
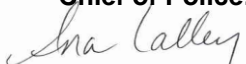
	ELGIN POLICE DEPARTMENT 151 Douglas Avenue Elgin, Illinois 60120	
Effective Date: 01/01/03	STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE	Revised Date: 12/28/23
Chief of Police: 	Physical Evidence Operations, 83.1	
Cross Reference: SOP 61.2 Traffic Crash Investigation SOP 84.1 Property Evidence Control Property Evidence Manual		Policy Sections: 83.1.1 Initial Response to a Crime Scene or Traffic Crash 83.1.2 Internal Department Resources 83.1.3 Evidentiary Items at the Crime or Crash Scene 83.1.4 Submitting Evidence/Chain of Custody 83.1.5 Equipment and Supplies

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish department protocol to ensure the proper collection, processing, and preservation of physical evidence.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the department to ensure department resources, to include evidence technicians and traffic crash investigators, are utilized to facilitate the collection, processing, and preservation of evidence. The department recognizes that a certain set of skills are necessary to ensure proper procedures are being followed to ensure the integrity of all investigations. Specialized training is provided to officers tasked with crime scene processing and traffic accident reconstruction.

DEFINITIONS

Evidence Technician: Patrol officers who are certified in the evidence collection process and are available to process evidence for small scale crime scenes and traffic crashes during their respective shifts. However, if the officer is a member of the Evidence Response Team, he/she may be tasked with processing evidence in response to a large-scale crime scene.

Evidence Response Team: Consists of evidence technicians who are on-call and readily available to process large scale crime scenes which require multiple evidence technicians.

Traffic Crash Investigator: Detective assigned to the Traffic Unit who is certified to process the scene of a traffic crash involving serious injuries or fatalities.

PROCEDURES

83.1.1 INITIAL RESPONSE TO A CRIME SCENE OR TRAFFIC CRASH

- A. Officers responding to a crime scene or traffic crash are responsible for determining the logistical needs of the incident and for requesting an evidence technician to the crime or crash scene.
- B. Prior to the arrival of an evidence technician, responding officers are responsible for ensuring the crime or crash scene is protected from contamination.
- C. Upon arrival of the evidence technician, the on-duty supervisor or designee shall provide pertinent case information to the evidence technician to help assess the evidentiary needs of the case. The evidence technician may determine that the needs of the crime or crash scene require the assistance of the Evidence Response Team or traffic crash investigator. Refer to Section 83.1.2 for information on internal department resources such as evidence technicians, the Evidence Response Team and traffic crash investigators.
- D. The first responding officer shall remain on scene until the evidence has been processed or when released from the scene by the evidence technician.

- E. The fire department will be notified in cases of arson or suspected arson.

83.1.2 INTERNAL DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

A. Evidence Technician Availability and Responsibility

1. Whenever possible, each patrol shift shall be staffed with at least one evidence technician who is certified to process a crime scene or traffic crash involving minor injuries. When this practice is not feasible, members of the Evidence Response Team or a traffic crash investigator shall be utilized.
2. When the evidence technician determines the crime scene or traffic crash requires additional officers, special expertise, or equipment beyond their capability, the on-duty patrol supervisor shall be notified and make contact with the Evidence Response Team supervisor who shall assess the situation to determine the logistical needs of the incident and facilitate the team's response. This shall also occur for a traffic crash involving serious or fatal injuries.
3. Evidence technicians are responsible for the following:
 - a. Ensuring the availability of necessary equipment to process and preserve the crime scene.
 - b. Determining the progression of tasks. Evidence technicians will photograph, sketch, and fingerprint the crime scene, mark, collect, preserve, and submit evidentiary items to the Property Evidence Room while also preserving the chain of custody.
 1. Sketches are not a substitute for good notes or photographs. When necessary, sketches will be used to supplement photographs in clarifying investigative data, such as measurements or identifying evidence.
 2. If a sketch is completed, the basic elements shall include, but not be limited to dimensions; relation to geographical features, buildings, or roads; address, floor, and room number; location of victim(s); date and time of preparation; name(s) of person(s) preparing the sketch; direction of north; location of evidence; and report number.

B. Evidence Response Team Availability and Responsibility

1. Members of the Evidence Response Team consists of evidence technicians who are selected for the team based on their experience, qualifications, and ability to be available on a 24-hour basis.
2. Annually, the Chief of Police designates sworn supervisors to manage the Evidence Response Team.
3. When the crime scene requires additional evidence technicians, equipment, or special expertise, the on-duty patrol supervisor will request the assistance of the Evidence Response Team. The supervisor of the Evidence Response Team is responsible for determining the logical needs of the crime scene and facilitating team members assignments.
4. The responsibilities of team members are addressed in Section 83.1.2 (A).

C. Traffic Crash Investigators Availability and Responsibility

1. Detectives assigned to the Traffic Unit receive specialized traffic crash reconstruction training and are available on a 24-hour basis.
2. When officers responding to the scene of a traffic crash determine there are serious injuries or fatalities or the needs of the crash scene are beyond their capability, the on-duty patrol supervisor shall be notified to make contact with the Traffic Unit Sergeant to request a traffic crash investigator. Refer to Standard Operating Procedure 61.1 Traffic Crash Investigation for more information.
3. Upon arrival, the traffic crash investigator is responsible for following the procedures outlined in Section 61.2.4 of Standard Operating Procedure 61.1 Traffic Crash Investigation.

D. Evidence technicians and traffic crash investigators are responsible for completing a supplemental police report regarding their observations and evidence collection activities. The report shall document the evidence collection, photographs and sketches of the crime or crash scene as applicable.

E. When department personnel are not available to meet the needs of the crime and/or crash scene, the on-scene supervisor may request assistance from an outside agency. For traffic crash investigations, the department may seek assistance from the Kane County Accident Reconstruction Team (KCART) and/or the Illinois State Police (ISP). For crime scenes, the on-scene supervisor, upon conferment with the investigations supervisor(s), may seek assistance from the Kane County Major Crimes Task Force for additional resources and/or evidence collection.

83.1.3 EVIDENTARY ITEMS AT THE CRIME OR CRASH SCENE

A. Fingerprints

1. Items that may support latent or partial fingerprints that cannot be adequately processed at the crime scene shall be packaged in a manner to ensure the fingerprints are protected from any action that may destroy or contaminate them.
2. All fingerprint evidence shall be placed in an evidence bag or envelope and properly marked with the following date, time, case number, location of the lift, collecting officer's initials and badge number.
3. When necessary, fingerprint evidence shall be submitted to the crime laboratory in accordance with the guidelines established in the Property Evidence Manual. Otherwise, fingerprint evidence will be secured in the Property Evidence Room.
4. Elimination prints from known victims and comparison prints from suspects will be recovered and submitted to the crime laboratory along with fingerprint evidence when necessary.

B. Digital Photography

1. Using department authorized equipment, digital photography shall be the primary method used by the department to document the crime scene.
2. Crime and crash scene photography may be completed by the responding officer. However, upon an assessment of the scene, it may be determined that the situation necessitates an evidence technician.
3. All aspects of the crime or crash scene shall be photographed.

4. Officers shall ensure the date and time settings for the camera are correct prior to taking any photographs.
5. No deletion of photographs shall be made at any time.
6. Prior to the collection of evidence, photographs shall be taken of the crime scene and evidence in its original state, unless exigent circumstances exist.
7. If a scale measurement is used, there will be one photograph with and one without said measurement.
8. All care shall be taken to ensure that photographs depict an accurate, authentic, and relevant aspect of the scene.
9. As soon as practical, but prior to the end of their shift, the officer who took the photograph shall download the images into evidence.com and verify the download was completed prior to deleting images from the memory card, unless exigent circumstances exist.
 - a. Images taken through use of the AXON Capture App on the officer's department authorized cell phone shall be uploaded to evidence.com as soon as practical, but prior to the end of the officer's shift.
 - b. Refer to Standard Operating Procedure 41.10 Body Worn Cameras for information on the use of body worn camera recordings as evidence.

C. DNA

1. The following precautions must be followed to avoid cross-contamination of DNA specimens:
 - a. Gloves must be worn and changed before and after obtaining a DNA sample.
 - b. Disposable instruments must be utilized. If disposable instruments are not available, instruments must be cleaned thoroughly before and after handling each sample.
2. Avoid touching the area of the evidence where DNA may exist.
3. Proper hygienic methods shall be utilized when handling DNA. Talking, sneezing, scratching, and coughing over evidence shall be avoided. The use of a face mask is preferred.
5. Prior to packaging, evidence must be thoroughly air dried, out of direct sunlight.
6. Insert evidence into paper bags or paper envelopes; do not use plastic bags or staples.
7. All DNA evidence must be kept dry and at room temperature, even during transport.
8. All evidence must be sealed, labeled, and transported in a manner to ensure proper identification of where the evidence was located.

D. Digital Devices

1. Computer Equipment
 - a. When collecting computer equipment or networked systems as evidence and employees trained in computer forensics should be consulted if needed.

- b. If the device is turned off, leave it off.
 - c. If the device is turned on, do not touch the device, and consult with a forensic examiner if needed.
 - d. Photograph the scene, to include the screen on the device, as well as any instruction manuals and software.
 - e. Keyboards and other components of the computer shall be preserved for fingerprints.
- 2. Cell phones
 - a. If the cell phone is powered off, leave it off.
 - b. Attempt to obtain lock codes.
 - c. If the cell phone is powered on, it should be removed from all network and cellular connections by placing the device in airplane mode, if possible, and connecting to a power source.
 - d. Once the appropriate documents are completed for submission to the Property Evidence Room, the cell phone should be placed into a 'cell phone use only' envelope and sealed.
 - e. The envelope containing the cell phone shall be placed in evidence locker and connected to the power source within the locker.
 - f. When use of the airplane mode setting on the cell phone is not possible, a signal blocking device should be used such as a Faraday bag or box and the cell phone should then be connected to the power source within the locker.

E. Digital Media

- 1. Digital media secured as evidence shall be stored on physical storage devices such as compact discs, CD-R, DVD-R, BD-R, flash drives and hard drives, or on department authorized cloud storage such as Box, Axon and Evidence.com.
- 2. The employee securing digital files shall complete the Quick Property Receipt within the records management system.

83.1.4 SUBMITTING EVIDENCE/CHAIN OF CUSTODY

- A. Items secured as evidence shall be properly packaged in accordance with the Property Evidence Manual and marked prior to being submitted to the Property Evidence Room for storage.
- B. All evidence packaging will depict the following information:
 - 1. The case number and item number.
 - 2. Description of the item.
 - 3. Badge number of the submitting employee. If the employee does not have a badge number, their name shall be documented on the packaging.
 - 4. Date of submittal.

- C. The employee securing any item shall complete a Quick Property Receipt, which is automated through the records management system, listing all items secured as evidence.
1. A copy of the Quick Property Receipt shall be attached to the police report or forwarded to the Records Division for uploading to the police report.
 2. The police report shall indicate the circumstances in which the item came into the custody of the employee. For more information on this report, refer to Standard Operating Procedure 84.1 Property Evidence Control.
- D. Items needing to be submitted to the Property Evidence Room, to include Quick Property Receipts and lab transmittals, shall be stored within the in-take storage lockers and the employee submitting the items shall ensure the locker is secured. When the items being submitted are not suited for an in-take storage locker, employees have the option to use one of the below temporary storage locations. Refer to Standard Operating Procedure 84.1 Property Evidence Control for more information.
1. Cages are available for items that are too large for the in-take lockers. Employees are responsible for ensuring the cage is secured.
 2. Evidence that requires air drying may be temporarily placed in the storage unit designed for drying evidence. Upon completion of drying, the evidence is to be packaged and secured in one of the evidence storage locations.
 3. Active cannabis plants need to be dried prior to storage in the Property Evidence Room.
 - a. The employee shall place the plant(s) in the separate drying area designed for drying the plants.
 - b. The submitting employee is responsible for monitoring the drying process.
 - c. Upon completion of drying, the evidence shall be packaged and secured in the drying area with the fan on.
 4. In cases where the items are too large for placement in an in-take locker or cage and the Property Evidence Room is not staffed, a supervisor shall contact the Property Evidence Custodian to determine an alternate, secured location.
 5. Whenever possible, items shall be processed, packaged, and submitted to the Property Evidence Room by the end of the employee's workday. When this is not possible, temporary lockers are available for items to be temporarily secured until the employee's next workday.
 6. Perishable items requiring refrigeration shall be placed in a refrigerated in-take locker located in the evidence processing area. The use of these lockers for storage of food or beverages for human consumption is not permitted.
 7. All the above locations are available to employees on a 24-hour basis.
- E. When items are transferred from one person to another, prior to being input into the property evidence management system, the transfer will be documented in the report. The record of the transfer shall include:
1. Date and time of transfers.
 2. Receiving person's name and position title.
 3. Reason for the transfer.

4. Type of examination desired, name and location of the laboratory, if applicable.
5. Synopsis of the event.

83.1.5 EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- A. The department maintains evidence processing equipment. Equipment shall include, but not be limited to latent fingerprint recovery equipment, photographic equipment, measurement equipment for traffic crashes and crime scenes, crash investigator supplies and containers for the collection and preservation of evidence.
- B. Requests for additional supplies should be made to an Evidence Response Team supervisor.
- C. Evidence technicians may request the use of equipment from an outside agency through an Evidence Response Team supervisor.