


GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE	Transmittal # 23-4	Policy # 8.42
Applicability: { } All DJJ Staff { } Administration {x} Community Services {x} Secure Facilities	Related Standards & References: ACA Standards: 3-JDF-3A-31, 4-JCF-2A-21 DJJ 8.5	
Chapter 8: SAFETY, SECURITY, AND CONTROL	Effective Date: 8/8/23 Scheduled Review Date: 8/8/24	
Subject: CRIME SCENE PRESERVATION	Replaces: 10/31/19 Investigations	
Attachments: A - Chain of Custody Form	APPROVED:  <hr/> Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb, Commissioner	

I. POLICY:

Department of Juvenile Justice secure facilities and community services offices (CSOs) shall preserve the integrity of all suspected crime scenes. The scene shall be secured to prevent unauthorized access by any person, removal of evidence, or contamination of the crime scene in any manner.

II. DEFINITIONS:

Chain of Custody: The process of accounting for persons who discover, handle, examine, or store evidence. A record will be maintained that shows the name of each person who has handled the evidence or had possession of the evidence collected. It is a very important record used to prove that the evidence offered is the same evidence that was collected and that the evidence has not been tampered with following collection.

Crime Scene: The physical location where a crime is alleged to have occurred.

Evidence: Items that can be used to establish or disprove an allegation of fact, including but not limited to actual objects, pictures, clothing, models, and other devices for the purpose of inducing belief in the minds of the court or jury.

III. PROCEDURES:

A. For any scene where a crime is alleged to have occurred:

1. The DJJ Director of Investigations or regional Field Supervisor will be immediately notified via phone by the facility Director, CSO director, or his/her supervisor.
2. The first person recognizing the scene as an alleged crime scene will immediately secure the scene and notify the senior official on duty. The primary

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responsibility will be to provide assistance to any injured person(s) and preserve life.

3. The senior official on duty will assign a staff member to be posted at the alleged crime scene to ensure that the integrity of the scene is preserved until the scene is taken over by the Office of Investigations or outside law enforcement investigative agency.
4. An Investigator from the Office of Investigations or law enforcement will be the only personnel authorized to remove evidence from the scene of the crime unless otherwise directed by the Director of Investigations or regional Field Supervisor. Only after Administrative staff have been notified and the appropriate authorities have completed their collection and documentation (e.g., photographing, sample taking, etc.) will the scene be turned back over to the facility or office.
5. Only emergency response personnel needed to preserve life will be allowed to enter the crime scene.
6. Unauthorized presence in the area is not to be allowed until the crime scene has been cleared by the Office of Investigations Investigator or law enforcement personnel.

B. Crime Scene Documentation:

1. The first person recognizing the scene as an alleged crime scene will document the person(s) at the crime scene location.
2. The staff member posted to the crime scene will document all persons who enter the crime scene, including name, title, purpose of entry, entrance time, and departure time. (Only emergency response personnel needed to preserve life, Office of Investigations, or outside law enforcement personnel will be allowed to enter the crime scene.)

C. No evidence will be altered or removed from the scene except as needed to preserve life. No one should touch, move, or pick up objects, clothing, or disturb in any manner, any article, mark, or impression that may have been made by the perpetrator, unless it presents a danger or movement of the item is necessary to preserve it. Any changes to the crime scene will be documented by the staff assigned to secure the crime scene.

D. Responsibility for protection, preservation, and continuity of the crime scene will cease only when the scene of the crime and/or the evidence is taken over by the Office of Investigations or an outside law enforcement investigative agency (e.g., Georgia Bureau of Investigation).

E. All persons with knowledge of the incident will document their statement in accordance with DJJ 8.5, Special Incident Reporting.

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F. Chain of Custody Procedures:

1. The chain of custody begins when discovery of the evidence is made and continues until the time the evidence is presented to the court.
2. In the event that forensic examination are required as a result of the alleged crime, the examining individual will maintain custody and control of all obtained forensic evidence until it is relinquished to the Office of Investigations or other law enforcement agency. If a youth has to be transported off site for examination, a full change of clothes will be taken for the youth.
3. To ensure the chain of custody and the protection of the integrity of the evidence, staff will follow these safeguards:
 - a) Limit the number of individuals who handle the evidence from the time it is found to the time it is given to DJJ Investigators or law enforcement officers.
 - b) If the person in possession of the evidence changes for any reason, the staff shall record the following using the Chain of Custody Form (Attachment A) at the time of the transfer:
 - i. To whom the evidence was given;
 - ii. The time and date it changed hands;
 - iii. The reason for the evidence being given to another; and
 - iv. When and by whom the evidence was returned.
 - c) DJJ staff must obtain the signature of the person accepting the evidence and/or returning the evidence on the Chain of Custody Form.
4. When directed to collect evidence, employees will use gloved hands and will place evidence in appropriate evidence bags with the Chain of Custody form stapled to it. The Office of Investigations may provide additional direction in regard to collection methods.

G. Any evidence discovered at a facility or community service office will be stored in a secure storage area, with the Facility or Office Director responsible for developing a Local Operating Procedure. Evidence must be stored in an administrative area that in double-locked (e.g., locked filing cabinets or desks behind locked doors). A logbook will be maintained in the same secured area that identifies articles placed in and removed from the area and should include the name of the person, date, and purpose of any person accessing the storage area.

H. Evidence will not be destroyed without the approval of the Office of Investigations in consultation with the Office of Legal Services.

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IV. LOCAL OPERATING PROCEDURES REQUIRED: YES