

# Greer Police Department

## General Order 930.1 Collection and Preservation Of Evidence

This order consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. PROCESSING EVIDENCE AT THE SCENE
- II. PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING STOLEN VEHICLES
- III. AT-SCENE EVIDENCE RECORDS
- IV. CRIME SCENE EVIDENCE TRAINING
- V. EVIDENCE TECHNICIAN STAFFING

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Chief of Police

**JULY 6, 2023**

CALEA 83.1.1; 83.2.1; 83.2.2; 83.2.3; 83.2.4; 83.2.5; 83.2.6; 83.3.1; 83.3.2

**I. PROCESSING EVIDENCE AT THE SCENE**

**A. Responsibilities of Evidence Technician and Reporting Officer**

1. It is the responsibility of the first officer on the scene of a crime to secure that scene from all non-essential personnel. The scene of a crime must be secured as soon as possible to prevent contamination and/or loss of evidence. The officer securing the scene should initiate a log identifying the name, time and reason for all personnel entering the scene. Personnel at the scene will not disturb, touch or handle physical evidence unless a danger exists that the evidence will be lost or destroyed prior to processing by an evidence technician. Should such a situation arise, it becomes the responsibility of the officer to mark, seal, tag and preserve the evidence. If the officer transfers the evidence to another person prior to it being logged in the Property Room, a Property Report form must be completed at the time of the transfer, in the field or at the Department, documenting the evidence and its transfer.
2. Criminal Investigators responding to a crime scene or incident, may in some instances, be responsible for photographing, collecting, preserving, transporting and submitting all evidence to the property room. In most cases, however, the investigator will obtain the assistance of crime scene technicians from the appropriate County or SLED to ensure the proper handling, collection, and transportation of evidence. Greenville and Spartanburg counties, as well as SLED, have Forensic teams available to assist on a twenty-four hour basis. See also I.C.1 of this General Order.
3. If the scene requires no critical on-scene processing, a patrol officer may handle the scene. All evidence obtained will be marked, sealed, tagged and placed in the evidence lockers by that officer. See also I.C.1. of this General Order.
4. The standard laboratory request form will be completed for all evidence that requires comparison or analysis. This request will be placed with the evidence in the evidence locker or refrigerator.
5. The procedures used for the collection and preservation of all evidence will be consistent with procedures established by the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) laboratory.
6. Officers will not conduct crime scene processing or collection functions for which they have not been trained.
7. Documentation shall be required each time the transfer of custody of evidence takes place.

**B. Evidence Processing Procedures**

1. Collection of blood and urine for DUI investigations
  - a. In any arrest or investigation for DUI of alcohol and/or drugs where the

collection of blood or urine is necessary, the suspect will be transported to the emergency room where the blood specimen will be withdrawn and placed into an unused, uncontaminated vial and given directly to the arresting officer. The blood specimen will only be collected by a physician, registered nurse, qualified technician or chemist. The arresting officer will observe the entire collection process. The blood must be collected within two hours of the violation. Urine specimens will be collected and placed in an unused, uncontaminated container provided by hospital personnel and given directly to the arresting officer.

- b. The SLED blood/urine collection report will be completed and placed with the evidence in the property room evidence refrigerator.

2. Collection of blood and/or other body fluids at major crime scenes

- a. Any employee handling blood, urine, semen, and/or any other body fluids will wear disposable, protective gloves while handling those fluids.
- b. Blood, urine, semen and other body fluids will be collected at a crime scene by evidence technicians trained in collection and preservation techniques established by SLED.
- c. All specimens collected in liquid form will be maintained in the property room refrigerator until they are transported to the SLED laboratory for analysis or comparison.
- d. All specimens collected will be marked, sealed and tagged as appropriate to identify and preserve them for analysis.

3. Latent fingerprints

The following general guidelines will be followed when processing a crime scene for latent prints:

- a. Latent fingerprints developed with fingerprint powder may be photographed on the original object. After being photographed, they should be lifted.
- b. The lifted print is to be placed on a latent fingerprint card and the appropriate information completed to include case number, date and time, and lifting officer or detective.
- c. Recovered latent prints will be transported at the earliest convenience to Greenville County for entry into AFIS.
- d. When requesting a comparison of latent prints with fingerprints of a known suspect, the requesting officer will include the fingerprint classification or ID number of the suspect.

4. Other items collected as evidence

- a. Wet clothing collected as evidence should be air dried prior to being marked, sealed and tagged.
- b. Documents that are wet will be handled the same as wet clothing.

- c. All firearms must be submitted on a separate property tag. Firearms submitted to the property room must be unloaded and the ammunition packaged separately, except weapons that need to be preserved for further processing at the lab. Any loaded weapon submitted will be conspicuously marked "LOADED FIREARM." The gun will also be packaged in such a manner as to prevent, to the extent possible, accidental discharge.
- d. Dangerous drugs (including, but not limited to, narcotics, hallucinogens and narcotic implements) submitted to the property room will be weighed after packaging and counted if appropriate by the submitting officer. Each separate container of the material will be marked with the weight and count along with other appropriate markings.
  - 1. All located drugs, identified or suspected, will be packaged and documented, and an Incident Report completed regardless of their status as evidence or found. Only the property custodian may destroy drugs.
  - (1) The property tag will list all drugs including number of containers, weight and/or count.
  - (2) All drugs submitted to the property room will be sealed. Each container will have a separate property tag.
- e. All money submitted will be counted by both the submitting employee and his/her supervisor. All money will be sealed and tagged separately upon submission to the property room. The property tag must identify the amount of money, submitting officer and the name of the supervisor verifying the count.
- f. Flammable fluid of evidentiary value will be stored in the property room in metal containers. A maximum of one gallon will be stored. Any excess fluid will be disposed of in accordance with EPA and Fire Department procedures for hazardous waste materials.
- g. No explosives, dangerous chemicals, nuclear material or ammunition greater than .50 caliber will be submitted to the property room. Contact will be made by the supervisor or investigating officer with the Fire Department, EPA, appropriate County bomb squad or other specialized agency when such material is recovered. All such items are to be photographed and disposed of according to procedures developed by the handling agency. Handling of the items will be accomplished by the specialized agency requested at the scene.
- h. Criminal activity is often stored in standalone home computers and other devices capable of storing data in an electronic format. Officers should be alert to the fact that an interruption in a power supply, a few strokes a device or keyboard or one click on the mouse can quickly alter or destroy evidence that may be stored in a computer or other device.
  - 1. Never assume that a suspect has limited knowledge of computers or other electronics.

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2. Isolate any computers present at a scene by removing everyone in the area and immediately remove any devices that a person has on his/her person that may contain stored data.
3. If a computer is "on" don't touch it.
4. If a computer and/or device is "off" don't turn it on.
5. Do not insert any disks present into a computer.
6. The crime scene technician, or on call investigator must be notified for the collection of computers.
7. The officer may seize computer disks or drives and/or other devices that are not attached to a power source.
8. Devices capable of storing data are extremely sensitive to electrostatic and magnetic discharge. Improper handling or storage of the device may cause damage and render it useless.
9. CID will be responsible for the retrieval of data or selecting a Forensic Computer Specialist to aid with retrieving evidence from the computer's hard drive or other devices.

C. Crime Scene Documentation

1. An evidence technician from the appropriate County will be requested to evaluate, photograph and process the scene for physical evidence on the following incidents:
  - a. Homicide.
  - b. Suicide.
  - c. Criminal Sexual Conduct, 1st degree.
  - d. Arson.
  - e. Robbery.
  - f. Major assaults.
  - g. Burglary.
  - h. Recovered stolen vehicle.
2. This list does not limit the requesting of County Evidence Technicians on other offenses not listed where evidence requires processing. It is also not intended to prohibit trained investigators from processing scenes of listed crimes where evidence technician is available.
3. All sworn personnel should be aware of what evidence is needed to meet the requirements of the offense being investigated. The Evidence Technician acts only in support of the investigating officer and, as such, may act only as an advisor and work at the request of the investigating officer.

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4. The reporting or investigating officer shall submit a supplemental report outlining the evidence found and processed. If no evidence is collected or photographs taken, the supplement will outline the reasons.

D. Submission of Evidence to the SLED Laboratory or Greenville Forensics

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evidence.

1. All evidence will be submitted to the property room as soon as practical to preserve the chain of custody and the integrity of the evidence.
2. Nonperishable evidence will be secured in the property room until it is transferred to the SLED laboratory. Transfers to the lab are made by the Property and are to be made as soon as practical after receipt of the
3. Perishable evidence is defined as fresh blood, bloodstained objects, other physiological stains and tissue, and biological material. When collecting perishable evidence from a crime scene, the following procedures will be used:
  - a. Any employee handling blood, urine, semen, and/or any other body fluids will wear disposable, protective gloves.
  - b. Fresh blood (wet specimen)

Fresh (wet) blood will be collected using swabs which will be allowed to air dry before being marked, tagged, sealed and refrigerated in the property room refrigerator.
  - c. Dry Blood
    - (1) Whenever possible, the entire object that has the bloodstain on it should be submitted
    - (2) When the bloodstain is located on a wall, floor, or other object that cannot be submitted, one of the following procedures should be utilized:
      - (a) When the stain is small, the fiber technique should be used. Cut a section of gauze proportionate to the size of the stain. Using a moistened swab, swab the gauze over the stain until the gauze turns a deep red color. The gauze should then be air dried in a pillbox before being sealed, marked and tagged. The dried gauze does not require refrigeration.
      - (b) Larger dry bloodstains may be scrapped directly into a pillbox using a sterile razor blade. The container should then be marked, tagged and sealed. No refrigeration is required.
  - d. Bloodstained Materials

These items will be air dried prior to packaging. After thoroughly drying, the item will be packaged in brown wrapping paper or paper bags, marked, sealed and tagged. Multiple items must be packaged individually to avoid cross contamination.

- e. Other stains, tissues or biological material
  - (1) Other types of stains can be collected the same procedures as previously described for wet or dry blood.
  - (2) Body tissue must be collected and placed in bottles in saline solution, capped, sealed, marked, tagged and refrigerated in the property room refrigerator. Body tissue collection will normally be accomplished by County crime scene technicians or Coroner's investigators.
  - (3) Other biological material, if not air dried, must be refrigerated after being marked, tagged and sealed.
- 4. When collecting perishable evidence, care should be taken to avoid cross-contamination when taking multiple samples. Tweezers, forceps, razor blades or any other instrument used to recover samples must be sterilized after each when taking multiple samples. Evidence technicians should wear protective rubber gloves and any other protective clothing required by OSHA when obtaining perishable evidence.
- 5. All perishable evidence packaging will be conspicuously marked on the exterior as to its content. For example, "Perishable biological evidence."
- 6. All evidence is to be marked and submitted as outlined in Section IV of this procedure.

E. Collection of Known Standards for Comparison

- 1. When the following types of physical or trace evidence is collected from a crime scene, a known standard sample must be collected for comparison by the SLED laboratory:
  - a. Blood
  - b. Hair
  - c. Fibers
  - d. Paint
  - e. Glass
  - f. Wood
  - g. Metal
  - h. Soil
  - i. Tool Marks
  - j. Footwear
- 2. The location from which samples are taken is critical for the lab and should be documented on the lab report.
- 3. All standards for comparison will be collected by evidence technicians in accordance with procedures established by the SLED lab.

F. Crime Scene Sketches

- 1. When crime scene sketches are drawn pursuant to the collection and preservation

of evidence, they will contain the following information:

- a. Dimensions
  - b. Relations of the crime scene to other buildings, geographic features, or roads.
  - c. Address, floor or room number as appropriate.
  - d. Location of significant features of the scene, including the victim.
  - e. Date and time of preparation.
  - f. Name(s) of person(s) preparing the sketch.
  - g. Direction of north.
  - h. Location of items of physical evidence.
2. Generally, the officer processing the scene will make rough sketches and measurements, including sufficient additional information so a final drawing can be made at a later time. These rough sketches are reporting documents and should be kept in a case file.

G. Crime Scene Photography, Audio, Videotaping

1. Photography or videotaping of major crime scenes and other incidents of major import will be the responsibility of the appropriate County evidence technician working in conjunction with the investigating officer or detective. The evidence technician will maintain those images or video for proper chain of custody until turned over to the investigating officer or detective. Greer Police drones may be used to videotape certain scenes.

Scenes or incidents of lesser import may be photographed or videotaped by the investigating officer or detective. All aspects of the crime scene or incident will be photographed or videotaped using digital equipment. All images or video are uploaded into evidence.com.

Examples of incidents where still or video photography may prove beneficial are as follows:

- a. Homicide.
- b. Criminal Sexual Assault, abduction or kidnapping.
- c. Investigation of excessive force.
- d. Visible injuries to a citizen during an arrest.
- e. Collisions, damage or injury involving personnel in the course of their duties or City property.
- f. Fatal or serious-injury accidents.
- g. Burglaries.



- h. Arson or suspected arson.
  - i. Investigation of discharge of firearm by police officer.
  - j. Aggravated or felonious assaults involving a weapon.
  - k. Any visible injury to a police department employee sustained while involved in an arrest situation.
  - l. Any crime scene upon request of the reporting or investigating officer.
  - m. Criminal Domestic Violence cases with visible injuries.
2. When photographing a crime scene, the photographer should take a series of overall photographs without any foreign objects visible in the scene. When the exact size of an item being photographed is required, a scale will be placed next to the item to add dimension and aid in the development of life-size prints.
  3. If the evidence to be photographed is a fixed object, the dimension of that object should be taken to provide a scale of reference.
  4. Audio recordings of scenes may be used to supplement photography or videotaping as necessary. All audio recordings will be uploaded to evidence.com.
  5. Personally owned devices will not be used for photography, audio recording, or videotaping.

#### H. Requesting Laboratory Examination

1. The responsibility for requesting laboratory examination lies primarily with the collecting officer.
2. Items requiring examination at the SLED Lab will be entered into iLab by the property officer. Officers will complete the appropriate analysis request forms for items that will be sent to Greenville Forensics. All requests by the submitting officer must be accompanied by a copy of the incident report when the evidence is submitted to the SLED lab or Greenville Forensics for analysis or comparison. Whenever available, materials and substances from known sources will be submitted for comparison purposes.
3. When the lab analysis results are returned to the Police Department, they will be provided to the appropriate officer/investigator for inclusion in the case file. SLED requires the email address and cell phone number of the investigating officer/detective prior to accepting any evidence for examination.
4. In sexual assault cases, the following items should be submitted to the SLED lab:
  - a. The SLED Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit containing evidence specimens from the victim.
  - b. SLED now restricts the amount of clothing to be submitted for examination. The victim's panties or underwear should be submitted. If the victim did

not wear panties or underwear after the assault, the item of clothing worn next to the victim's body upon which the suspect's seminal fluid may have drained should be submitted.

- c. Any object(s) on which the victim observed or has reason to believe that the subject ejaculated, or any item which the suspect used to wipe his penis after ejaculation.
- d. The SLED Suspect Evidence Collection Kit containing the suspect's standards.

## **II. PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING STOLEN VEHICLES**

- A. Vehicles that are reported stolen within the City will generally be examined by an officer trained and qualified to lift prints upon recovery. This examination may be conducted by the jurisdiction where the vehicle is recovered if it is outside the City limits. Police Department personnel may process another jurisdiction's stolen vehicle recovered in the City if time and manpower are available.
- B. The recovered vehicle should be processed for evidence at the recovery scene. If this is not practical, the recovered vehicle shall be towed to an appropriate location. If the vehicle requires restoration of serial numbers or has altered or missing serial numbers, it will be impounded. Additional requests for evidence work and laboratory examination are the responsibility of the investigating officer.
- C. The evidence technician or officer processing the vehicle will be governed by the procedures established in this General Order. Any evidence collected will be handled as outlined in this General Order.
- D. A patrol officer or detective will complete the appropriate reports on any vehicle recovered in the City. Disposition of the recovered vehicle will be handled in accordance with established procedures.
- E. It shall be the responsibility of the patrol officer or detective recovering the vehicle to notify the Communications Section with the following information:
  - a. Date and time of recovery.
  - b. Name and/or unit number of officer making the recovery.
  - c. Vehicle location, condition and name of towing company.
- F. The recovering officer will be responsible for ensuring that the vehicle is removed from SLED and NCIC files. A copy of the SLED/NCIC cancellation will be attached to the report.
- G. The recovering officer is also responsible for notifying the vehicle owner of its recovery as soon as possible or practical.

## **III. AT-SCENE EVIDENCE RECORDS**

- A. Property Submitted for In-House Processing
  - 1. Physical evidence collected by officers or an evidence technician shall be marked immediately. The mark shall consist of the officer's initials and the date inscribed or marked with indelible pen in a location that will not deface, mutilate or devalue the item.

2. The officer or evidence technician will seal the evidence in a proper container, placing his/her initials and the date on the seal. A property tag with all requested information completed will be securely attached to the container.
3. Officers should not submit evidence or property on one property tag in such a manner that creates an excessive or unmanageable quantity. (For example, six televisions should not be submitted on one property tag.)

**B. Property Submitted for Laboratory Processing**

1. Whenever items are submitted that are to be processed by SLED or Greenville Forensics, they must be properly tagged and packaged as previously outlined, keeping in mind the various sections of the respective lab and trying to keep like items together.
2. Submitted property must be accompanied by a completed laboratory request and a copy of the original incident report.

**C. Inventory Procedures for Collected Evidence**

1. All physical evidence collected from a crime scene by a patrol officer, evidence technician or detective shall be listed on an investigative supplement form and shall contain the following information:
  - a. Description of item (include make, model and serial number, if any).
  - b. Source (from whom or location where obtained).
  - c. Name of person collecting the item(s).

**D. Crime Scene Reporting**

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1. An accurate record of events that transpire at the scene of a crime, in connection with the investigation, is required at the time of trial. It is the responsibility of officer, technician or detective who processes the scene to submit detailed describing the sequence of events associated with a scene investigation on a supplemental report.
2. In addition to the inventory requirements listed above, the evidence technician or detectives report shall contain the following:
  - a. Date and time of arrival at the scene.
  - b. Location of the crime.
  - c. Name of victim(s), if known.
  - d. Name of suspect(s), if known.
  - e. Narrative of the evidence technician's actions at the scene.
  - f. Action taken at the scene, including the number of photographs taken and measurements.

3. If a specialist is called to the scene; i.e., staff from the SLED lab, collision reconstruction specialist, etc., the date and time of the request and the requesting officer's name will be added to the report. All information obtained by the specialist will be documented and included with the report.
  4. The same responsibilities for accurate crime scene reporting also apply to patrol officers when completing an incident report and conducting an investigation. (See GO 510.3 Operations; I Investigations; Number 4.)
- E. Recording Photography/Videotaping Information
1. The photography and videotaping of any crime scene is the responsibility of the evidence technician or investigating officer. The officer photographing the scene will note such in a supplemental report including date, time and location. All video and photographic evidence will be uploaded to evidence.com.
- F. Maintaining the Chain of Custody
1. Transfer to SLED Lab or Greenville Forensics
    - a. The Property Custodians are responsible for conveying evidence to the appropriate lab.
    - b. The Property Custodian will enter into the property log, the following information:
      - (1) Incident number.
      - (2) Date and time out.
      - (3) Name of Property Custodian checking out the property.
      - (4) Where the property was taken (SLED Lab. etc.)
    - c. As a general rule, the property custodian will convey items to the SLED Lab or Greenville Forensics no less than weekly. Evidence in major cases as determined by the CID Commander will be taken to the lab on the next business day or as soon as practical. All evidence will be hand-delivered.
    - d. When items are returned from the SLED Lab or Greenville Forensics, the returning Property Officer will enter into the property log the date, time and the receiving custodian's name.
  2. Transfer to Court
    - a. Officers needing evidence from the property room for court must notify the Property Custodian no less than 24 hours in advance of the time needed.
    - b. Anytime an officer takes evidence to court, the Property Custodian will enter the evidence transfer into the Property Log.
    - c. Any evidence not retained by the court will be returned to the Property Officer by the officer. The Property Custodian will enter the return into the Property Log and place the evidence in the property room.
    - d. When evidence is retained by the court, that fact will be noted on the

Property Log along with the date retained and the name of the court retaining the evidence.

**G. Custody Information on Evidence Submitted for Laboratory Examination**

1. To maintain a record of physical evidence submitted to the SLED Lab or Greenville Forensics for examination, the following information is required:
  - a. Name of officer last having custody of the item.
  - b. Date and time of submission.
  - c. Date and time of receipt by the Lab.
  - d. Name and signature of representative accepting evidence.
2. A copy of the laboratory sheet with the above information is kept with the investigative case file.

**H. Requesting Written Reports of Laboratory Analysis**

1. The SLED Lab and Greenville Forensics provides a written report of laboratory findings as standard procedure on all requests for laboratory examination. If another laboratory is used for examinations, a written report of findings will accompany the property.
2. Written reports of laboratory findings will be filed in the investigative case file. A copy of the report will be provided to the requesting officer.

**IV. CRIME SCENE EVIDENCE TRAINING**

**A. Training in Crime Scene Processing**

1. Patrol Division officers are usually the first officers to arrive at a crime scene. They have a key function to perform in securing the scene and safeguarding evidence from damage or destruction.
2. Basic training in evidence handling is provided by the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy. In addition, evidence familiarization in the following processing procedures is included in a new officer's field training program. Topics covered include the following:
  - a. Potentialities and limitations of the examination of physical evidence.
  - b. The Department's General Order on the role of the officer, detective and evidence technician at a crime scene.
  - c. Collection methods and procedures for fingerprints, footprints, blood, fibers and fabrics, weapons, hair, paints, glass and tool marks, and the requirements for collection of materials from a known source for comparison purposes.
  - d. Preservation methods for various forms of evidence.
  - e. Maintenance of the chain of custody (marking, sealing, tagging, receiving and recording).

- f. Crime and collision scene sketches.
- g. Crime and collision scene photography.
- h. Crime and collision scene records.

## **V. EVIDENCE TECHNICIAN STAFFING**

### **A. Requirements for Evidence Technician Availability**

- 1. Responses to calls for service where a crime has been committed that may involve physical evidence requires that such evidence be collected promptly and submitted to the laboratory without delay.
- 2. If deemed appropriate and authorized by the Patrol Squad Supervisor, the on-call investigator from CID and or appropriate county Forensics Tech may be requested to respond to the crime scene through the dispatcher. Upon arrival, the duty detective will assume responsibility for the crime scene and the collection and preservation of evidence.
- 3. Primary evidence collection responsibility during traffic collision investigation is given to Traffic Team investigators who are trained and equipped for that purpose. An evidence technician will be called to process a traffic collision if the Traffic Team Investigators determine the necessity.
- 4. A patrol officer may request, through the squad supervisor, an evidence technician to respond to any scene believed to have physical evidence present.
- 5. The responsibility for supervising a crime scene will rest with the Patrol Squad Supervisor unless and until a detective arrives and assumes responsibility for the scene.
- 6. In cases where the call out of a detective or appropriate County Forensics is not justified, the investigating patrol officer shall be responsible for processing the scene, collecting and preserving any evidence.
- 7. The Greer Police Department provides the necessary tools required for the processing, basic sketching, photographing, or videotaping of crimes scenes applicable to the abilities of Greer Police officers or detectives. All other scenes are processed by the appropriate County Forensics team.