



# CLEVELAND DIVISION OF POLICE

## GENERAL POLICE ORDER



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| EFFECTIVE DATE:<br><b>JULY 8, 2020</b>                     | CHAPTER:<br><b>5 - Field Investigations</b> | PAGE:<br><b>1 of 3</b> | NUMBER:<br><b>5.10.01</b> |
| SUBJECT:<br><b>CRIME SCENE PRESERVATION AND PROCESSING</b> |   |                        |                           |
| CHIEF:<br><b><i>Calvin D. Williams, Chief</i></b>          |   |                        |                           |

*Substantive changes are italicized*

**PURPOSE:** To establish procedures *for* requesting crime scene processing by the Crime Scene and Record Unit (CS&RU).

**POLICY:** When there is evidence at a crime scene to be recorded or collected, officers shall take all appropriate precautions to preserve the crime scene and prevent the destruction, modification, movement, or manipulation of evidence. *When requested and available*, the CS&RU shall record and collect evidence at any scenes related to the commission of a crime.

**PROCEDURES:**

I. Establishment of a Crime Scene

A. *Officers shall:*

1. At the earliest moment when it becomes apparent that a crime scene may contain evidence that could be substantive to the investigation of a crime, ensure that the crime scene is secured:
  - a. In a manner that prevents uninvolved *members* or other persons from entering the crime scene. This may include the establishment of an area cordoned off by crime scene tape and the establishment of a crime scene entry log as described in General Police Order 5.10.02 Crime Scene Entry Log.
  - b. Encompassing the largest area that could potentially contain evidence. The area of the crime scene can always be reduced if necessary.
  - c. *To maintain control of persons entering the crime scene and lessen the risk of scene contamination, establish only one ENTRY and one EXIT point into and out of the crime scene.*
2. Exercise due care to avoid disturbing (e.g., touching, manipulating, moving, or altering any evidence or changing the appearance of a crime scene in any manner) the crime scene.
3. Prevent anyone (*including command staff and other supervisors*) not involved in the investigation, or necessary for the rendering of first aid or other exigency, to enter the crime scene.
4. Prevent any unauthorized person from touching or moving any object at the scene.

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5. Notwithstanding the rendering of first aid and other exigencies, crime scenes shall be maintained in the most undisturbed state possible pending the arrival of the CS&RU.
  - a. This includes, but shall not be limited to, turning on/off lights, touching telephones, touching door handles, opening/closing windows, opening drawers, and unnecessarily walking through the scene.
6. Avoid cross-contamination and be highly cognizant of the potential to transfer their DNA or fingerprints to a crime scene or any item within that crime scene.
7. Not eat, drink, use tobacco products, or introduce any item or substance into a crime scene unless it is in the furtherance of protecting or processing the crime scene.
8. Prevent anyone from *using tobacco products*, drinking, or eating at the scene.

B. Supervisors shall:

1. Determine if the physical evidence warrants crime scene processing and/or photography.
  - a. If warranted, the supervisor shall *request* the CS&RU respond via the Communications Control Section (CCS).
  - b. Specialized unit supervisors may have members under their command process a crime scene and collect evidence, if those members have been trained.
2. Have *members* remain at the scene of a serious crime until the CS&RU arrival. A zone car *shall* remain on scene if a suspect may be on scene or in the area.

II. *Victim Not Present at a Crime Scene*

- A. *When a crime victim is not at the crime scene (e.g., hospital, friend's house, police district) the following shall apply:*
  1. *Responding members shall interview victims and/or witnesses in order to determine if a crime scene exists where physical evidence may be found.*
  2. *The district where the crime scene is located shall have a zone car respond to the crime scene to determine if evidence exists.*
  3. *A supervisor from the district where the crime scene is located shall determine who will make the incident report, if members from another district are with the victim, keeping in mind:*
    - a. *The district of occurrence will handle all follow up investigations for felony crimes.*

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- b. *A supplemental report shall be completed if any physical evidence is located at the crime scene.*
- c. *Members making the original incident report shall confer with a supervisor in the district of occurrence to obtain the title of the report.*

### III. Requests for CS&RU

- A. A request for CS&RU processing shall include:
  - 1. The location where CS&RU personnel are needed and the incident report number.
  - 2. The nature of the crime and services needed (e.g., prints, photographs).
  - 3. Whether *members* will remain on scene and if not, any restrictions regarding access to the scene.
  - 4. The name and rank of the requesting supervisor.
  - 5. Information which may assist CS&RU personnel to respond to and complete an assignment including specific areas or items to be processed.
  - 6. Information that may affect the safety and security of CS&RU personnel (e.g., weapons, hazards, suspects on scene).
- B. *CS&RU shall advise on scene members of their approximate arrival time. When the crime scene does not require an immediate response or CS&RU is delayed due to a backlog of assignments, members shall advise the complainant or victim.*
- C. *When CS&RU is not available to respond, crime scenes shall be processed (e.g., photographed, evidence collected) by on scene members, according to current procedures.*
- D. *District personnel or other unit detectives shall collect and confiscate all weapons, drugs, and currency from a crime scene or vehicle.*
- E. *With the exception of Homicide Unit, Force Investigation Team, or Internal Affairs Unit investigations, NO member of the CS&RU shall collect weapons, drugs, or currency from a crime scene or vehicle.*

**THIS ORDER SUPERSEDES ANY PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DIRECTIVE OR POLICY FOR THIS SUBJECT AND WILL REMAIN EFFECTIVE UNTIL RESCINDED OR SUPERSEDED.**