
CRIME SCENE MANAGEMENT/EVIDENCE PRESERVATION (#8001)

CRIME SCENE MANAGEMENT: The law enforcement officer is in charge of a crime scene. The officer will make a determination of status of the scene (see below) and make this information available to responding police, fire and medical units. In the absence of being notified, fire and medical units should not assume that the scene is secure and take precautions to protect themselves from danger.

It is the responsibility of all responding fire and medical units to be aware of the important evidence that can be damaged or destroyed upon entering a crime scene. Fire and medical personnel shall consult with police officers before disturbing items that may be evidence of a crime. All involved should take precautions to not disturb crime scene evidence, (e.g., weapons, bloodstains, vehicles, skid marks, etc.) or other evidence that can be vital to investigators to reconstruct the crime or accident scene.

Deceased patients fall under the jurisdiction of the Alameda County Coroner's Bureau - if applicable (see Death in the Field policy # 8030).

CRIME SCENE CLASSIFICATIONS:**1. Closed Access to Unsecured Crime Scene** (Hazard still exists):

- ▶ Hostage situation
- ▶ Suspect(s) still on scene
- ▶ Environmental hazards present

2. Limited Access Crime Scene: (Critical evidence could be destroyed or compromised, Hazard may still be present, Environmental hazards present)

- 2.1 EMS personnel will take direction from the officer in charge who will direct entrance and arrange appropriate escort.
- 2.2 Life saving considerations will take precedence. EMS to confirm death on obvious suicides / homicides. (see Death in the Field policy # 8030).

3. Open Access Crime Scene: Evidence still has to be collected but personnel have access to entire area. Consult with police officers before disturbing. Critical evidence could still be destroyed or compromised.**4. Cold Crime Scene:** No evidential concerns or hazard present.**EVIDENCE PRESERVATION:****1. At any scene where criminal activity is suspected, the rescuer shall:**

- 1.1 Immediately notify law enforcement, if they are not already present.

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- 1.2 Take precautions not to remove, move or otherwise disturb anything in the environment except as absolutely necessary to perform critical patient care activities. (Document in the PCR if patient care activities necessitate disturbing the physical environment.)
2. In situations where sexual assault is alleged by the victim, or suspected (see policy #7006), the rescuers shall:
 - 2.1 Immediately notify law enforcement personnel, if not already present.
 - 2.2 Not allow the patient to wash, shower or change clothing.
3. When removing clothing from victims of gunshot wounds, stabbing or other assaults:
 - 3.1 Do not cut the garments through or near the bullet or stab wound holes if it can possibly be avoided. The bullet/stab wound hole, powder particles or powder smudges around the hole can have considerable investigative value as evidence and should not be modified.
 - 3.2 If clothing is bloody allow it to dry. Do not allow blood or debris contaminate another area or garment if it is avoidable. Do not roll garments up in a ball. Never put wet or bloody garments in plastic bags.
 - 3.3 Handle clothing as little and as carefully as possible. Powder flakes from gunshot wounds may fall off of them decreasing the value of powder-deposit examination.
4. Try to start IVs above the hands, if the patient actually fired, or may have fired the weapon. If time permits, consider bagging the hands.
5. When in doubt as to how to proceed, yield to the primary investigative agency on the scene