case, victims(s), address, case number, officer in charge, scene personnel, assigned tasks) - Identity of person doing the informing (full name, rank, contact details (cell or phone number)) - Identity of any other staff you liaise with - Detail of the task and responsibilities. |
| Arrival information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transportation mode and any intermediate stops (e.g. secondary scenes which may relate to assertions of cross contamination) - Date and time - Address of scene and examination - Personnel already at the scene, e.g. witnesses, Police, victim(s), emergency staff (this information may be important s6(c)) - Notifications made or to be made to Fire Service, Crown solicitor(s), pathologist etc. |
| Description of scene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weather (rain, sun, approximate heat, wind etc) - Location (interior / exterior, floor number, ground floor, single level dwelling, garage, office building etc) - Description of scene (messy, organised, blood-like marks, broken glass, other descriptions relating to why no other witnesses are available, e.g. house 50 metres from roadside front boundary lined with high trees and side and rear boundary has 2 metre fence) - Vehicles, buildings or other major structures or observations at the scene - Evidence easily s6(c) |
| Description of victim(s) (if present) | s6(c) |
| Crime scene team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assignments / tasks to personnel - Information from scene personnel (from first responder/ officer attending account) - Start and end times for scene duties - Wording of the briefing given to the scene guards - Evidence processing, collection, packaging and transportation / storage. |
| Examination process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examination methods - Photographs taken - Comprehensive crime scene sketch plans throughout the examination process - Exhibits collected - Chain of evidence log. |
| More detailed, additional notes about crime scene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - s6(c) |

Sketch plans

Photographs and scene notes alone do not record a crime scene adequately. A sketched plan should also be routinely made to:

- refresh investigator's memory
- record exact location of evidence found in relationship to pieces of furniture or fixed objects and numbered markers
- provide a permanent record
- assist everyone's understanding of the scene
- supplement photographs and notes
- assist in locating items/exhibits in areas of clutter and confusion.

Where accurate plans are required, consider requesting the crash investigation unit which has trained forensic mappers, to carry out forensic mapping. (See [Photogrammetry \(Forensic mapping\)](#) below)

Types of sketches


Crime scene locations present different types of sketching problems. The type of sketch chosen is not important. What is important is that the resulting drawing best and most easily depicts the crime scene.

This table outlines the most common types of sketches used for recording crime scenes.

| Type of sketch | Description / use |
|---|--|
| Overview, floor plan, or bird's eye view sketch | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Used in nearly all crime scene situations where the items of interest are located on one plane.- It is the:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- simplest and most common sketch for diagramming crime scenes- easiest for lay people, e.g. jury members, to comprehend. |
| Elevation drawing | Used when the vertical, rather than the horizontal, plane is of interest. For example, if a wall of a house had bloodstains present, the elevation drawing of the wall would be used to depict this scene. |
| Cross projection, or exploded view | A combination of the preceding two types. It is similar to the floor plan sketch except the walls have been folded down into the same plane as the floor. |
| Perspective drawing | Depicts a three-dimensional drawing of the scene. Although the final drawing will be very clear if done properly, this type of sketch requires a fair amount of artistic skill and therefore is generally not recommended. |

Drawing rough sketches

This table outlines the steps for drawing rough sketches at crime scenes.

| Step | Action |
|------|--|
| 1 | Decide what is to be sketched. Include all key features and essential items in the drawing. |
| 2 | <p>Commence with an overview sketch of the entire scene and the outlining boundaries. Identify on this sketch what areas will be drawn in more detail with subsequent sketches.</p> <p>Each sketch should be numbered so cross referencing can be used.</p> <p>Each sketch should maintain a Key or Legend, so items identified are recorded in the Key, rather than on the sketch itself. This avoids clutter and misinterpretation.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Begin sketching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - as soon as the investigating officer has attended to the essential tasks of aiding the injured, protecting the scene, securing witnesses and making arrests - after a preliminary search of the scene but before the removal of evidence (where objects must be removed from the scene before the sketch is completed, the exact location of those items should be outlined with a marking device). |
| 4 | Indicate North on the sketch. (Use compass if necessary). |
| 5 | <p>s6(c)</p>  |
| 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use drawing and charting symbols to locate all objects accurately and identify them by numerals. Draw 'stick' figures to represent bodies. |
| 7 | Include the position of doors and windows and the direction of opening. |
| 8 | <p>Try to make all corrections to the sketch while still at the scene. Don't rely on your memory.</p> <p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your sketch doesn't have to look like a draftsman or architect completed it. - Do not attempt to draw to scale or exact positioning. - You may be called to court to interpret it. |
| 9 | <p>Record in a title block:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - complainant's name and file number - location sketched - date and time of sketch - sketcher's name and names of anyone assisting with measurements - sketch's scale or a notation that the sketch is not to scale |

Finished drawings for court

A finished or formal drawing is usually prepared for courtroom presentation based on information recorded in the rough sketch. Unlike the rough sketch, the formal drawing is drawn to scale and embodies all the fine points of accepted drafting techniques.

The finished sketch can be as simple or complex as the need requires. Items pertaining to the investigation may be added to the drawing by means of transparent plastic overlays. Different colour inks may be used to attract attention to certain locations or items.

This drawing must be exhibited.

Note that the original rough sketch is a discoverable document and must be retained.

Examples of sketches

See [examples of sketches](#) at the end of this chapter.

Photography

This topic outlines the role of photography at crime scenes. See the [Photography \(Forensic imaging\)](#) chapter for more detailed information about digital imaging, the services provided by specialist Police Forensic Photographers and when they should and must be used.

Photography is a useful tool for recording crime scenes, and preliminary photographs should be completed before crime scene specialists start working on the scene. Coordinate more detailed photography (e.g. close-ups) with the sketch plan drawer and other evidence recovery staff (e.g. scene examiner, scientist or fingerprint officer).

Use of Police Forensic Photographers

Police Forensic Photographers are trained in the recording of high-quality imagery of crime scenes, victims, exhibits, evidence and other situations for presentation at court.

Trained forensic photographers **must** be used to take digital images and recordings for homicide, serious crime investigations, and post mortems. They must also be used for recording fatal motor vehicle crashes: and should be used for recording images of victims of crime, and evidential and technical images of exhibits.

Use of mobile devices for taking photographs

Only in exceptional circumstances should mobility devices / iPhones be used to take evidential images. You should only do so when the device is capable in the circumstances of capturing a quality image and it is appropriate to do so. For example you are first on the scene at an assault in the street. Bloodstains are visible and it is about to rain. Use your iPhone to take an image. Cover the bloodstains to enable sampling and subsequent photography should this be required later. Similarly you could take evidential images of tyre tread pattern tracks or foot or shoe prints which are at risk of being damaged.

Follow the [Guidelines for taking and storing images using iPhones](#) in the 'Photography (Forensic imaging)' chapter when it is necessary to use your mobility device / iPhone to take photographs. Note that all images collected using your i-phone are subject to disclosure.

Type and purpose of crime scene photographs

This table outlines some of the types/ subjects of crime scene photographs that should be considered, and the purposes of those photographs.

| Type /subject | Purpose and actions to take |
|---|--|
| Environmental photography (i.e. the street and surroundings) | s6(c) |
| General scene photography | Show the scene's overall appearance, including a panorama of the scene and paths taken through it. |
| s6(c) | - s6(c) |
| Photography of items of evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use medium-range and close-up s6(c) - Note these shots can be used to unambiguously record the location of items of interest while still in situ. |
| Technical photographs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist to identify and process physical evidence by using filters, illumination techniques, macroscopic/ microscopic photography. - s6(c) |
| s6(c) | - s6(c) |
| Closer range photographs | s6(c) |

Storage of crime scene and investigation related images

All images taken in relation to crime scenes and investigations are deemed evidential and must be stored in accordance with the Police [Digital Imaging Guidelines](#) in the 'Photography (Forensic imaging)' chapter.

Video recording

A Police forensic photographer **must** be used whenever a video recording of a crime scene is required.

Videos supplement (rather than replace) still photography by recording the overall appearance of the scene and the position of items within it. [360° photography](#) could also be used as another way of recording and presenting images of the crime scene. A video of the scene could be added into the 360° presentation for court.

The advantages of video recordings are:

- a narrative description can be added
- a valuable aid for initial and subsequent briefings
- a number of items or a large scene may be viewed to show a perspective or relationship between items, and
- movement may be recorded (e.g. following a road or track or an individual performing an activity as part of the reconstruction of events).

Procedure when video recording

Follow these steps when recording videos at scenes.

| Step | Action |
|------|---|
| 1 | Begin filming: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- indoor scenes outside- outside scenes with a pan view. |
| 2 | Include in the narrative: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- an introduction- the speaker's name- time, date, location- case reference / operation name, and other pertinent identifying information. |
| 3 | Ensure other personnel remain silent during recording as their voices may be picked up, distracting the recorder and sometimes compromising the recording when the tape is used as evidence. Consider turning the audio recording option off. |
| 4 | s6(c) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Show relative location and position when panning and zooming in on items. |
| 5 | Do not edit or erase the master tape to maintain integrity. |

360° Photography

360° photography can be used to record a virtual tour of a crime scene for investigative team briefings and later presentation in court. A record and presentation of the crime scene can be produced that includes virtual walk-through, links to exhibits, key evidence, maps, and other relevant information. 360° photography services are provided by trained staff in the Police Forensic Imaging Sections and should be considered for homicide and suitable serious crime scenes.

See also [Photography \(Forensic imaging\)](#) in the Police Manual.

Photogrammetry (Forensic mapping)

Photogrammetry may be considered in special circumstances for serious crime scenes. It is also used in traffic crashes.

Photogrammetry is remote sensing technology in which geometric properties about objects are determined from photographic images. For example, the three-dimensional coordinates of points on an object are determined by measurements made in two or more photographic images taken from different positions.

Common points are identified on each image. A line of sight (or ray) can be constructed from the camera location to the point on the object. The intersection of these rays (triangulation) determines the three-dimensional location of the point. More sophisticated algorithms can exploit other information about the scene that is known a priori (e.g. symmetries) in some cases allowing reconstructions of 3D coordinates from only one camera position.

See the '[Forensic mapping](#)' chapter for more information about photogrammetry. Although focused on traffic crashes, the principles apply to all crime scenes.

3D Laser Scanning

3D laser scanning of a crime scene enables **accurate reconstruction** **s6(c)**

3D laser scanning of a crime scene should be considered:

- **s6(c)**

s6(c)

Refer to the [Forensic Evidence Guidelines](#) for further information.

s6(c)

Risk management and safety at crime scenes

Health and safety duties

The expectation of the Commissioner and the [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#) is that employees working in crime scene examination will take reasonable care to ensure that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of themselves or others, and comply as far as they are reasonably able to with any reasonable instruction that is given to adhere with the Act and its regulations.

A key enabler is the application of the [TENR-Operational threat assessment](#) in the workplace. See also 'Health, safety and wellbeing' for keeping our communities safe, and ensuring our people are safe and feel safe. Of particular relevance to crime scene examination are:

- [Blood and body fluid exposure](#)
- [Fingerprint and Scene of Crime Office \(SOCO\) laboratory and crime scene safety](#)
- [Hazard management](#)
- [Hazardous substances management](#)
- [Clandestine drug laboratories](#).

Risk management

All employees share responsibility for creating and maintaining a safe workplace. Part of this includes risk management.

Risk management requires the application of a systematic method to identify and assess a risk to determine whether it is a significant risk and has the potential to cause harm. Employees' exposure to risks must be eliminated so far as is reasonably practicable, or where elimination is not reasonably practicable then they must be minimised so far as is reasonably practicable.

Risk assessment is the process of evaluating hazards in order to ascertain the likelihood that exposed workers will be adversely affected, and to characterise the nature of the effects. A hazard is anything that is an actual or potential cause or source of harm. Risks may be identified from task analysis exercises, audits from ongoing hazard reports from employees, the application of TENR to specific operational situations or as a result of accident or incident investigations.

There are numerous opportunities in a work environment including at crime scenes for identifying new hazards, e.g. due to new or modified equipment and/or processes or situations that Police employees are being exposed to through the course of their work. Once hazards are identified, there is a requirement to eliminate, or minimise where elimination is not reasonably practicable, the risk (potential for harm) to people who are exposed to this hazard as far as is reasonably practicable, and to communicate the risks and controls to potentially affected workers. **A hazard board has been developed for use at crime scene examinations to aid with risk communication.**

Use of hazard boards at crime scenes

The tasks involved during crime scene examination are potentially hazardous. The work is often carried out under pressure in less than ideal surroundings. Individual scenes may present different risks and each should be managed from a safety perspective through a process of risk management. This will ensure:

- hazards are identified
- safe systems of work are developed (including PPE requirements)
- risks are minimised.

A hazard board is to be used at:

- homicide scene (includes a full scene examination required for suspicious sudden death scene examinations - not for general 1S or suicide scenes)
- arson (traditionally the most dangerous scene attended)
- any other crime type or incident type where staff from external agencies are required to attend.

A hazard board may be used at other crime scene examinations not listed above as determined by the crime scene manager or

delegate.

Completing the hazard board

Completing the hazard board is part of the appreciation/planning process prior to conducting a crime scene examination. (**Note:** Continue to document identified hazards in your notebook if the scene is one which does not require a hazard board to be used - see above.)

Populating the hazard board is self-explanatory. Use a removable whiteboard marker when completing it.

Types of hazards to consider and mitigation

| Hazardous Energy Type | Example |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Gravity and acceleration | Falls, crashes, falling objects |
| Kinetic (refers to vehicles) | Impacts, crashes and collisions |
| Mechanical | Crushing, breaking, sheering, cutting, straining |
| Electrical | Shock arcing, static-caused explosions |
| Chemical | Poisoning, corrosive explosives, gases, asbestos |
| Pressure | Ruptures, leaks, explosions |
| Thermal | Fires, burns, sunburn, heat stress, frostbite |
| Noise and vibration | Hearing loss, metal fatigue, soft tissue injury |
| Explosive | Explosions |
| Human | Strains, sprains, hernias, dislocations, suffocation, choking, asphyxiation, heart attacks, stress, fatigue, assaults, Occupational Overuse Syndrome. |
| Radiation | Burns and exposure |
| Biological and microbiological | Illness, disease, viruses, insect bites, spider bites |

This list is not exhaustive and there may be other types of hazards identified.

When risks are identified, the 'Control Method and Controls Implemented' section of the hazard board must also be completed. This includes a 'Monitoring and Frequency' column.

Site safety plans must be prepared and can be included as the sketch notes of the Q/C Scene, Scene Coordinator etc.

Where to display hazard board

Display the hazard board at a prominent area near the natural entry to the scene (warm zone). It should be easily identifiable as required to be read by any persons entering the scene.

If the hazard board contains sensitive information relating to the investigation (e.g. evidential material in reference to a firearm) ensure that the board is out of the line of sight of members of the public, suspects and/or the media who may be able to record these details.

Hand over

Whenever the scene is handed over to Police or Police have completed the scene examination and are handing the scene back to the premises or vehicle etc. owner / occupier / tenant / complainant / etc., the contents of the hazard board are to be passed on to these persons as part of the Police responsibility to ensure future people required to enter the scene remain safe.

Where Police receive a scene hand over from an external agency (e.g. Fire staff at an arson scene), a full briefing from an appropriate external agency staff member is required regarding the risks identified by them. Even after such a hand over, an appropriate Police staff member must undertake their own risk assessment at the crime scene and document identified hazards and controls.

Recording the hazard board

Take a photo of the hazard board on a Police mobility device, print it out and add it to the file.

Record details of the briefing of Police staff / external agency staff in O/C Scene or Scene Coordinator's notebook detailing who was present and that the briefing was conducted in line with the hazard board.

Also record by photographing, printing out and adding to the file:

- hazard boards received from external agencies as part of a hand over
- information provided by police to an external agency when the scene is handed over to them.

Safety precautions

This table outlines some typical safety precautions which can be taken to ensure the safety of employees and others. This should not be considered a comprehensive list of all risks and controls (precautions) and is provided only as a tool to aid in the risk assessment process.

| Type of risk | Precaution |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Scene environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that all the potential health and safety risks relating to the scene and its environment are assessed early on. Consult experts where necessary. - Appropriate safety equipment should be worn to isolate, minimise or mitigate the particular risks of that scene. - For arson scenes, once declared “safe” by the NZ Fire Safety Officer, staff entering the scene must wear a hard hat, steel soled boots, overalls, appropriate gloves and the correct grade of respirator mask. - Where the scene contains explosives and or detonators, then personal radios, cell phones and camera flashes should not be used in the vicinity. |
| Personal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure personal protection - booster updates for tetanus and hepatitis B. - Use personal protective equipment. - Use disposable protective items. - Use the appropriate grade of masks, goggles, and protective overalls when dusting or using chemicals to protect from liquids, aerosols and vapours, powders and air borne particles. - When Luminol is being applied, the correct size respirator mask (not a disposable mask) with the appropriate cartridges (multi-gas) and goggles, OR a full face respirator mask with cartridges (multi-gas); AND disposable overalls and gloves are the PPE required to be worn by staff present. - Wear appropriate gloves for the task and change regularly. If you have cuts or abrasions to the hand these should be covered with a dressing, and always wear gloves. Consider double gloves for additional protection. - Personal hygiene - always wash hands before and after examinations. - Carry a first aid kit. - Do not eat, smoke or drink during a scene examination or in a laboratory environment. - Treat all hazards as dangerous. - Clean or dispose of personal protective equipment after use. |
| Equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Place contaminated sharps in the appropriate containers. - Decontaminate all equipment after use (10% bleach diluted with water or other appropriate disinfectant). Soak for ten minutes (or as per directions), rinse with water and dry. Further precautions can be taken by hospital sterilisation. - Biohazardous rubbish (gloves, disposable overalls) should be disposed of by a reputable company. |
| Evidence | <p>Evidence stained with blood or other body fluids is potentially biohazardous and should be handled as such. s6(c)</p> <p>- s6(c)</p> |
| Engineering and workplace controls | <p>Use engineering and work place practice controls to eliminate or minimise your exposure to hazardous materials. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engineering controls include using puncture-resistant containers for contaminated sharps and adjustable mirrors for locating evidence in confined / hidden spaces. Options for working at height may also need to be considered. - workplace controls include hand washing and wearing personal protective equipment to reduce the likelihood of exposure when tasks are performed. |

Checklist: What to look for at scenes?

General items

Use this list as a guide for early noting, preserving and examining possible evidence. The list begins with evidence that may be found outside a building, and then covers possible evidence found inside.

s6(c)

Approaches

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Look for and take possession of: | Take control samples of any substance or items likely to have touched the offender’s clothing, footwear or implements including: |
|----------------------------------|--|

s6(c)

Points of entry and exit

This table lists where points of entry or exit may be indicated.

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| In a building | In an open area |
|---------------|-----------------|

s6(c)

Interior or seat of activity

Look for:
s6(c)

s6(c)

Examination strategy example

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Incident / operation: | Date: |
| Background information / briefing | |
| Forensic examination aims | |
| Forensic team (Indicate role and organisation) | |
| Scene designation: Each scene to be numbered and subject of 'scene forensic strategy' document and appended to this strategy. | |
| Scene management Scene to be managed by appropriate scene manager to address resourcing, preservation, contamination, health and safety and welfare issues and evidence / intelligence recovery in line with <u>O/C</u> case requirements. Scene Forensic Strategy document (see below) to be completed and reviewed. Scene contamination log (see below) to be completed and appended. | |
| Resource tasking Resources, including specialist personnel and equipment, to be tasked following consultation with <u>O/C</u> case or their nominated representative. (Scene manager - <u>O/C</u> scene / Scene co-ordinator). Briefing: Briefing / de-briefing of scene examination team to be undertaken by the Scene Manager. | |
| Associated strategies: | |
| Results / Forensic submissions, Interpretation and Review To be discussed and actioned via forensic strategy meetings with <u>O/C</u> case | |
| SIGNED: | |
| (Scene manager) | (O/C case) |

Scene forensic strategy document - example

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Incident / Operation: | Date: |
| Scene of: | |
| At: | |
| Background information / Briefing: | |
| Forensic examination aims: | |
| Team personnel: | |
| Preservation issues: | |
| Contamination issues: | |
| Health and safety issues / Risk assessment: | |
| Significant results / Fast track submissions: | |
| Review: | |
| Signed: | |
| (O/C case) | (Scene manager) |

