
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS POLICE

GENERAL ORDER

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SUBJECT: Crime Scene Responsibilities, EMS,
and Community Deaths

REFERENCE: CALEA [Ch.41](#), [Ch.42](#), [Ch.83](#), [Ch.55](#)

CROSS REFERENCE:

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I. PURPOSE

A. To establish the chain of command, the responsibilities, and the procedures for collection of evidence at crime scenes.

II. INITIAL RESPONSE

A. Patrol officers will almost always be the first police response to any crime scene. Whenever an officer responds to a crime scene, the officer's responsibilities may be prioritized as follows:

1. Preserve life.
2. Apprehend the suspect.
3. Protection of the scene and any evidence.

B. Crime Scene Command.

1. The senior officer on a scene will assume command and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate actions are taken, to include notifying a supervisor and detective if appropriate.
2. A field supervisor who responds to a crime scene will maintain control of the scene.
3. If a crime scene warrants a detective response, the officer in charge or the field supervisor will turn the control of the crime scene over to the responding detective.
4. When the Crime Scene Investigation Unit responds to a crime scene, they will be briefed by the officer, supervisor, or detective in charge. CSI officers are responsible for processing and collection of evidence.

C. The following scenes will generally require a supervisor response. This list will serve as a guideline only, since circumstances may dictate additional instances where a supervisor response is appropriate.

1. Any death of a person
2. Rape
3. Child abuse

4. Robbery
5. Aggravated Battery
6. Aggravated Assault
7. Kidnapping
8. Vehicle pursuits
9. Tactical situations
10. Natural or man-caused disasters
11. Large disturbance
12. 10-60
13. Discharge of firearm by officers
14. Officer injured or involved in an accident
15. Officer involved disturbance
16. Aggravated Burglary
17. Overdose

D. The following scenes require that the responding officer immediately notify a detective to determine if more in-depth investigation is needed. If an officer is unable to make contact with a detective, the attempt will be noted in the officer's Investigative Report.

1. Any death of a person
2. Suicide
3. Robbery
4. Rape
5. Aggravated battery
6. Aggravated assault
7. In custody felony suspects
8. Child abuse
9. Bombing
10. Abduction
11. Other incidents deemed appropriate by the field supervisor
12. Overdose – Notify Narcotics

III. MISDEMEANORS

- A. Except in unusual circumstances, a patrol officer will handle the entire investigation and any appropriate scene processing for misdemeanor crimes. The entire investigative effort may be completed at the time the original report is taken. Valuable information may be lost if it is not obtained during the initial investigation.
- B. Officers will conduct follow-up investigations whenever applicable on all misdemeanor crimes. This may include computer work, such as running a license plate, or conducting a small canvass to locate and interview any witnesses.
- C. Under certain circumstances, it may be appropriate for an officer to request supervisor approval to have CSI personnel respond to process misdemeanor evidence (e.g. marks or injuries from domestic battery as outlined in General Order 40.06).

IV. FELONIES

- A. In many instances, the responding officer will handle the entire preliminary investigation and any evidence collection at the time the original report is taken.
 1. The preliminary investigation should include thorough victim and witness interviews and any appropriate scene processing in order to discover and develop any possible leads.
 2. When possible, officers should follow up on information that they develop that may be immediately useful in locating a suspect or locating property.
 3. Felony reports are forwarded to the Criminal Investigation Bureau for follow up. Officers must ensure that they document any possible leads from the preliminary investigation. Cases that have no leads will not be assigned to a detective and will be classified as inactive. Cases will become active and be assigned when there is a lead a lead surfaces, or there are other solvability factors.
 - a. Officers will not tell a victim that a detective will contact them within the next few days. A victim will be contacted or receive a letter telling them whether their case is inactive or assigned.
 - b. Advise the victim to call the Criminal Investigation Bureau only if a new lead surfaces.
 - c. If a usable print is lifted, advise the victim that it will be checked through a fingerprint identification system and that the Department will contact them if a hit is made.
 - d. Victims should be reminded that serial numbers of stolen items or any additional losses will be sent to the Department by mail, not by telephone.
 4. Officers who conduct the preliminary investigation of any felony will complete an Investigative Report documenting the actions the officer took and all pertinent information obtained from the victim or any witnesses.
 5. Investigative reports will be completed on all felonies that officers respond to, including auto thefts and auto burglaries with a loss under \$1000 Report desk personnel completing walk in auto thefts and auto burglaries are not required to complete an Investigative Report when no suspect or witness information is available.

6. Officers will notify field supervisors and detectives as appropriate.
 - a. When an officer is conducting a preliminary investigation of any felony, except auto theft and burglary, a supervisor will be advised.
 - b. Officers will note in the Investigative Report which supervisor and, if appropriate, which detective was notified and whether or not they responded.
 7. If there is a workable crime scene, the officer will secure it and process the scene or request supervisor approval to have the Crime Scene Investigation Unit respond if appropriate.
 8. The officer in charge of the scene will ensure that there is sufficient manpower to secure the scene and carry out any necessary duties.
 9. Officers should attempt to separate any witnesses until statements can be obtained.
- B. If a supervisor or detective responds to a crime scene, that supervisor or detective will assume command and ensure that all necessary duties are carried out. If a detective responds to a crime scene, the detective is in command of the scene.
- C. Major Case Situations. Officers should remember the following guidelines for handling major case crime scenes. All relevant information from these guidelines should be reflected in the officers' reports. Much of the preliminary investigation of major case incidents will be conducted by detectives, however, patrol officers will usually be the first officers on the scene and must be able to provide and record important information, control the scene, and see to all other relevant responsibilities.
1. Officers will record the exact time the call was received. If it was received from a citizen, the person should be identified and detained if possible.
 2. The exact time of arrival should be recorded. Dispatch will be notified when the officer arrives on scene and will have this information.
 3. The officer will carefully select a path of entry and exit from the scene. Officer safety and evidence should be considered in this decision.
 - a. Remain cognizant of the fact that the suspect(s) were likely present and that evidence of their presence may be left behind. Avoid disturbing any prints (fingerprints, footprints, tire prints, etc.) that are at or near the scene.
 - b. Once a path of entry and exit has been carefully selected, any succeeding persons entering the crime scene shall use the same path.
 - c. Prior to the response of the detectives or a CSI technician, only one officer should enter the crime scene, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.
 - d. Prior to the arrival of EMS/Fire, attempt to direct their vehicles and their personnel to an area that gives them easy access to the injured party, yet does not destroy or contaminate evidence.
 4. Make assessments for the immediate welfare of those present.
 5. Apprehend any suspect(s) at the scene.
 6. Detain any witnesses, and separate them as soon as possible.
 7. Notify a field supervisor.
 8. If the victim is near death, try to obtain a dying declaration, with an additional witness present, if possible.
 9. If emergency medical personnel are present identify them, including names and unit number, and document:
 - a. That when death is confirmed, medical personnel are cleared from the immediate area, to prevent evidence contamination. If the victim is obviously dead when officers arrive, one medical person will be allowed to access the body to confirm the death. That person's name and unit number will be documented.
 - b. Anything that the victim told EMS personnel.
 - c. What alterations had been made to the crime scene, who altered the scene, and the reason it was altered.
 10. If the suspect has fled, broadcast any suspect information.
 11. Protect the crime scene, documenting its original condition and any changes to it.
 - a. Request any additional units that may be necessary, through the supervisor or officer in charge.
 - b. A crime scene log should record all persons who enter the crime scene, the time, and the reason.
 - c. If a weapon is located, protect it for CSI to film and recover.

- d. Note any changes that have been made (the body has been moved, if lights have been turned off or on, if doors or windows have been opened or closed, if furniture has been moved, if toilets have been flushed, or if vehicles have been moved, etc.) since the crime occurred.
12. Erect barriers such as crime scene tape or marked vehicles. Make the perimeter big enough and move all unnecessary persons outside of it. Officers, including supervisory personnel, who do not have a specific and/or valid reason for being within the crime scene should be regarded as unnecessary, and thus, unauthorized.
 - a. Crime Scenes will now be separated using Red (Hot Zone) and Yellow (Warm Zone) Crime scene tape on major crime scenes.
 - (1) Hot Zone – Red crime scene tape will be used to identify the inner perimeter of the crime scene. This area will generally be limited to CSI and the Detectives working the case until the investigation is complete.
 - (a) Any sworn personnel that enter the “Hot Zone” who are not authorized in subsection (1) will complete a case supplement report explaining why they entered and what they did inside the area.
 - (b) The on scene supervisor will coordinate and ensure all case supplements match the inner crime scene log.
 - (2) Warm Zone – Yellow crime scene tape will surround the inner perimeter and allow for the movement and access for all personnel not directly involved with the scene.
 13. The supervisor will make sure all necessary notifications are made (CSI, detectives, PIO, DA, etc).
 14. A canvass of the area shall be made, and documented to include:
 - a. Location of negative or no responses.
 - b. Locations, license plates, and descriptions of vehicles in the area.
 - c. Identity and contact information for all persons spoken to.
 15. If a suspect is taken into custody, document the exact time, location, and description. Officers are not to administer Miranda warnings or make any attempt to interview or interrogate a suspect who is in custody. Brief interviews for the purpose of establishing identity and/or probable cause are permissible, but extreme care should be exercised, in accordance with applicable case law. If a suspect is located away from the scene do not bring the suspect back to the scene. If caught at the scene, remove the suspect at once. Do not permit a suspect to use a toilet or wash until approved by a detective. Document any spontaneous statements. Record the behavior of the suspect (e.g. drunk, crying, nervous, hostile, etc).
 16. The first officer to arrive on the scene will generate a case supplement describing the conditions observed upon arrival, all actions taken by the officer, and who responded to the scene and what actions were taken.
 - a. Officers will need to distinguish who enters the inner and outer perimeter.
 17. The introduction of any foreign objects into the crime scene is strictly prohibited. This will include, but is not limited to, tobacco, food, and drinks.
 - a. No employee will be allowed to use any type of tobacco product while on the scene of any crime.
 18. Any and all trash will be properly removed and disposed of from a scene at the conclusion of any investigation.
 - a. The KCKFD may be called to wash away any biohazardous fluids from the street or sidewalk.

V. CRIME SCENE PROCESSING

- A. Any officer who processes a felony crime scene will generate a report documenting his or her actions.
 1. When a felony scene is processed by a patrol officer, the officer will note in an Investigative Report what actions were taken.
 2. When a crime scene is processed by an officer, the officer should always use latex gloves.
 3. Evidentiary property that is collected will be documented with a Property Report and secured with the property unit. See General Order 80.02, Property.
 4. Fingerprints that are lifted will be placed on fingerprint cards. The fingerprint cards will be properly completed and placed in the small yellow fingerprint card envelope. The complaint number will be placed on the fingerprint card and on the envelope. The fingerprint cards are evidence and a Property Report will be completed.
 5. Media storage cards containing photographs taken by anyone other than the Crime Scene Investigation Unit (field units and supervisors) will be placed in small yellow envelopes. The envelopes will be placed in the media card drop box located in the after-hours property drop box. A properly completed photo log must accompany the envelope. (Refer to General Order 80.10 for storage of in-car video).
- B. Scenes processed by officers

1. If a CSI Technician is not called to the crime scene, it will be the responsibility of the officer taking the report to process the crime scene. Processing will include the collection and preservation of physical evidence and conducting a neighborhood canvass.
 2. The officer will indicate in the Investigative Report when:
 - a. The scene is not processed. The officer will explain why no action was taken.
 - b. The officer processed the scene but was unable to obtain usable evidence. The officer will document the collection methods attempted.
 - c. The officer does not conduct a neighborhood canvass. The officer will explain why this procedure was omitted.
- C. Scenes processed by the Crime Scene Investigation Unit
1. Ordering the Crime Scene Investigation Unit. The Crime Scene Investigation Unit must be ordered on the authority of a supervisor or detective. The first officer will evaluate the crime scene and, if deemed necessary, request a CSI Technician through the Field Supervisor. The Field Supervisor will make the determination based upon the following criteria:
 - a. The seriousness of the offense.
 - b. The size of the crime scene.
 - c. The amount of evidence to be collected.
 - d. Whether or not collecting available evidence requires specialized skills or equipment.
 2. When the Crime Scene Investigation Unit arrives at the scene, they will be briefed by the individual in command. The CSI Technicians will be informed as to what has occurred and what the person in charge of the scene believes needs to be processed at the crime scene. The crime scene will then be turned over to the CSI Technician for processing.
 3. The Crime Scene Investigation Unit has the responsibility to process the crime scene and will make every effort to satisfy the evidence processing and collection requests of the detective or supervisor in charge.
- Note: Tows ordered for processing will be marked "hold for CSI", and the tow truck driver will be advised so that the vehicle will be locked indoors.
- D. Arson Scenes. An On-Duty Fire Investigator will be notified of the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident, to determine whether he or she should respond to the scene. If the On-Duty Fire Investigator elects not to respond to the scene, the initial officer will document in his or her Investigative Report that the arson investigator was notified and did not respond.
1. Suspected flammable/combustible materials recovered by officers for evidence or safekeeping that are capable of being safely transported in a police car or by shop truck will be taken to Fire Station #1 to be logged in to the Flammable/Combustible Evidence room using procedures outlined in the General Order 80.02.
 2. If the flammable/combustible material is of a nature that it cannot be safely transported by police vehicles, officers will notify the On-Duty Fire Investigator through police dispatch for recommendations and assistance.

VI. EMS PROCEDURES

- A. The first Police or Fire Department Unit to arrive at the scene involving an injured person will determine if an ambulance is needed. Upon arrival, Fire Department ambulance personnel will assume responsibility for medical decisions relating to the injured person. If an ambulance is not needed, the decision to cancel an ambulance will be made by the ranking Fire Department Commander on the scene if present.
- B. Radio requests for emergency medical assistance will be relayed by the Police Department dispatcher to the Fire Department dispatcher.
- C. Care should be taken to protect crime scenes and prevent the destruction of possible evidence. However, rendering medical care to the injured is first priority. Only the minimum number of personnel necessary to treat the injured should be permitted on the scene.
 1. In situations, which tend to attract unruly crowds, it may become unsafe for the paramedics to continue treatment at the scene. In these situations, a police supervisor or commander may request that Fire Department personnel evacuate the area for their safety and the safety of the patient.
- D. Ambulance personnel will be responsible for determining the destination of the injured person.
 1. Self-destructive subjects suffering from possible mental disorders will be transported by ambulance personnel to the appropriate local medical facility for treatment and/or evaluation.
 2. If a sick or injured person is placed under arrest, the arresting officer shall request that the person be taken to the University of Kansas Medical Center for treatment unless, in the judgment of medical personnel, the individual needs to be transported to the nearest medical facility.
- E. Non-Breathing Person

1. Discretion and sound judgment should be exercised anytime an officer encounters a person who appears to have no pulse and is not breathing.
2. If the incident, which caused the person to have no detectable pulse and/or no apparent breathing, is recent or was witnessed by someone, an EMS Unit will be ordered.
 - a. The decision to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) will be at the discretion of the officer based upon the circumstances of each individual case.
 - b. Officers will adhere to communicable prevention guidelines as outlined in General Order 40.14, Prevention of Communicable Disease.
3. Once CPR has been initiated, it should only be discontinued on the order of a physician; when relieved by EMS personnel; or when one person performing CPR alone is unable to continue.

VII. SUICIDES, ASSISTED SUICIDES AND SIDS DEATHS

- A. Every violent or suspicious death will be approached and handled in accordance with major case crime scene procedures. Appropriate notifications will be made. A determination of how it is to be investigated will be made by Criminal Investigation Bureau personnel.
 1. A final determination or disposition of suicide or other cause of death is not the responsibility of Department personnel. The Coroner classifies the cause of death. The District Attorney is responsible for determining if criminal intent is present and if charges are to be filed. The District Attorney will be supplied with a complete case file on every suspicious death.
 2. Equivocal deaths are those that are open to interpretation. Crime scenes where self-inflicted or accidental circumstances appear present should be examined carefully for indications of staging. In a staged crime scene, the victim and evidence are manipulated to present a scenario different from what actually took place.
 3. Three types of staging are most common:
 - a. Presenting a suicide to cover up a homicide.
 - b. Presenting a sex related homicide when it was not.
 - c. Committing arson to cover or destroy evidence of a homicide.
- B. Suicides
 1. If the scene appears to be a suicide, examine the scene to determine:
 - a. Whether the deceased could have caused the injuries and death.
 - b. Whether the deceased was physically able to accomplish the act.
 - c. Whether all wounds are within physical reach of the deceased.
 - d. Whether there are any hesitation marks.
 - e. Whether there are any medications present. If so, document and recover them.
 2. Document and describe the nature and position of the victim's injuries.
 3. The psychological profile of the victim is very important. Officers should document information obtained such as:
 - a. Whether the victim was under medical care for psychological or medical problems.
 - b. Whether there are indications of depression.
 - c. Spontaneous remarks from family, friends, neighbors, etc.
 - d. Whether there were any notes, including suicide notes, as well as other handwriting samples to confirm.
 - e. Whether there were any "terminal actions," such as giving away belongings, saying goodbye to others, etc.
 - f. Whether there are recent changes in lifestyle, such as eating, sleeping, personal hygiene, work problems, etc.
 - g. Any other unusual behavior or circumstances that may shed light on the victim's mental condition prior to the suicide.
- C. Euthanasia and Victim Assisted Deaths.
 1. Check the scene for assisted suicide books (e.g. final Exit).
 2. Check the crime scene for plastic bags. If there are any located they should be protected for possible fingerprinting.
 3. Recover and document any medications, noting the date issued, dosage, and how many are present.

D. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

1. Document the infant's location of birth and birth weight.
2. Obtain the name of the last person to see the infant alive and the date and time.
3. If resuscitation was attempted, note who attempted it and what method(s) were used.
4. Describe the location of death and position of the infant. Note whether the infant was sleeping on his or her back or stomach. Photographs will be taken.
5. Note any caregiver information, such as a doctor, clinic, hospital, etc. The approximate date of the most recent examination or treatment should be recorded. Interview any caregivers separately if possible.
6. Note whether the infant was breast or bottle fed, or whether the infant was eating solid food.
7. Ask if there had been any behavior pattern changes, and whether he or she was able to roll over without assistance.
8. Note whether there was any other illness in the household.
9. Note if there have been any other instances of SIDS or other child deaths in the family's history. Also, document any known contacts with SRS or any other child protection agency. Observe and document the condition of any other children present.
10. Note any persons other than the parents with access to the infant (e.g. babysitters).

VIII. OVERDOSE

- A. Due to the risks associated with synthetic opioids, i.e. fentanyl, it is imperative that officers take extra precaution when responding to any overdose call by limiting contact on the scene.
- B. When an officer is dispatched to the scene of an overdose or suspected overdose, they will immediately notify the Narcotics Unit and secure the scene. No one except Emergency Medical Personnel and the first officer on scene will enter the scene until Narcotics arrives.
 1. If the victim is alive, a member of the Narcotics Unit will determine and oversee the investigation.
 2. If the victim is deceased, Major Case will be notified. They will lead the investigation with assistance from Narcotics.

IX. DECEASED PERSONS

- A. In those instances when an officer responds to the scene of a death which is the direct result of some violent action or is of suspicious or unusual nature the officer or field supervisor will request the coroner be notified and asked to respond to the scene. A detective will also be notified, and will respond.
 1. In such case, the body will not be disturbed until the coroner inspects the body. If the coroner or deputy coroner is unable to respond, the body will be disturbed as little as possible and transported to the appropriate facility designated by the coroner.
 2. A designated body transport company, whose contact information will be maintained in Communications, will be notified to respond to a coroner requested pickup of a deceased individual.
 3. When suspicious circumstances exist, the Crime Scene Investigation Unit will take photographs of the scene and the undisturbed body. If CSI is not available, a field operations Sergeant will be requested to take the photographs.
- B. Community Deaths: In the event an officer responds to a natural death where no violent factors are present and the death does not appear to be questionable the following procedures will be followed:
 1. A supervisor will respond to all community death calls and ensure all necessary responsibilities are completed.
 2. A detective will be notified and advised of the circumstances of the death. The detective will respond unless the homicide commander determines otherwise.
 3. If a detective is not available the homicide commander will be notified, and will determine if a response is needed.
 4. Trained medical personnel will make the determination that the person is deceased if they are on the scene.
 5. Notification of the coroner is not necessary for community deaths that do not have any violent factors present, and the death does not appear questionable.
 6. The officer will determine if the deceased person was under the care of a certified medical physician at the time of death. If so, the family or the officer should contact that physician and arrange for a death certificate. When a certified medical physician cannot be contacted or refuses to sign the death certificate, the coroner will be notified. If the deceased was not under a doctor's care, the coroner will prepare a death certificate.
 - a. Officers will not make funeral home referrals. If the family needs assistance in this matter, they should be referred to the Coroner's Office, their own clergy, or the on-duty Police Chaplain may be contacted to assist.

- b. A designated body transport vehicle ordered by dispatch personnel, or a vehicle from a funeral home, will transport the body to the appropriate facility.
- 7. Officers will remain on the scene until a disposition for the body has been determined or arrangements for transportation have been made.
- 8. In addition to a Standard Offense Report for the death, a detailed Investigative Report will be completed which will include:
 - a. The condition of the room or location where the body was found.
 - b. The types of medication the person was taking and how much remains in each container.
 - c. If forced entry was made, list who made it and where. The Crime Scene Investigation Unit will photograph the point of forced entry.
 - d. What next of kin was notified and by whom.
 - e. Who pronounced the victim deceased.
 - f. Who authorized the removal of the body, and who removed it.
 - g. Anything unusual about the call.
- 9. Officers will bear in mind that they are conducting a preliminary death investigation, not merely documenting an incident.
- 10. If the death occurs at a medical facility, nursing home, hospice, etc., and no suspicious circumstances are present, a police response is not required.
- C. In the event officers respond to the scene of a disaster or accident where accidental death has occurred the Coroner will be notified. The scene will be secured and only rescue personnel necessary will be admitted to the scene. All personal property, valuables, etc. will be recovered, tagged, and turned in by police personnel.

X. DEATH AND SERIOUS INJURY NOTIFICATIONS

- A. In the event of death due to homicide, vehicle accident, or industrial accident or disaster, a Public Information Officer and an on duty Field Operations Commander will be notified by the dispatcher. The PIO will respond, ascertain the identity of the deceased person, and see that the next of kin has been notified of the death.
- B. In the event that the Public Information Officer is unable to respond, the ranking investigative officer will ascertain the identity of the deceased person and see that the next of kin of the deceased has been notified of the death.
- C. If family members are located within the Department's jurisdictional limits, the on-duty Police/Fire Chaplain will be notified, advised of the facts, and will be responsible for notifying the family in person, if possible. The PIO will accompany, or designate an officer to accompany, the Chaplain in making death notifications.
- D. If family members are outside the Department's jurisdictional limits, the local police agency in that area will be notified by the Public Information Officer or the ranking investigative officer to assist in the notification.
- E. The name of a deceased person will be withheld from the public until such time that a family member has been notified.
- F. In the event of death due to overdose, suicide or natural causes the ranking police supervisor on the scene will be responsible for notification of family.
 - 1. If family members are outside the Department's jurisdictional limits, the local police agency in that area will be notified by the ranking police supervisor to assist in the notification.
 - 2. Supervisors, of the Division in which the incident occurred, whom have exhausted all of their resources and are still unable to notify the next-of-kin, may elect to seek assistance from the on-duty or the on-call backup P.I.O.
- G. To ensure against hoaxes, if another police agency requests assistance in making a notification of death, serious injury or serious illness, the Public Safety Communications Center will confirm the request by contacting the initiating agency.
 - 1. After the confirmation is made:
 - a. A patrol unit will make an emergency message notification for a requesting outside police agency, once confirmation procedures as described above have been satisfactorily done by the Public Safety Communications Center.
 - b. A police/fire chaplain, if available, will make the death notification within the Department's jurisdictional area for an outside police agency. In the event that a police/fire chaplain is not available, the Public Information Officer will make the death notification.