



Peoria Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual

Policy 8.03 Collection and Preservation of Evidence



I. POLICY

It shall be the policy of the City of Peoria Police Department to establish a set of thorough procedures and guidelines to be followed by all employees responsible for crime scene security and the collection and preservation of evidence.

II. PROCEDURES

A. General Provisions: To the detective in charge of processing a crime scene, it is of utmost importance that a proper framework of procedures be adhered to by all personnel, and the basic steps for crime scene processing are adhered to. (See Section B of this Chapter)

1. Call-outs: The Crime Scene Technician may be subject to call-outs to any major crime scene on a twenty-four hour basis by the Technical Services Bureau Manager or their designee. (83.1.1)
 - a. The on-duty supervisor is responsible for calling out all necessary personnel, including the appropriate Criminal Investigations Bureau (CIB) supervisor.
 - b. In the event that the Technician is unavailable, the supervisor in charge of the incident may assign processing responsibilities to other qualified employees or solicit the assistance of crime scene personnel from other agencies. (Upon arrival of a Crime Scene Technician, it is to be assumed that the scene has been properly secured.)
2. Supervision: The primary objective of the supervisor in charge of the crime scene is to prevent personnel from taking unorganized physical action. The supervisor in charge is responsible for directing the on-going events by asserting the leadership role from the onset of the investigation.

B. Basic Steps for Crime Scene Processing: (83.2.6)

1. The first officer on the scene must ensure that the scene and perimeter are secure and protected and increase the outer perimeters of the area if necessary.
2. The first responding officer and/or supervisor must conduct a preliminary survey after securing the scene. This is an initial walk through of the scene in order to obtain an understanding of the scene as a whole, including the existence and location of readily observable items of possible evidence.
3. Officers arriving after the scene has been secured must contact the first officer/supervisor on the scene for pertinent information. All personnel who enter the scene must be accounted for.
4. The narrative description of the scene is prepared during the preliminary survey. This is a description of the original conditions of the scene as found by law enforcement personnel. It is limited to a view of the scene as readily observed by the naked eye. Three (3) common methods of narrative preparation are:
 - a. Handwritten notes.
 - b. Audio tape recorder.
 - c. Video tape with sight/sound capability.
 - (1) When a video tape is made, the video recorder shall be set to show the correct date and time the scene was recorded.
 - (2) It is imperative that, once the video taping has begun, the officer maintain the recorder in a continuous running mode until the scene has been fully recorded.

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5. Record the scene.
 6. Evaluate latent print evidence.
 7. Evaluate physical evidence.
 8. Conduct a detailed search.
 9. Collect, mark, and record physical evidence.
 10. Conduct a final survey to ensure that conditions of the crime scene have been documented as thoroughly as possible.
 11. Release the scene.
- C. Responsibilities of Supervisor in Charge of Crime Scenes: It is the responsibility of the supervisor in charge of a crime scene to maintain control of the scene and all personnel involved in the incident. In addition, the supervisor in charge of a scene shall ensure that:
1. The objectives of the crime scene search have been determined.
 2. Equipment and personnel needs have been determined and/or requested (i.e. CIB notified).
 3. Assignments for specific duties have been accomplished.
 - a. Assignments should be made concurrent with the aptitude and training of the personnel involved.
 - b. Task assignments must be documented. This may be accomplished through the issuance of written assignments, the use of a voice recorder, or by taking written notes to document the assignments made.
 - c. Personnel given assignments must be made aware of the specifics. (No assumptions can exist in this area.)
 - d. The trading of assignments is not permitted.
 - e. Involved personnel have been briefed on the goals and direction of the search prior to the processing of the crime scene.
 - f. Make no inferences that one assignment is of greater or lesser significance than others.
 - g. Either an initial or Supplemental Report shall be submitted for all assignments. (83.2.6)
 4. The Major Incident Checklist has been initiated. (83.2.6)
 5. A Command Post has been established, if indicated.
 6. Information for actions and direction has been reviewed on a constant basis as the crime scene process progresses.
 7. Notes have been prepared to document actions and observations made. (83.2.6)
 8. Unforeseen circumstances are dealt with in a logical manner in keeping with the objectives of the search.
- D. Crime Scene Technician Responsibilities:
1. Comparison of latent print evidence with latent print records of known or suspected criminals by the use of the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) workstation and the maintenance of such files.
 2. Conducting training sessions with employees that will be involved in lifting latent prints or taking fingerprints of arrestees or suspects.
 3. Recording and gathering evidence at major crime scenes.
 4. Ensuring all photographic processing is accomplished.

5. Responding, assisting and developing with all Investigate Capture Station requests, to include photo line ups.
 6. Acting as AFIS Site manager.
- E. Recording the Scene - The Crime Scene Technician shall report directly to the supervisor/officer in charge of the incident and shall be responsible for recording all evidence in the following manner:
1. Photographs of the Scene - A complete set of photographs, with written documentation, shall be made of the scene. When possible, photographs shall contain a landmark showing the relative positions of the item being photographed. During major crime scenes, photographs shall be supplemented by a video recording of the scene. (83.2.2) (83.2.4.b)
 - a. All items of evidence shall be photographed prior to removal.
 - b. When the size of an object needs to be shown, a scale shall be introduced. If a scale is used, at least two (2) photographs of the objects shall be taken; one with the scale and one without the scale. Both photographs shall use the same lighting, camera settings, and camera position.
 - c. A written record shall be made by the photographer giving the photograph sequence number, date, time, location of the item photographed, and evidence marker, if applicable.
 - d. When an officer takes photographs to document a crime, they will use a department issued digital camera. All officers are required to receive training on the use of the department issued digital camera.
 - e. All digital photographic media cards will be forwarded to the crime scene technician for processing.
 - f. All digital media cards will be processed/downloaded to the department's secure software by the Crime Scene Technician.
 - (1) Once the media card is downloaded, it will be cleared and returned to the police clerk assigned to equipment and supply to be returned to Patrol Services.
 - (2) No personal photographs, negatives, audio or videotape recordings shall be taken or retained by individual employees for non-departmental related purposes.
 - g. All Audio and Videotapes shall be impounded into property as an item of evidence.
 - h. Anytime, at the scene of a serious crime against person or property, in which photographs were not taken or physical evidence was not removed from the scene, the assigned officer/detective shall prepare a report to their immediate supervisor explaining the reasons why.
 2. Crime Scene Sketches (83.2.4.c)
 - a. Investigating officers shall prepare a sketch pursuant to the collection and preservation of evidence at all major incidents. A list of such incidents would include, but is not limited to:
 - (1) Death investigations where foul play is suspected.
 - (2) Fatal or near fatal traffic accidents.
 - (3) Major crime scenes (including traffic) to which investigators have been summoned.
 - b. Sketches shall be submitted with the IR for supervisory approval. The sketch should contain sufficient information so that a final scaled drawing can be made at a later time. The rough sketch should include:
 - (1) Dimensions, including measurements.
 - (2) Relation of the crime scene to other buildings, geographical features, or roadways.
 - (3) Address, floor, or room number, if applicable.

- (4) Location of significant features of the scene, including the victim\.
 - (5) Date and time of sketch preparation.
 - (6) Name(s) of the individual(s) preparing the sketch.
 - (7) Direction of north.
 - (8) Locations of items of physical evidence recovered.
3. Preparation of a complete and detailed report - The report shall include actions taken at the scene, number of photographs taken, whether or not measurements were taken, and a listing of the physical evidence removed.
 4. All major crime scenes that CIB investigates will be recorded by the use of a video camera. These investigations will include, but not be limited to, homicides, sexual assaults, kidnappings, serious aggravated assaults, officer involved shootings, and clandestine laboratories. Traffic Services Section (TSS) will videotape record all on-scene investigations regarding traffic fatalities and serious accident scenes that the TSS supervisor deems necessary.
- F. Collecting and Processing Evidence in the Field - It is imperative that proper methods for collecting and preserving evidence be used in the field. Proper methods are those that will preserve the evidence in the process of collection, prevent introduction of foreign material to it, and ensure as complete a sample as possible.
1. Evidence Collection (83.2.1) (84.1.1.d)
 - a. In general, employees should photograph and release property to its owner when one has been identified and verified through reasonable means. Items of property will be impounded under the following conditions:
 - (1) An owner cannot be identified.
 - (2) The item is a weapon used in an offense against others.
 - (3) Any item that requires scientific analysis.
 - (4) Any evidence that by State Statute is contraband (drugs, fireworks, etc.)
 - (5) Any other evidence that by its nature should be impounded.
 - b. Each item of evidence shall be labeled at the time it is collected, seized, or received. The Peoria Police Department provides several types of tags, evidence labels, etc. for the proper labeling of evidence.
 - c. Each item shall be numbered separately and sequentially.
 - d. Items should be tagged and placed in an appropriate package or container and sealed. If sealed with evidence tape, the seal shall be marked with the initials and ID# of the person collecting the evidence, and date. Each item of property will be completely identified and recorded on the preprinted container or evidence tag. The following information shall be included for each item:
 - (1) Name or initials and ID# of the employee collecting the evidence.
 - (2) The date and time the evidence was collected.
 - (3) The Incident Report (IR) number.
 - (4) The item number.
 - (5) Description of the item (including make, model number, serial number, color, etc.)
 - (6) This information will be included on the "Seized Property" form (#151-004) on items seized during search warrant service or other applicable situations. This information will include:

- (a) Source (from whom or location from which obtained)
 - (b) Name of person collecting the items
 - (c) Date and time each item was collected.
- e. Items should also be labeled or tagged in such a way as not to lessen its evidentiary value.
- f. For all items of evidence that are removed or seized, a list will be included on the Property Impound form (#152-015) and shall contain the following information: (83.2.1)
- (1) Item number.
 - (2) Description of the item (including make, model number, serial number, color, etc.)
 - (3) Incident report number
- g. Evidence shall be collected, marked, and packaged only by the person(s) assigned to process the crime scene. Others may be assigned to assist in a crime scene search to locate items of evidence, but should not touch or move items of evidence when located.

2. Evidence Processing:

- a. It shall be the responsibility of the officer/detective assigned to the case, in consultation with their immediate supervisor, to determine which items of evidence need to be sent to a criminal or forensic laboratory for further examination.
- b. It shall be the responsibility of the assigned officer/detective to notify a Police Services Officer assigned to Property as to which items need to be sent to the lab, to which lab they should be sent, and what tests or analysis are requested.
- c. The laboratory will not run a test unless it is specifically asked for. (83.3.1) (83.3.2.a)
- d. Items requiring laboratory examinations shall be taken or sent (mail, Federal Express, etc.) to the appropriate lab as soon as practical.
 - (1) Items shall be prepared, packaged, and delivered, in accordance with the requirements of the receiving lab, by the Property Custodian, Crime Scene Technician, or assigned detective.
 - (2) There may be circumstances when an officer/detective will need to personally take evidence to a lab. When this occurs, the officer/detective shall coordinate with the property custodian to ensure that all necessary paperwork is completed and returned. (83.3.1) (83.3.2.b & c)
- e. Whenever a known source is available, material from that known source shall be collected and sent to the laboratory for comparison with the physical evidence collected. (83.1.2)
- f. A written record on any evidence submitted to a laboratory for examination shall be maintained. The record shall include the following information: (83.3.2.d)
 - (1) The name of the officer last having custody of the item.
 - (2) The date and time of submission or mailing and the method used for transmission.
 - (3) The date and time of receipt in the laboratory.
 - (4) The name and signature of the person in the laboratory receiving the evidence.
- g. A request for written results of analysis shall be made on all evidence submitted to a laboratory. (83.3.2.e)

- (1) Copies of this request shall be forwarded to the officer/detective requesting the analysis and to the Records Management Section.
 - (2) Lab reports, when returned by the lab, shall be forwarded to the Records Management Section.
- G. Vehicles - Vehicles taken into custody as evidence by this Department shall be impounded and released in accordance with the below listed procedures.
1. Processing Vehicles for Other Jurisdictions
 - a. If the vehicle is reported stolen by another agency, that agency shall immediately be contacted for hit confirmation and vehicle disposition purposes. A computer locate will be placed on all recovered stolen vehicles from other jurisdictions.
 - b. If the reporting agency requests that a vehicle involved in a serious crime be impounded, it shall be impounded in our department vehicle impound area or other action as authorized by the reporting agency.
 - c. If the reporting agency does not wish the vehicle to be impounded, it shall be towed by the Agency contracted towing company.
 - d. Once towed, the reporting agency shall be notified by teletype of the name and telephone number of the towing company having possession of the vehicle.
 2. Locally Stolen and Recovered Vehicles: Vehicles stolen from within the jurisdiction of the Peoria Police Department shall be processed for items of evidence.
 - a. If the officer responsible for the investigation or processing of the vehicle has any doubt as to the need of a search warrant, contact should be made with the on-duty supervisor for advice and direction.
 - b. Upon completion of processing for evidence, the registered owner of the stolen vehicle will be requested to take possession of the vehicle.
 - (1) In the event that the registered owner cannot be contacted, the vehicle will be towed and impounded by the Peoria Police Department's contract towing company.
 - (2) Refer to policy 4.01, Patrol Administration, for victim notification.
 - (3) If the vehicle is recovered in an inoperable condition, the registered owner may request a towing company of their choice.
 3. Processing Vehicles Involved in Major Felonies
 - a. Vehicles involved in major felonies that are evidentiary in nature shall be processed for items of evidence. If the officer responsible for the investigation or processing of the vehicle has any doubt as to the need of a search warrant, contact should be made with the on-duty supervisor for advice and direction.
 - b. Prior to impounding a vehicle involved in a major felony, the appropriate CIB or TSS Supervisor shall be contacted for impound authorization.
 - (1) The location of impound will be determined by the CIB or TSS Supervisor or the detective assigned to the investigation
 - (2) If the major felony originated from a traffic accident or incident, a Patrol Services Bureau supervisor shall authorize the vehicle impound for evidentiary purposes.
- H. Drug Field Testing – Only officers who have been certified through the Arizona Department of Public Safety (AZ DPS) to field test drugs will conduct field testing at the time of arrest.
1. Procedure

- a. Drug certified officers will field test drugs seized, complete a Field Drug Testing Report, and include in the narrative section of the report the fact that the drugs were tested along with the results.
 - b. Only officers who have successfully completed the Marijuana Testing Program through the AZ DPS Crime Laboratory will field test marijuana.
 - c. Only officers who have successfully completed the AZ DPS Testing Program for methamphetamine, cocaine, and cocaine base, will field test these drug categories.
2. Only drug testing kits that have been approved for use by DPS will be used.
 3. Officers will field test all drug arrests and complete the Field Drug Testing Form.
 - a. Simple possession cases will be field tested at the time of arrest and the drugs will not be submitted to the AZ DPS Laboratory at the time of the initial arrest. At the time of the Preliminary Hearing, if the case is set for trial, the arresting officer will be responsible for completing a lab sheet and having the drug analyzed by the AZ DPS Laboratory.
 - b. All possession for sale cases will be field tested and immediately submitted to the AZ DPS Laboratory.
 - c. Residue cases will be submitted to the AZ DPS Laboratory and field tested only if there is enough residue present for both the field test and AZ DPS Laboratory.
- I. Training (83.2.4.a & d)
1. Training in crime and accident scene processing is provided as part of the Academy's basic curriculum for recruits. In addition, all persons responsible for crime scene processing shall receive specialized training to develop the following skills:
 - a. Recovery of latent prints.
 - b. Recovery of foot, tool, and tire impressions.
 - c. Photographing crime or accident scenes.
 - d. Preparing crime or accident scene sketches.
 - e. Collecting, preserving, and transmitting physical evidence, including biological materials.
- J. Equipment (83.2.4.a, b, c, & d): Department vehicles used by persons responsible for processing crime scenes shall be equipped in a manner that allows timely and effective processing of the scene.
1. Each officer shall be issued a latent print kit which shall be carried with them, in their vehicle, while on duty.
 2. The crime scene van shall contain, at least, equipment and supplies to be used for the following purposes:
 - a. Recovery of latent prints.
 - b. Photography.
 - c. Sketch of the scene.
 - d. Collection and preservation of physical evidence.
- K. The guidelines and specific instructions for the collection, packaging and processing of physical evidence is detailed in the Peoria Police Department Property and Evidence Procedure Manual. (83.2.3)
1. This manual shall be reviewed each fiscal year by the CIB supervisors to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the procedures.

2. Each employee that is responsible for evidence collection shall be trained and issued a manual.

L. Hazardous Materials

1. The Peoria Fire Department will only be notified to determine the nature of the hazardous materials encountered. The fire department dispatcher will be notified of the size and condition of the material so that an appropriate response can be made.
2. In general, hazardous materials will not be impounded at the Peoria Police Department. Hazardous materials which are evidentiary and require testing will be impounded only in sufficient quantity for testing, in an air tight container and in the property room of the Peoria Police Department Property and Evidence Room until the item can be transported to the AZ DPS facility for testing.
 - a. Access to this area will require contacting the Property and Evidence Section Police Services Officer or the Property Section Supervisor.
 - b. Fireworks confiscated as evidence shall be photographed and impounded for destruction. These fireworks shall be stored in the fireworks container in the fenced basement storage area (bike cage).
3. The on-duty supervisor will ensure that unstable hazardous materials encountered (other than as a result of a motor vehicle accident) are disposed of properly, i.e. notifying a hazardous materials disposal company for clean up. A list of current available hazardous material clean-up companies will be maintained in the Communications Section. The Bureau Lieutenant will be notified prior to any contact being made with the disposal company.
4. If the hazardous material is determined to be generally stable and only an environmental hazard as in motor oil, household chemicals, gasoline, etc. the officer shall do the following:
 - a. If a portion of the hazardous material must be retained as evidence the officer will only obtain a sample sufficient for testing in a laboratory.
 - (1) The item will be impounded into the Property and Evidence Section with a notation to the Police Services Officer assigned to the Property and Evidence Section of the need for testing at the AZ DPS Laboratory as soon as possible.
 - (2) In the event a device is encountered that appears to be constructed as an explosive (gasoline filled bottles with cloth wicks), the on-duty supervisor will notify an appropriate bomb disposal unit to ensure the device is deactivated.
 - b. If there is any non-evidentiary hazardous material, or if there is excess of material after an evidentiary sample has been obtained, the City Yard will be notified. The City Yard has the proper storage containers to dispose of household chemicals and motor oils at that location.
 - (1) This material will not be poured on the ground, down the drain, or any similar manner.
 - (2) Although gasoline is generally stable in routine uses, the City Yard has no way of disposing of that type of material and a professional hazardous materials disposal company must be notified.

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