


LEESBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT REGULATIONS AND GENERAL ORDERS MANUAL		
General Order Number: 213	Section: OPERATIONS	Effective Date: SEPTEMBER 2022
Title: COLLECTION AND PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE		
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I. BASIC EVIDENCE COLLECTION

- A. It is the responsibility of the first officer at the scene of a crime to secure the scene and prevent the loss of evidence. When necessary, the officer securing the scene must initiate a log documenting the time, name and reason for all personnel who enter the crime scene. All personnel at the scene are responsible for not disturbing, touching, or handling physical evidence unless there is a threat to the officer's or another's safety or there is a danger that evidence will be lost or destroyed before it can be processed. If evidence must be handled, it becomes the responsibility of the officer handling the evidence to mark, seal, tag, preserve and properly take custody of that evidentiary item.
- B. All officers should complete basic crime scene processing such as fingerprinting and photographing when a crime scene does not require specialized training for evidence collection.

II. SPECIAL PROCESSING AVAILABILITY

- A. The specialized training and equipment of the detective and crime scene technician is an asset to crime scene processing and crime solving. Crime scene technicians are those personnel who have graduated from the Virginia Forensic Science Academy or its equivalent. Patrol crime scene technicians are those officers who have completed the 40 hour basic crime scene processing and evidence collection class through the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Training Academy or its equivalent.
- B. The detective and crime scene technician positions are a support service of the Patrol Section. The detectives and crime scene technicians are supervised by the Criminal Investigations Section supervisors. Patrol crime scene technicians are supervised by their team supervisors, but their evidence processing work is supervised by the Criminal Investigations Section supervisors.
- C. The Criminal Investigations Section supervisors shall ensure the detectives and crime scene technicians are properly trained for their positions. All problems or concerns in these areas should be brought to the attention of the Criminal Investigations Section supervisors.
- D. When requested to respond to a crime scene, detectives have the responsibility to direct and supervise both the crime scene technician and patrol officer in the processing of the crime scene. At all other times this responsibility lies with the team supervisor.

III. COLLECTION OF KNOWN SAMPLES

- A. The laboratory can only compare a known item with an item showing similar characteristics. Sufficient specimens and controls must be submitted for comparisons of such items as hair,

blood, buccal swabs, fibers, paint, glass, wood, metal, soil, tool marks, footwear, handwriting and voice samples.

- B. The investigating officer assigned the case or crime scene technician will be responsible for obtaining any required known specimens, according to legal procedures. The investigating officer will ensure that specimens and the evidence are taken to the laboratory for analysis and comparison.

IV. EVIDENCE PROCESSING

- A. All evidence shall be collected, packaged and stored according to the Department of Forensic Science Evidence Handling and Packaging Guide. Officers shall package potentially hazardous items, including all glass items, in a manner to prevent breakage, destruction, and the possibility of causing injury to those handling the evidence.
- B. Collection of blood for DUI investigations.
 - 1. In any arrest or investigation for DUI due to alcohol or drugs, the State DUI collection kit will be utilized. Blood must be withdrawn by a physician, registered nurse, qualified technician or chemist.
 - 2. Blood containers must be sealed with a tape or label that displays the following information:
 - a. Name of suspect;
 - b. Date and time of collection;
 - c. Name of persons collecting and sealing the vial.
 - 3. All vials not mailed immediately will be placed in the refrigerated locker in the property room.
 - 4. If the blood sample requires a drug analysis, the vial should be mailed with a laboratory request form specifying the drug for which to be tested. The envelope should be padded and labeled "Infectious Material". Vials for blood and drug analysis will be sent to the State designated facility.
- C. Collection of blood and other body fluids.
 - 1. Blood, urine, semen, DNA and other body fluids will be collected at a crime scene where they are found by crime scene technicians or detectives trained in collection procedures established by the Division of Forensic Science.
 - 2. All specimens collected in liquid form will be placed into a refrigerator in the property room.
 - 3. All specimens collected will be marked, sealed and tagged as appropriate to identify and preserve them for analysis.
 - 4. Blood and body fluids collected using a sterile swab and distilled water method shall be air dried prior to being submitted.
- D. Latent Prints.
 - 1. The following guidelines will be adhered to when processing a crime scene for latent prints:
 - a. Latent processing should be attempted by the investigating officer at all crimes where latent prints may be recovered. If the owner of the property requests no processing, officers shall consider and document this request;
 - b. During the investigations of major crimes, latent impressions developed with fingerprint powder may be photographed on the original object. After being photographed, the latent should be lifted;
 - c. The lifted print is to be placed on a latent fingerprint card and the card shall be completed by the officer.
- E. Other Evidence.

1. Wet clothing collected as evidence should be air-dried in the CIS evidence bay drying closet. Upon drying, the evidence will be marked, sealed and tagged, by the collecting officer.
2. Wet documents collected as evidence should be handled in the same manner as wet clothing.
3. Perishable evidence is to be submitted as detailed in this General Order.
4. Firearms shall be submitted to the property room packaged or tagged separate from other property. All firearms submitted shall be unloaded and made safe. The submitting officer shall query the firearm through VCIN/NCIC and attach the printout to the property form.
5. All money submitted to the property room will be counted by the submitting officer and their supervisor. Money shall be tagged and packaged separate from other property in an LPD currency envelope. The currency envelope must identify the amount of money, denominations, who submitted it, and who verified the count.
6. No explosives, dangerous chemicals, nuclear material, volatile fluids, or ammunition greater than .50 caliber will be submitted to the property room. The responsible supervisor shall contact the Loudoun County Fire Marshals Office when such material is recovered. All such items shall be photographed. Handling of the items shall be accomplished by the agency trained in the appropriate area of specialization.
7. Hypodermic needles submitted to the property room shall be packaged in a biohazard sharp objects disposal pouch. This pouch shall then be placed in an envelope. The envelope shall be lettered in red ink, "Hypodermic Needle-Caution" and contain a biohazard sticker.
8. Once packaged, suspected PCP or Khat will be stored in the refrigerator locker. The exterior packaging should be clearly labeled to indicate that the package contains suspected PCP or Khat.

F. Processing Vehicles.

1. Stolen vehicles recovered by the Department shall be processed at the location of the recovery by the officer assigned the case. If additional expertise is needed a supervisor may request a crime scene technician or detective. The officer assigned the case shall ensure the originating agency and the vehicle owner are promptly notified of the recovery.
2. Vehicles reported stolen to the Department but recovered outside of the Town may be processed by the recovering agency. All physical evidence recovered will be handled in accordance with the guidelines of this chapter. For towing procedures see General Order 212 Abandoned Towed Vehicles.
3. In some cases, vehicles may be secured in the CIS bay for processing in a controlled environment. When determining whether to tow a vehicle to the CIS bay, consideration shall be given to exigency for obtaining evidence, location of vehicle, environmental conditions, and availability of crime scene technician.

G. Submitting Physical Evidence.

1. All physical evidence collected by an officer shall be documented immediately. The evidence should be placed in an evidence envelope when size permits and a property tag utilized if an envelope is not practical.
 - a. All envelopes shall be sealed, with officers placing their initials and date on the seal.
 - b. All requested information on the face of the envelope will be completed by the submitting officer.
2. When a property tag is used an indelible pen must be utilized to mark the case number on the tag and it shall be securely attached to the physical evidence taken into custody.
3. When submitted evidence requires further processing either by a crime lab or departmental personnel, the submitting officer will be responsible for ensuring the processing request is accomplished.
4. All physical evidence or property collected by an officer shall be listed on the property form and on a Case Report or Supplemental Report. Officers shall complete all pertinent information requests concerning the property or evidence on both reports.

IV. PHOTOGRAPHY

- A. The photographing of a crime scene, motor vehicle crash, victim injuries or other incident, is the responsibility of the investigating officer. For serious crimes or complex scenes, officers may request supervisory assistance or a supervisor may request a crime scene technician to photograph the scene or incident. All aspects of the scene should be photographed. The officer assigned to photograph the scene shall maintain a record of photographic data that shall include;
1. Date and time pictures were taken;
 2. Location;
 3. Case number;
 4. Name and EIN of officer taking photographs
- The above information should be logged on a Supplemental Report. When necessary, the crime scene technician shall ensure the prompt development of the film. Officers shall document on their report of investigation that photographs were taken at the scene. Request from complainants, legal firms, insurance companies, or outside agencies for copies of photographs shall be forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Section supervisor.
5. Any photographs using film will be developed by the State Lab.
- B. All video, digital, and still images remain the property of the Leesburg Police Department.
- C. Officers shall not use their personal cameras or cell phones to capture digital images at a crime scene. The Leesburg Police Department provides cameras that should be utilized for official business.

V. FINGERPRINTS

- A. Processing for Latent Fingerprints.
Collection and processing of latent fingerprint evidence by the investigating officer, detective, or crime scene technician shall be in compliance with procedures outlined in lesson plans during basic academy training.
- B. Death Scenes.
Officers that investigate any death shall check the deceased's name with the Central Criminal Records Exchange (CCRE). If the deceased is on file with the CCRE, the investigating officer shall obtain a set of the deceased's fingerprints. The fingerprints and a copy of the report of investigation will be forwarded to the Criminal Investigations Section supervisor who will file the fingerprints and the State form SP-172, "Death Notice", with the CCRE. The CCRE will then match the deceased's fingerprints and purge their files.

VI. PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

- A. Latent print processing kit and evidence collection bags are available from the squad level evidence technicians. Team supervisors will maintain a camera in their cruiser to be utilized to photograph crime or motor vehicle crashes scenes for patrol officers.
- B. The Crime Scene Technician will be responsible for maintaining an adequate supply of photography and evidence processing equipment for the Department.
- C. Officers or detectives shall always attempt to photograph major crime scenes and attempt to recover all available physical evidence. If no photographs can be taken or no evidence can be collected, the assigned officer or detective shall document in the report of investigation the specific causative factors that inhibited or curtailed these attempts. For this directive, major crimes are: homicide, suicide, robbery, rape, arson, felonious assaults, burglary, breaking and entering, and serious injury or fatal motor vehicle crashes.

D. See also General Order 211 Traffic Accident Investigation.

VII. CRIME SCENE REPORTING

- A. An accurate record of events that transpire at a crime or motor vehicle crash scene, in connection with the investigation, is required at the time of trial. It is the responsibility of the officer who processes the scene to submit detailed reports describing the sequence of events associated with actions taken in collecting and processing evidence. In addition to the requirements stated elsewhere in this General Order, the processing officer shall document the following with a Supplemental Report.
1. Date and time of arrival at the scene;
 2. Location of the crime;
 3. Name of the victim;
 4. Name of the suspect;
 5. Narrative of the officer's processing actions at the scene, including the number of photographs taken, whether measurements were taken, and a listing of physical evidence recovered.

VIII. INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

- A. If a specialist from another law enforcement agency is called to the scene, the officer making the request shall document the date and time of the request and the name of the requesting officer. If that specialist prepares his/her own report, a copy of the report shall be obtained by the requesting officer. All information obtained by the officer will be documented with a copy of the specialist's report or by completing an Offense Report or a Supplemental Report. The requesting officer is responsible for the documentation of this information.

IX. EVIDENCE HANDLING

- A. Transfer of Evidence.
No item shall be released from the property room without the property officer recording the transaction on the original property form and in the property and evidence tracking software. All transfers shall be documented with the date and time of transfer, officer that received or relinquished the property, and location or destination of the property. Officers shall document laboratory actions, court actions, and all dispositions of property with a Supplemental Report. When all the property listed on the property form has been relinquished, the original property form shall be forwarded to the Records Section.
- B. Submitting Evidence to the Laboratory.
1. All evidence is to be submitted to the property room as soon as practical to preserve the chain of evidence. Non-perishable evidence will be secured in the property room until it is transferred to the crime lab.
 2. Perishable evidence is defined as fresh blood, blood stained objects, other physiological stains and tissues, and biological materials.
 - a. Fresh blood. If possible, submit one tube of unclotted blood per specific analysis request. Identify and seal the sample. Submit the sample the same day, or refrigerate it until it can be transferred to the laboratory.
 - b. Dry blood. Submit the item if possible. Wrap each item separately and seal it to retain all sample material. Submit it the same day or refrigerate it until it can be transferred to the laboratory. If submitting the entire item is not possible, use a sterile swab moistened with distilled water to absorb the suspected blood. As a last resort, scrape crusts onto clear paper using a sterile scraping tool. Flakes of dried liquid can be collected with fingerprint tape and adhered to a clean card.

- c. Physiological stains, tissues, and biological materials should be submitted in the same manner as blood. All wet blood, wet tissue, or wet stains and secretions will deteriorate unless cared for properly. When submitting these items to the laboratory, indicate to the laboratory personnel that these types of samples are enclosed by writing "Not Air Dried" on outside of the package. See also the Division of Forensic Science, Physical Evidence Collection Guide.
3. Normally, the Administrative Services Coordinator is responsible for the transporting of evidence to the laboratory. Evidence should be transferred to the laboratory within 15 days of the date the evidence was taken into custody. Biological, perishable and other evidence, as necessary, should be transferred to the laboratory as soon as practical. The investigating officer will coordinate this transport with the Administrative Services Coordinator.
4. All officers submitting evidence to the laboratory for examination shall complete the State form, DFS-70-001, "Request for Laboratory Examination". The following information is required:
 - a. Submitting officer (name of);
 - b. Date of submission
 - c. Name and signature of the person in the laboratory receiving the evidence;
5. Officers shall maintain a copy of the, "Request for Laboratory Examination" form with their case file.
6. When a "Request for Laboratory Examination" form is filed, officers will receive written results from the State lab regarding the laboratory examinations requested.