



Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure		
	APD.SOP.3081 Crime Scene Investigation Effective Date: October 22nd, 2024	
Chief Darin Schierbaum	Signature by: DS	Date Signed: 10/22/2024

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

APD Staff,

The Policy and Standards Section is dedicated to providing the department, and its employees, with accurate, understandable and transparent policies. In order to publish policies that reflect the most up-to-date standards, the Policy and Standard Section regularly reviews all policies to ensure that they are reflective of the current mission and objectives of the Atlanta Police Department.

No significant changes were found during the review and renewal of APD.SOP.3081 - Crime Scene Instigation, however, we encourage you to read the policy below to better understand:

- How to properly preserve evidence to maintain the integrity of an investigation.
- How the Crime Scene Technicians assist on crime scenes.
- How, and what, evidence should be collected.

Thank you and stay informed!

Policy and Standards Section
Planning, Research, and Accreditation Unit

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. <u>PURPOSE</u>	3
2. <u>POLICY</u>	3
3. <u>RESPONSIBILITIES</u>	3
4. <u>PROCEDURE</u>	3
4.1 <u>Personnel Availability</u>	3
4.2 <u>First Responding Officer</u>	4
4.3 <u>Crime Scene Assessment</u>	6
4.4 <u>ID Unit Notification</u>	7
4.5 <u>Evidence Collection</u>	7
4.6 <u>Evidence Recording</u>	13
4.7 <u>Report Preparation & Documentation</u>	15
4.8 <u>Releasing the Crime Scene</u>	16
4.9 <u>Transfer of Physical Evidence</u>	16
4.10 <u>Processing Evidence</u>	17
4.11 <u>Submission of Evidence to GBI</u>	19
4.12 <u>GBI Crime Lab</u>	21
5. <u>DEFINITIONS</u>	22
6. <u>CANCELLATIONS</u>	23
7. <u>REFERENCES</u>	23



1. PURPOSE

To provide officers and crime scene personnel with guidelines to document, collect, package, and preserve evidence.

2. POLICY

Documentation, collection, and preservation of evidence are crucial steps in criminal investigation, often providing the basis for effective identification, documentation, prosecution, and conviction of perpetrators.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Division and section commanders will ensure that all sworn employees and crime scene technicians are familiar with and in compliance with this policy.
- 3.2 Supervisors will monitor the collection and preservation of evidence processed by their subordinates in accordance with this directive.
- 3.3 The responding officer will protect the crime scene until a criminal investigator responds and takes over the investigation. If an investigator does not take over the investigation, the responding officer will take all necessary steps to investigate the crime scene.
- 3.4 Investigating officers will be responsible for the overall direction of the crime scene and all activities related to the case investigation.
- 3.5 The Identification Unit commander will implement this directive within the Identification Unit.
- 3.6 Crime Scene Technicians (CST) will take all care reasonably possible to ensure the integrity of evidence collected at crime scenes by adherence to Departmental procedures and the GBI's Division of Forensic Science manual.
- 3.7 CST or personnel collecting evidence will be required to attend training on the collection, storage, and transportation of DNA evidence through Police Officer Standards and Training approved courses (e.g., law enforcement classes, or online, through the National Institute of Justice DNA initiative courses). (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.2.1)

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 PERSONNEL AVAILABILITY

- 4.1.1 The Identification Unit Commander will ensure that a crime scene technician is available on a 24-hour basis to process a crime scene and/or traffic collision. A CST will respond to a call for service where a crime has been committed that may involve physical evidence requiring prompt processing, collection and/or submission to the Georgia Crime Lab.
(CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.1.1)
 - 1. Criminal Investigations Division (CID) and Field Operations Division (FOD) Investigators are on duty 24 hours a day to investigate crime scenes.
 - 2. Accident Investigation Unit (AIU) investigators are on call 24 hours a day to investigate traffic collisions that result in serious injury or death.

- 4.1.2 The CST will be responsible for processing crime scenes under the direction of an investigating officer and/or investigator.
- 4.1.3 CID, FOD, and AIU investigators along with CST will be requested to process a crime or vehicle collision scene for evidence in the following circumstances:
 - 1. Homicide, suicide, or any suspicious or unexplained deaths.
 - 2. Rape or sexual assaults cases.
 - 3. Vehicular collisions with serious injuries or fatalities.
- 4.1.4 CID and FOD investigators, along with CST, at a supervisor's request, may be requested to process a crime scene for physical evidence in the following circumstances:
 - 1. Robbery
 - 2. Burglary
 - 3. Recovered stolen vehicles; and
 - 4. Aggravated assaults.
- 4.1.5 When a crime or vehicular crash has occurred that requires the collection and preservation of physical evidence by a CST, then they will be notified as soon as possible.

4.2 THE FIRST RESPONDING OFFICER

- 4.2.1 The first responding officer at the crime scene will ensure that the following tasks are performed as appropriate and, in the order, deemed necessary:
 - 1. Attempt to secure a "dying declaration" if there is a chance a victim may die.
 - 2. Create a crime scene log to record the identities of all responders who accessed the scene before or after the first officer's arrival. All persons irrespective of rank who wish to enter the crime scene are required to secure approval from the lead investigator and log in.
 - 3. Direct emergency service providers into the scene, pointing out potential sources of evidence. Remind medical technicians to preserve items of clothing. Record their activities and the victim's condition and position when found. Instruct medical personnel not to unnecessarily alter the scene or clean it up.
 - 4. If a victim or suspect is transported to a medical facility, send an officer or investigator for security, to document any comments, and to preserve clothing and related evidence.
 - 5. The lead investigator or the assigned investigative unit will make contact with the Medical Examiner's Office or the Homicide Unit.
- 4.2.2 Make a careful and limited walk-through of the crime scene first to secure the location from the threat of perpetrators. Thoroughly assess the crime scene for hazards, to include blood-borne pathogens, explosives, firearms, gasoline, natural gas, chemicals, and other toxic substances. Relay information on the nature of any dangerous situations to Communications.

- 4.2.3 Take all precautions reasonably possible not to disturb potential sources of evidence, such as footprints or tire marks, or cross contaminate potential sources of DNA evidence. Identify path of entry and retrace that path when exiting.
- 4.2.4 Be aware of persons and vehicles in the vicinity. Record vehicle license plate numbers in close proximity to the crime. Assess the overall extent and severity of the incident; note the location of evidence in plain view and the location of weapons in particular.
- 4.2.5 Where injured persons are encountered, request medical assistance and provide emergency first aid if feasible. Retrace the path of entrance when exiting the crime scene and document the original position of the victim(s).
- 4.2.6 Secure and separate suspects and witnesses. Take reasonable measures to prevent the movement of family, friends, or bystanders into the crime scene.
- 4.2.7 Secure a perimeter for the crime scene with identified points of entry and exit. The perimeter should be expansive enough to reasonably ensure that evidence of the crime will be contained and protected.
 - 1. Protect the crime scene using physical barriers (e.g., crime scene tape, rope, cones, vehicles, personnel) or existing boundaries (e.g., doors and gates) as appropriate, and ensure that only persons with a “need” and “right” to enter the scene are permitted inside.
 - 2. Take appropriate steps to protect the crime scene from degradation due to weather conditions, such as rain, snow, or wind, or the intrusion of other devices, such as vehicles.
 - 3. Keep persons other than those directly involved in the investigation and other essential first responders outside the crime scene perimeter. Keep any pets or other animals outside the perimeter as well.
- 4.2.8 If victims, firearms, or other items at the scene must be touched or moved for safety or related reasons, put on latex or other nonporous gloves. Ensure that persons do not smoke, chew tobacco, use the telephone or bathroom at the scene, eat, drink, move any items, adjust windows, doors, or thermostats, reposition anything, or discard items other than those related to medical service providers.
- 4.2.9 The scope of crime scene processing is dictated by the seriousness of the crime and complexity of the crime scene. For crimes that do not require the assistance of a CST or criminal investigator, or where circumstances demand that immediate steps be taken to preserve evidence, first responders will be prepared to do the following:
 - 1. Locate and preserve items of evidence
 - 2. Collect and preserve evidence in plain view
 - 3. Transport and submit evidence to property control for storage or for laboratory examination.
- 4.2.10 Brief arriving supervisors or investigators if summoned to the crime scene, review actions taken thus far by all first responders, evidence located, witnesses identified, victims or perpetrators located or identified, and provide the supervisor with any other pertinent information.
- 4.2.11 Prepare the initial incident report unless otherwise directed by a supervisor or lead investigator. Record, at a minimum, information on the time of arrival, appearance and conditions upon arrival, any items at the scene that are known to have been moved, modified, or touched; personal



information on witnesses, victims, suspects, and any statements or comments made; and actions taken by the officer or others at the scene.

4.3 CRIME SCENE ASSESSMENT

The lead investigating officer or on-scene supervisor in charge will:

1. Develop an investigative plan, outlining specific responsibilities for processing the crime scene. First responders will be aware of what to look for when initially assessing the crime scene before the crime scene investigators are on the scene.
2. Evaluate measures and steps that have been taken to include safety procedures, perimeter security and access control, the adequacy of investigative resources, whether witnesses and suspects have been identified, and the degree to which preliminary documentation of the crime scene has been made.
3. Conduct a crime scene walk-through in cooperation with the first responder and the crime scene technicians to identify any threats to crime scene integrity and conduct an initial identification of evidence.
4. Determine the need for a search warrant prior to any intrusive search or collection of evidence. (APD.SOP.3020 "Search and Seizure")
5. Assess the overall crime scene prior to evidence collection in order to develop a plan for working within the crime scene without unnecessarily destroying or contaminating evidence.
6. Identify evidence collection and document team members to include specialists such as an odontologist, bomb technicians, arson investigators, entomologists, fingerprint technicians, or others.
7. Identify protective equipment and clothing that are required to safely process the crime scene.
8. Identify a separate area if necessary for equipment and personnel staging and for gathering and sanitizing tools, equipment, and personal protective gear between evidence collections.
9. Assign one officer whose primary responsibility is to record and collect items of evidence. This will increase efficiency, establish the chain of custody, help prevent loss, and reduce the number of officers who must appear in court.
10. Determine the evidence search method to be used and the point(s) at which the search will begin and establish a working route around the scene to minimize disruption and contamination.
11. Develop, in cooperation with CST(s) or other trained personnel, a collection plan for identified items of evidence detailing the process and the order of collection.
 - a. Focus initially on easily accessible areas in open view and work outward
 - b. Select a systematic search pattern
 - c. Select the best progression of processing and collection so as not to compromise subsequent processing and collection efforts; and

- d. Maintain the chain of evidence.

4.4 IDENTIFICATION UNIT NOTIFICATION

- 4.4.1 When a crime scene dictates the need for the immediate services of a CST, the Identification Unit will be notified immediately through the Communications Section by the supervisor, responding officer, or investigator.
- 4.4.2 The CST will respond by identifying themselves by respective radio number. The CST will determine code or signal, the exact location of the crime and proceed to the crime scene location. Upon arrival at the crime scene location, the crime scene technician will inform Communications Section of arrival.
- 4.4.3 The first responding officer on the scene is responsible for the security of that scene and will assist the assigned CST or investigator.
- 4.4.4 The CST will discuss with the on-scene officer/investigator to understand the complexity of the crime scene in order to properly process it.
1. If the crime scene has not been established using crime scene tape, the CST will do so immediately.
 2. A complete walk-through of the crime scene will be made with the first officer and investigator on the scene.
 3. Photographs of the overall crime scene area may be made prior to the initial walk-through but will be made prior to the actual collection of the evidence. No dusting for latent prints will be done until all necessary photographs or videos have been made.
- 4.4.5 The CST will take custody of all evidence not collected by investigator or medical examiner, and be responsible for its proper collection, processing and preservation.
(CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.2.4d)
- 4.4.6 The investigating officer will consult with the CST prior to requesting services deemed necessary to aid in the investigation, to include what will be collected and future testing and analysis of the evidence.
1. The crime scene technician will advise the investigator, as necessary, regarding the testing procedures and requirements and what possible benefits to the investigation can be obtained.
 2. The investigator and the crime scene technician will decide what evidence will be forwarded to the Georgia Crime Lab and what type of analysis is to be requested.
- 4.4.7 The CST will review crime scene activities with the investigating officer prior to the release of the crime scene. Information and activities regarding the crime scene will not be released by anyone except the lead investigator or the unit supervisor.

4.5 EVIDENCE COLLECTION

(CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.2.1)

4.5.1 The location and condition of all items of evidence will be documented on the Property/Evidence Form (Form APD-006) and by means of photographs, sketches, and, where deemed necessary and appropriate, videotape.

4.5.2 Latent Prints

1. Where the possibility of latent prints exists, the officer, investigator or CST will properly dust for the prints.
2. When a print becomes visible after dusting, the investigator or CST will first photograph the print on the original object. After photographing, the print(s) will be lifted by using latent print lifting tape.
3. The lifted print will be put on an index card and the investigator or CST will note on the back of the card the date, time, location of incident and print location, incident/case number and the employee's name.
4. The CST(s) will be notified when latent print processing involves chemical or more extensive methods of development.
5. When requesting a comparison of latent prints with fingerprints of a known suspect, the requesting officer will include inked finger and palm prints and/or the fingerprint classification number of the suspect. (CALEA 6th ed. Standards; 83.2.3 and 83.2.4a)

4.5.3 Computer Equipment

1. Before handling or moving any equipment, officers should contact the Cyber Crimes Unit for assistance.
2. Officer or CTS will photograph, or record with their BWC, the equipment in its original position, including any information displayed on any monitors or output devices.
3. Do not remove any disks from any drives. All software, disks and manuals in the area of the equipment being recovered will also be collected.
4. If the equipment is on, leave it on. Contact a Cyber Crimes Unit investigator for further instructions if necessary. Once the power is disconnected, all wires and connections will be labeled. (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.2.5)
5. All items connected to the computer such as mice, printers, monitors, scanners, etc. will be recovered as well.
6. Computers will only be processed for evidence by a qualified Cyber Crime Unit investigator. Officers will not attempt to recover data themselves.
7. Computers and related items will be placed into evidence.

4.5.4 Crime Scene Sketches
(CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.2.4c)

A crime scene sketch may be completed pursuant to the collection and preservation of evidence, as deemed necessary by the CST or the investigating officer.

1. Sketches will include the following information:



- a. General layout
 - b. Incident report number
 - c. Title or description of area
 - d. Location of the scene by address, floor, and/or room number
 - e. The relationship of the crime scene to other buildings or permanent objects
 - f. Date and time of sketch
 - g. Sketcher's name
 - h. Scale of measurement (to scale or not to scale)
 - i. Location of items or other significant features
 - j. Compass direction
 - k. Names of streets or landmarks or both
 - l. Person who prepared the final diagram
 - m. Person(s) who took the measurements; and
 - n. Legends describing items too small or difficult to duplicate exact shape or scale.
2. It is recommended that the CST or investigating officer make a rough draft sketch at the scene including such items as measurements and other information so that the final drawing can be made accurately.
3. Sketches will be drawn to accurately depict the location and placement of evidence. Sketches will be made in addition to any photographs or videotapes made of the crime scenes as directed by the lead investigator.

4.5.5 Crime Scene Photography

1. Photographs and/or videotape of the overall crime scene will be taken. Where indicated, individual photographs and/or video will be taken of items in the position found prior to collection. (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.2.2b)
2. It is imperative that all photographs be made first without a placard followed by another photograph with the desired scale. This will assure the court admissibility of the photographs.
 - a. Both photographs (without and with placard) will be taken utilizing the same camera, position, lighting, and camera setting.
 - b. Alternatively, the dimensions of a fixed object in the scene may be taken to provide a scale of reference. All items of evidence will be photographed and/or videotaped prior to being collected, labeled and packaged for storage and/or processing.
3. Minor accident scenes or crime scenes may be photographed and processed by the investigating officer. The CST will photograph and process all major crime scenes; such as homicides, rapes, traffic fatalities, and when requested to do so by a supervisor.
4. The CST will be responsible for the number and type of photographs taken. Generally, all aspects of the scene should be photographed.



5. The CST(s) will have camcorders available as part of their vehicle equipment for recording crime scenes. Although the use of the camcorder is not mandatory, its use is highly recommended, in addition to standard still photography.
6. Photographs will also be taken of tool marks, footprints, tire marks, blood spatter, serial numbers, latent fingerprints prior to being lifted, and any other related items of potential evidentiary value where possible.
7. All crime scene photos and video will be stored in Evidence.com. A backup copy (CD) will be made and sent to the photo lab.

4.5.6 Firearms

The collection of firearms and related evidence will be conducted in a manner that will ensure the safety of all personnel involved and the integrity of evidentiary items.

1. If a firearm must be moved to protect it as evidence or because it cannot be safeguarded, its location and position will be accurately marked and photographed where found if possible. The condition of the weapon, the number of cartridges contained, and the position of the safety will be recorded.
2. If moving the weapon, lift it by grasping gently on the serrated surface of the handle. Never insert a pencil or other object into the barrel to lift or move it, as it may destroy evidence inside the barrel. The weapon will be placed in an appropriate container.
3. Generally, firearms will be unloaded before being transported for evidence. If it must be transported loaded (because the weapon is damaged, for instance), it will be conspicuously tagged to indicate this fact and sealed in a rigid container similarly marked. When unloading a revolver, the position of the cylinder will be recorded, as should the markings on cartridges and conditions of primers.
4. Fired bullets and cartridge cases will be protected and photographed, and their relative positions from each other and from fixed locations sketched and photographed before being bagged.
5. Bullets will not be pried from objects or surfaces. Portions of the objects in which they are embedded will be removed with the bullet intact.

4.5.7 All personnel handling evidence of any kind will wear latex or other nonporous gloves. Individual items of evidence will be examined carefully for trace evidence prior to being moved or packaged.

1. Change gloves between collections of samples in different areas; and
2. Use disposable instruments or clean them thoroughly with a ten (10) percent bleach solution before and after handling each sample.

4.5.8 Some items of evidence may require special handling and packaging and should be examined for trace evidence prior to packaging. When in doubt concerning appropriate collection or packaging procedures, officers will request assistance from a crime scene technician, criminal investigator, or supervisor.

4.5.9 Evidence containers will be marked when collected. The crime scene technician or collecting officer will fully describe each item, package each item of evidence separately and place his or her initials, date of discovery, and incident or exhibit number on the sealed container including the



tape used for closure. Staples should never be used for sealing evidence containers. Large items will be packaged with butcher paper or other suitable packaging. Such items will be marked by engraving tool or other instrument but with care not to damage the item's evidentiary value as advised by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation's Division of Forensic Sciences.

4.5.10 DNA Evidence

1. Evidence suitable for DNA analysis can be found at many crime scenes and is a powerful investigative tool for linking suspects to crimes, eliminating suspects, and identifying victims. All officers will be aware of common sources of DNA evidence, ways to protect against contamination of samples, and basic collection and packaging guidelines.
2. Wear a mask to avoid contamination through talking, sneezing, and coughing over evidence.
3. Avoid touching the area where DNA may exist.
4. Blood and semen are the two most common sources of DNA evidence. However, other body tissues and fluids can be used for analysis even in microscopic quantities.
5. DNA is particularly sensitive and subject to contamination. Therefore, first responders in particular must be familiar with situations that will degrade, destroy, or contaminate DNA evidence.

4.5.11 Hair

1. Hair samples may be placed in a zip-locked bag.
2. When obtaining scalp, facial, or pubic samples from an individual, a minimum of 25 randomly pulled hairs is necessary. Medical personnel will obtain such samples.
3. A brush or a comb can be used to obtain some of the hairs as a basis for comparison.

4.5.12 Blood or Bodily Fluids

1. Evidence should be thoroughly air-dried before packaging. If it cannot be air-dried, refrigerate and submit to the laboratory in no more than seven (7) days.
2. Put evidence into new paper bags or envelopes, not into plastic bags.
3. Sterile swabs will be used to collect liquid blood. Vials containing blood samples should be refrigerated as soon as possible but for no longer than seven days.
4. Bloodstains will be photographed first, then packaged or wrapped carefully in paper so that the bloodstain is not dislodged or disturbed. Smaller objects can be placed in envelopes or cardboard boxes.
5. Wet bloodstained material must be dried prior to submission to a laboratory. Officers will not use heaters, freestanding room fans, or intense light to facilitate drying as this may destroy the evidentiary value of the samples. Low-humidity cold environments that are well ventilated are suitable for this purpose.
6. If exigent circumstances dictate immediate action to prevent destruction of evidence, wet bloodstained materials may be rolled or folded in paper or placed in a brown paper bag or box, sealed, and labeled. Folding garments through stains will be avoided.



7. Bloodstained articles and blood samples will be transported as soon as possible and should never be stored in patrol vehicles or otherwise exposed to heat.
8. Use a cotton swab lightly moistened with saline solution to collect dried bloodstains on fixed objects too large to transport or on porous surfaces. If saline is not available tap water may be used so long as a control standard of the water is collected for comparison.
9. Blood samples, clothing and bedding that may retain semen evidence will be air-dried if wet, packaged separately in paper containers, and labeled.

4.5.13 Microscopic and Trace Evidence

Microscopic and trace evidence usually require standards of comparison in order to be of value. It is the lead investigator's responsibility to collect known source standards from the victim and/or crime scene for comparison to evidence obtained from the potential suspect. Examples include the following: (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.3.1)

1. Pulled pubic hair from a suspect to compare with hair evidence combed from a victim.
2. Paint chipped from a vehicle near the area of a car from which it is suspected the paint was transferred to another vehicle.
3. Vegetation (such as weeds) near the scene of a homicide to compare with the seedpods found in the cuffs of a suspect's pants.

4.5.14 The location from which samples from a known source are taken is critical where fractures have occurred, such as in the case of glass, wood, paint, and metal. Other known sources are fibers, fabrics, soil, and tool marks.

4.5.15 The employee collecting evidence will maintain evidence at the scene securely, and in a manner that will prevent degradation and preserve the chain of custody.

4.5.16 Processing Recovered Stolen Vehicles

1. When a stolen vehicle is recovered, the recovering officer will notify the Central Records Unit, which will attempt to notify the owner.
2. The recovering officer will process the recovered vehicle for any evidentiary value, including fingerprints, photographs, found property not belonging to the vehicle owner, etc. A CST will respond if requested in cases that involve other accompanying crimes.
 - a. The recovering officer will process all stolen vehicles.
 - b. When a field identification kit is not available, a crime scene technician will process the vehicle. If a CST is not immediately available to process the recovered vehicle, the officer will place the vehicle on "HOLD" until the vehicle can be processed, unless otherwise requested by the vehicle owner.
 - c. If the vehicle is involved in other criminal activity, the owner may not interfere in the processing of the vehicle for physical evidence.
 - d. If necessary, the wrecker service may transport recovered stolen vehicles to the Atlanta Police Department Public Safety Annex to be processed prior to transporting them to the wrecker yard.



3. The recovering officer is responsible for reporting his or her action relating to a recovered stolen vehicle on the Incident Report. The CST will report his or her actions on the Crime Scene Report.
4. The release of the recovered stolen vehicle is the authority of the Property Control Unit.

4.6 EVIDENCE RECORDING

4.6.1 Photographs and/or Videotape Information

1. When photographs are taken of a crime scene, a log will be completed, which will include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Date and time
 - b. Location
 - c. Incident number
 - d. Any other information deemed proper by the photographer.
2. When a crime scene is videotaped, the CST will provide the same information listed above in the narrative of the Crime scene report.
3. Video recordings will be submitted to the photo lab along with a copy of the crime scene report for transfer from the recording device or memory card to a standard DVD. The investigating officer or investigator will obtain the DVD from the photo lab by signing a receipt. The memory card will be erased and returned to the CST or investigator.

4.6.2 Storing and Reproducing Digital and Conventionally Filmed Photographic Images

1. Storing Digital Photographic Images:
 - a. Images will be downloaded directly from the camera, or by using a card reader.
 - b. Images should not be edited using the Cannon software, as this will modify the image file and the image file will not be admissible in court proceedings.
 - c. After downloading images, burn each case/incident to a separate CD and mark each CD with the incident number, date, crime scene number, and your name.
 - d. Turn in the CD with the report to the Photo Lab.
 - e. The Flash card can be used again after deleting images. The technician must be certain that the CD has a good, photographed image before the images are deleted.
 - f. Separate the photo folder for each technician.
2. Reproducing Digital and Conventional Film/Negative Photographic Images:
 - a. Setup printer by adjusting the paper size, lens, color balance, and film type.
 - b. Insert conventional film/negative or CD.
 - c. Pull conventional film/negative or CD up onto the monitor.



Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure

APD.SOP.3081 Crime Scene Investigation

Effective Date: October 22, 2024



- d. Make color and density selection.
- e. Print photograph
- f. After printing photographs, place a printed label with the photo number, victim(s) name, date, and the incident location (address where the crime scene took place), on the back of the photograph.
- g. The photographs should be placed/stored into the photo lab photo files in numerical order by the file number.

4.6.3 Sealing, Marking, Labeling Evidence

1. All evidence will be properly and timely sealed, marked, and labeled to insure the proper identification at a later date, according to the GBI, Division of Forensic Sciences manual.
2. In order for physical evidence to be accepted by the trial court, the chain of custody must be maintained. The initial step in this process will be marking and/or labeling the item at the time collected, seized, or received.
 - a. The marking (on the item itself) will be a unique identifier for the officer or crime scene technician recovering the item and should be placed on the item where it will not detract from or interfere with the analysis of the item as evidence or from its usefulness to the proper owner.
 - b. The following information is placed on the Crime Scene Report (Form APD-645)
 - i. The markings used
 - ii. Location (on item) of markings
 - iii. Where item was found, or recovered
 - iv. By whom item was found
 - v. Where item is stored
 - vi. Related confiscation number(s)
 - vii. Incident number
 - viii. Identification Unit case number
3. Evidence will be packaged or placed in an appropriate container to ensure protection. Items which cannot be marked should be placed in an appropriate container, sealed and the container marked.

4.6.4 Evidence Listing

1. The CST will prepare a complete listing of items, recording all evidence in the evidence logbook pertaining to the case, and place in RMS Entry for Evidence, and Incident report forms.
2. Copies may be retrieved from RMS by the investigator.
3. This list will include but not be limited to:
 - a. Complete description of the item (including make, model, and serial number, if any).



Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure

APD.SOP.3081 Crime Scene Investigation

Effective Date: October 22, 2024



- b. Source (from whom and/or location obtained).
- c. Name of person collecting the item(s).

4.7 REPORT PREPARATION & DOCUMENTATION

- 4.7.1 If the officer or investigator is on the scene, the CST(s) will complete a Crime Scene Verification Report (Form APD 645) and have it signed by the officer or investigator. The Crime Scene Verification Report will only be used when the officer or investigator is present.
- 4.7.2 All crimes processed by a CST must have a Crime Scene Verification Report completed.
 - 1. The crime scene documentation will accurately record how the scene was found and the events that transpired at the scene in connection with the investigation.
 - 2. The documentation will include, if applicable, but not be limited to:
 - a. Date and time of arrival at scene.
 - b. Time of Report.
 - c. Location of the crime: Street address, floor, room number, etc.
 - d. Name of the victim(s) if known.
 - e. Name of the suspect(s) if known.
 - f. Action taken at the scene including the number of photographs (rolls) taken, measurements taken (yes or no), and a listing of all physical evidence recovered.
 - g. Case file reference number.
 - h. Name of investigating officer.
 - i. Storage location of evidence.
 - j. Technician's name.
 - k. APD Identification number.
 - l. Incident number.
 - 3. Attach reports on any additional action by a CST. Follow-up reports will cover activities as to the name of the requesting person and the date and time of this request. In addition, this package will contain a log of CD's, DVD's, negatives, printed photographs, checkout list of photographs, and any records such as crime scene sketch information (measurements, description, etc.). (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.2.6)
- 4.7.3 Investigating officers who process a crime or crash scene will prepare a Supplemental Incident Report that thoroughly documents the facts and circumstances surrounding the collection of all items of evidence. The following information should be recorded in the report:
 - 1. Date and time of arrival at the incident scene.



2. Location of the crime or crash.
3. Identity of the victim(s).
4. Name of the suspect(s) if known.
5. Action taken at the scene.
6. Number of photographs taken.
7. Measurements made from the scene.
8. List of physical evidence recovered.
9. Incident number.
10. Date and time crime scene technician was requested and arrived on scene.
11. Name of investigating officer.
12. Disposition of physical evidence and exposed negatives.
13. Crime scene measurement information.

- 4.7.4 A description of the specific actions performed at the scene, including: the number of photographs taken; video recordings made; whether measurements were made; the identity of others present or involved in the processing of the crime scene; and an itemized inventory of all items of evidence seized.

4.8 RELEASING THE CRIME SCENE

Prior to releasing the scene, the investigating officer will ensure that the following steps are taken to the degree and in the order deemed appropriate:

1. Conduct a debriefing of members of the crime scene team to share information and identify priorities for follow-up investigation. Review evidence collected, discuss preliminary findings, and identify potential forensic tests and any actions needed to complete the crime scene investigation.
2. Complete overall measurements and photographs of the crime scene.
3. Conduct a final walk-through of the crime scene to determine if any evidentiary items have been overlooked, check for equipment or materials that may have been left behind.
4. Determine when the crime scene can be released.

4.9 TRANSFER OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

4.9.1 Chain of Custody

1. The CST will record the chain of custody for any transfer of custody of physical evidence, by documenting it using the File on Q evidence report writing system; or when requested by a supervisor, use the Property/Evidence Receipt form (Form APD 006).
2. This report will document the full and continuous custody of all evidence handled by any employee of the Atlanta Police Department.
3. This report will record such information, to include, but not be limited to:



Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure

APD.SOP.3081 Crime Scene Investigation

Effective Date: October 22, 2024



- a. Date and time of transfer.
- b. Receiving person's name and functional responsibility.
- c. Reason for the transfer.
- d. Name and location of the laboratory, synopsis of the event and examination desired (when transferred to a lab not within this Department).

- 4.9.2 Whenever possession of physical evidence is transferred from one person to another, a record will be made of the transfer. (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.3.1)
- 4.9.3 The transfer will be recorded on the back of the evidence receipt (Form APD 643), to include name and function of the receiving party, name and function of the releasing party, date and time of transfer, items involved, reason for transfer, name and location of the laboratory, synopsis of the event, examinations required.
- 4.9.4 No evidence will be stored in desks, offices, vehicles, personal lockers, case files, or other unauthorized places. All evidence will be turned over to the Property Control Unit prior to the end of the investigator's/officer's shift.
- 4.9.5 Physical evidence submitted to an outside agency for examination will be handled in the same documented manner as above, in addition to using the outside agency's report form.
- 4.9.6 The GBI's Evidence Submission Form will be submitted to the laboratory and will detail the nature of the request and a synopsis of the incident. The transmittal will also contain the chain of custody information, to include the name of the officer who last had custody of the items, date and time the items were submitted for examination, date and time the items were received by the laboratory and the name and signature of the person receiving the items at the laboratory.
- 4.9.7 A completed evidence receipt (Form APD 006) must accompany property and evidence submitted to the Property Control Unit.
- 4.9.8 Evidence and property retrieved from the Property Control Unit will follow procedures detailed in APD.SOP.6030 "Property and Evidence Control."

4.10 PROCESSING EVIDENCE

- 4.10.1 Processing and collection of evidence will be conducted in such a way as to preserve the integrity and condition of the evidence by preventing the introduction of foreign materials and insuring as complete a sample as possible and practical.
- 4.10.2 Physical evidence will be marked in accordance to the GBI Division of Forensic Sciences manual, placed in Georgia Crime Lab approved containers, properly sealed, and placed in the Department refrigerator, if perishable. If non-perishable, put it in a locked storage room. Evidence transported to either the GBI Crime Lab or to the APD Crime Lab will be put in a locked cabinet at Property Control until it is ready to be transported to either the GBI Crime Lab or to the APD Crime Lab.
- 4.10.3 Evidence placed in the secure storage room in a locked cabinet will remain for a maximum of 72 hours before transport to the appropriate unit. The Crime Scene Technician Watch supervisor will regularly monitor evidence storage areas for timeliness and proper packaging.
- 4.10.4 Latent fingerprints will be preserved and protected from destruction and contamination.



Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure

APD.SOP.3081 Crime Scene Investigation

Effective Date: October 22, 2024



1. Of all the physical evidence that is found at crime scenes, latent prints are the most fragile and great care must be taken to assure the integrity of this evidence.
 2. Latent prints may sometimes be visible to the unaided eye; however, often they are not, and no inference can be made to their existence merely on visual examination of the crime scene.
 - a. Every effort will be made to recover latent prints.
 - b. If latent prints are lifted, the CST will complete the latent fingerprint card, recording all pertinent information regarding the crime scene.
 - c. If latent prints are revealed using chemicals and an ultraviolet light source, photos of the print will be taken.
 - d. If shoe prints or tire tread prints /impressions are observed at crime scenes, photographs will be made of prints/impressions before any attempt is made to lift or make plaster casts of this evidence.
 - e. Tool marks and or impressions will be photographed before any attempt is made to make a silicone cast of the mark or impression. If deemed necessary by the technician or the investigating officer, that part of the crime scene that bears the tool mark/impression will be removed for further processing at the G.B.I. Lab. It is imperative that this action be approved by the supervisor if private property will be damaged by the process.
 - f. Document evidence recovered at crime scenes will be confiscated by the investigator and transported to G.B.I. Crime Lab.
 - g. The CST will mark each item with a number prefixed by the letters “APD” representing the Atlanta Police Department.
- 4.10.5 To prevent contamination, crime scene technicians will wear rubber gloves, and body covering when handling items containing any suspected body fluids.
1. An item containing suspected body fluids will be dried prior to transport to the G.B.I. Crime Lab.
 2. When dried, this evidence will be packaged and marked as evidence, as well as suspected bio health hazards due to possible body fluid contamination. In every instance, wear rubber gloves and coveralls when handling this evidence.
 3. Body fluid soaked, or stained evidence will be placed in paper bags (not plastic) for transmittal to the location of drying and storage to minimize contamination.
- 4.10.6 Processing Evidence for the G.B.I. Crime Lab
1. Evidence requiring examination will be forwarded to the G.B.I. Crime Lab as soon as possible to prevent any loss of evidentiary value.
 - a. The decision to submit items of evidence to a full-service lab is based primarily on the nature of the incident. It must be criminal in nature with prosecution pending.



Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure

APD.SOP.3081 Crime Scene Investigation

Effective Date: October 22, 2024



- b. The investigating officer along with the CST and supervisor will make final decisions regarding the submission to which lab the evidence will be submitted depending on the type of examination desired and the urgency of having results.
 - c. At no time will evidence be sent to a private lab without prior approval from the C.I.D commander.
 - d. All packages will be sealed in a manner as to completely cover all seams with packaging tape.
 - e. All parcels containing Hazardous materials will be properly marked with health hazard warnings on every side of the package wrapping.
 2. In all cases, samples from known sources (e.g., suspect, victim) will be included in each submission to a full-service lab.
 - a. Samples of body fluids/tissue will be obtained by appropriate medical personnel in the appropriate environment. There will be no exceptions to this requirement.
 - b. All body fluids and tissue that are to be forwarded to a full-service lab will be refrigerated or frozen in the Identification Unit where it will be labeled and packaged for transmittal to the laboratory.
 - c. Evidence involving major crimes which cannot be submitted because of a lack of comparison standards will be properly packaged and stored in the Property Control Unit until comparison samples are obtained.
 3. Evidence which requires refrigeration will be retained in the Identification Unit evidence refrigerator.
 4. Any delay in submitting evidence to a forensic lab will be documented by the assigned investigating officer or crime scene technician. The report will explain the reason for the delay, the anticipated length of the delay, and what damage, if any, is to be expected to the value of the evidence.
 5. Evidence retained for analysis by Identification Unit employees will be promptly processed and packaged to maintain the chain of custody, preferably by the employee who collected it.
 - a. All packages will be sealed in a manner as to completely cover all seams with packaging tape.
 - b. All parcels containing Hazardous materials will be properly marked with health hazard warnings on every side of the package wrapping.

4.11 SUBMISSION OF EVIDENCE TO THE GEORGIA BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS (GBI) CRIME LABORATORY (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.3.2)

- 4.11.1 The investigating officer is responsible for requesting laboratory examinations and for identifying what forensic test(s) is to be performed. (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.3.2a)
- 4.11.2 The examination request form will be forwarded with the evidence to the GBI Crime Lab by the Property Control commander, his or her designee, or by the responsible investigator/officer if the Custodian cannot make the transport.

- 4.11.3 Packaging and Transport Requirements: All evidence will be packaged in accordance with the procedures established by the GBI Crime Lab. (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.3.2b)
- 4.11.4 Evidence must be preserved so as to retain its integrity and original condition to the maximum extent possible.
- 4.11.5 Documentation Requirements: The following documents will accompany evidence brought to the GBI Crime Lab: (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.3.2c)
1. Property/Evidence Inventory form (Form APD 006) to maintain the chain of custody; and
 2. GBI Laboratory evidence examination request form (OPS Form 1). This form is available for download at the GBI – Division of Forensic Science website (<http://dofs.gbi.georgia.gov>).
- 4.11.6 Evidence Receipts: All evidence brought to the GBI Crime Laboratory for examination will be properly receipted by having the official who accepts custody, sign and date the Property/Evidence Control Record form. (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.3.2d)
- 4.11.7 When evidence is released from the GBI Crime Laboratory, the agency official that obtains custody of the evidence will sign and date the Property/Evidence Control Record form.
- 4.11.8 Requesting Written Results of Laboratory Analysis: The GBI Crime Laboratory provides a written report of examination findings as standard procedure for all Departmental requests. (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 83.3.2e)
- 4.11.9 A copy of the GBI Crime Laboratory written report will be placed with the case file and the original report will be filed in the Property Control unit.
- 4.11.10 Lab Request for Examination
1. Evidence submitted for a laboratory examination will include prior custody information.
 2. The following information will be recorded as an attachment to the lab request and placed in evidence logbook:
 - a. Date that evidence is being sent to the lab
 - b. Case number assigned to the evidence being sent to the lab
 - c. Lab evidence was sent to
 - d. Officer or Technician packaging and sending evidence to lab
 - e. How evidence was delivered to lab
 - f. Name of person transporting evidence to crime lab
 - g. Name of person submitting and to whom the report and evidence should be returned.
 - h. Name of suspect and/or victim associated with evidence
 - i. Date evidence returned to the Atlanta Police Department



Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure

APD.SOP.3081 Crime Scene Investigation

Effective Date: October 22, 2024



- j. How evidence was returned to the Atlanta Police Department, (e.g., UPS, FEDX, name of officer, technician, or person returning evidence)
 - k. Where stored, the locker number where evidence was placed prior to the transporting officer taking physical custody of evidence
 - l. What is evidence placed in, describes the type of container or packaging
 - m. Supervisor's signature authorizing evidence to be sent to the lab.
 - 3. All evidence that is submitted to Georgia Crime Lab for examination will be documented on the crime scene evidence log, GBI evidence log, crime scene report, and evidence container.
- 4.11.11 A verbal Lab Analysis report on the analysis or primary results of evidence testing will be followed by a written report containing the same analysis.
- 4.11.12 Laboratory transmittal letters will become part of the chain of custody report that will document requests for evidence testing.
- 4.12 G.B.I. CRIME LAB AND "CRIME LAB" REPORT WEB SITE**
- 4.12.1 Each section commander in the Field Operations Division will designate one primary and one backup employee to serve as site manager to access Crime Lab reports on behalf of the section.
- 4.12.2 Each section commander in the Criminal Investigations Division will designate three primaries and three backup employees to serve as site managers to access Crime Lab reports on behalf of the section.
- 4.12.3 The Computer Services Unit commander will designate one employee as the Department's Universal Site Manager and one back up to oversee the web site system.
- 4.12.4 Sworn employees and Crime Scene Technicians will be responsible for completing the Georgia Bureau of Investigation's "Evidence Submission Form" when submitting evidence to the State Crime Lab for analysis.
- 4.12.5 Site managers will access crime lab reports from the web site promptly and distribute them immediately to the primary investigator on the case. Do not distribute these reports further without specific authorization and do not allow them to be open to casual viewing.
- 4.12.6 The universal site manager is the Department's liaison with the GBI Crime Lab on the retrieval of reports. They will manage the Department's interaction over the web site; train, assist, and authorize site managers in its use and report any apparent misuse of the web site or the reports to the proper authority.
- 4.12.7 Whenever a site manager is transferred, terminated or has any other change in status that should terminate their access to the G.B.I. web site, the division or section commander will immediately notify the universal site manager by telephone, followed up by written documentation.
- 4.12.8 Only the universal site manager (and backup) has authority to add or delete users or provide site managers with passwords.
- 4.12.9 Site managers will maintain the confidentiality of the crime lab web site, by not disclosing passwords or any other accessed information. Site managers will be required to change passwords every 90 days or when mandated by the Universal site manager.

- 4.12.10 Site Managers will maintain copies of the Department's "Web Site User's" report on all requests for information, changes of user's password and requests for new web site users.
- 4.12.11 When completing the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Division of Forensic Science's Evidence Submission Form (OPS Form 1) sworn personnel and Crime Scene technicians must list the following characters to retrieve crime lab reports. If the forensic characters are not present, the report may not be accessible:
1. CID/ID UNIT employees will enter "Atlanta Police Department" (Section I).
 2. Agency's case number (Section I).
 3. Victim's and/or Suspect's name; spelled correctly (Section II).
 4. Primary or case officer (Section III).
 5. Any other officer, agency (e.g., prosecutor/juvenile court) to receive a report (Section III).
 6. Employees should enter the lead investigator's city email address (Section III).
 7. Services requested (Section IV/V).
- 4.12.12 The Universal Site Manager will:
1. Audit the site manager at least quarterly to verify that they retain their section commander's authorization.
 2. Complete quarterly review of the Crime Lab's usage log to watch for any inappropriate usage patterns.
 3. Obtain Crime Lab reports for users when the site managers are not available.

5. DEFINITIONS

Camcorder: A self-contained unit of communication equipment made up of a hand-held video camera and recorder.

Crime Scene: The location(s) at which a crime has been committed and/or where evidence of a crime is located or presumed to be located, and the site(s) of accidents and suspicious incidents where foul play could be involved.

Field Identification Kit: Latent print processing case made up of powder, tape and lifting cards used by police officers.

First Responder: The officer dispatched to the scene or the first officer to arrive on a scene.

Investigating Officer: The lead investigator or officer responsible for investigating the scene of a crime or accident.

Latent: A fingerprint or other prints that may not be apparent to the eye but can be made sufficiently visible, as by dusting, for use in identification.

Lead Investigator: The investigator having primary responsibilities for a case.



Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure

APD.SOP.3081 Crime Scene Investigation

Effective Date: October 22, 2024



Odontology: The scientific study of the structure, development, and abnormalities of the teeth

Real or Physical Evidence: Any material in either gross or trace quantities collected at a crime scene for examination and analysis.

Silicone: Any of a group of semi-inorganic polymers of siloxane, characterized by high lubricity and thermal stability used in forming casts.

Site Managers: Individuals designated by section commanders to retrieve crime lab reports from the State's web site.

Universal Site Manager: An individual assigned to the Computer Services Unit to monitor the Department's G.B.I. crime lab web sites, with access to all sites and has the authorization to add and delete users, issue passwords and make modifications to the system.

6. CANCELLATIONS

APD.SOP.3081 "Crime Scene Investigation," effective June 12th, 2019

7. REFERENCES

APD.SOP.3020, "Search and Seizure",
APD.SOP.5050, "Cyber Crimes Unit"
APD.SOP.6030, "Property and Evidence Control"
APD.SOP.6040, "Identification Unit"
Atlanta Police Department Crime Laboratory Operations/Procedures Manual

Georgia Bureau of Investigation Requirements for Submitting Evidence Manual, April 25, 2000

Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) 6th ed. Standards; 83.1.1, 83.2.1, 83.2.2, 83.2.3, 83.2.4, 83.2.5, 83.2.6, 83.3.1, and 83.3.2.