



Policy and Procedure

Policy Number

10.02

Chapter Property and Evidence

Article Evidence Collection

Authorized By:

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PURPOSE

This policy provides guidance for crime scene management and documentation and the processing, collection and preservation of evidence.

POLICY

Proper preservation, documentation and collection of physical evidence at crime scenes is of utmost importance for successful apprehension and prosecution of criminals. Department employees should treat every case as though it will go to trial and shall collect, document and preserve physical evidence in a manner consistent with this policy and compliant with federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations.

DEFINITIONS

ADAMS is the digital evidence storage system used by the Department.

BEAST is the property and evidence management system used by the Department

Crime Scene Analyst (CSA) is a civilian employee trained to perform the duties of crime scene processing and reconstruction.

Crime Scene Manager is the person responsible for coordinating the preservation, documentation, and collection of physical evidence assignments for personnel at a crime scene.

Crime Scene Investigator (CSI) is a collateral assignment for officers trained to perform the duties of crime scene processing and reconstruction.

Crime scene personnel are any Department personnel collecting and processing evidence from a crime scene, including officers, detectives, CSIs/CSAs, Criminalist and Crime Scene Manager.

Criminalist is a person with specialized training in the collection and examination of the physical evidence located at crime scenes.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Crime Scene Responsibilities <CALEA 83.1.1>

The proper collection and preservation of evidence taken from any crime scene shall be the primary concern of all officers involved in the investigation. The Department will have CSIs/CSAs, Criminalist or other qualified personnel available on a 24- hour basis to process crime scenes. The first responding officer shall be responsible for following the guidelines established in the Loveland Police Department Crime Scene Processing Guidebook for securing the scene until a Detective, CSI/CSA, or Criminalist arrives or otherwise instructed by a supervisor. All responding officers shall follow these guidelines and the Loveland Police Department Crime Scene Processing Guidebook when collecting, processing, and preserving evidence.





The Crime Scene Manager or Criminalist shall be responsible for coordinating the efforts of personnel collecting physical evidence. A supervisor shall call a detective, CSI/CSA, and the Criminalist as soon as possible, to respond to crime scenes when extensive evidence processing procedures are required.

The person assigned the crime scene manager role shall direct others, as necessary, to handle evidence-processing functions such as:

- Documenting entry and exit of persons into the scene
- Securing the scene
- Photographing of evidence at all crime scenes
- Collecting physical evidence

Patrol officers may collect physical evidence at crime scenes in which the officer has determined that a detective, CSI/CSA or the Criminalist need not respond. Any person collecting physical evidence from a crime scene shall have, at a minimum, pre-service and in-service training specific to evidence collection and processing.

Transfer of Custody of Physical Evidence in the Field <CALEA 83.2.1>

Once evidence is seized, handling should be kept to a minimum unless otherwise directed. The employee seizing the evidence should maintain complete physical control over the evidence until the evidence is properly logged, tagged and secured in the department property locker. However, if the situation dictates a transfer, the below procedure shall be followed:

- The initial collecting employee will initiate the chain of custody by documenting the recovery of the evidence in a report
- Each employee handling or processing the evidence thereafter will properly maintain the chain of custody by documenting the following in a report:
 - Date and time of transfer; and
 - Receiving person's name and position.

Collection of Evidence and Elimination Samples from a Crime Scene <CALEA 84.1.1 (c)> <CALEA 83.3.1>

Officers shall collect samples from a known source for elimination or comparison purposes with any physical evidence collected and document the type of sample and from whom taken. Such samples may include:

- Victim buccal swabs
- Suspect buccal swabs

Collecting officers shall place all items in an appropriate packaging and sealed as soon as possible after collection with package seals. The packaging shall be marked pursuant to guidelines in the Loveland Police Department Submission and Packaging Manual.

Collection of Digital or Electronic Equipment Evidence <CALEA 83.2.5>

Officers shall follow the guidelines in the Submission and Packaging Manual and Crime Scene Processing Guidebook when collecting and processing digital or electronic equipment evidence.

Crime Scene Sketches

If the Crime Scene Manager determines that a crime scene sketch should be completed prior to evidence collection, the following elements should be included in the sketch:





- Measurements of crime scene area and evidence locations
- Location of crime scene (physical address or room location)
- Location of significant features of the scene, including the victim
- Date and time of preparation
- Name of the person(s) preparing the sketch
- Direction of north
- Case number

Officers producing rough sketches should include sufficient additional information so that a finished diagram can be created after the evidence is collected and processed. 3D animation software may be used when appropriate as determined by the crime scene manager.

Photographing/Video Recording/3D Imaging the Crime Scene <CALEA 83.2.2>

The Criminalist or CSI/CSA, following established guidelines outlined in the Loveland Police Department Crime Scene Processing Guidebook, shall photograph all aspects of a crime scene before evidence is removed. Crime scene personnel may video record a crime scene to supplement, but not replace still photographs as evidence. Crime scene personnel may video record a crime scene or incident using a digital video camera or department issued cellphone. The department does not approve the use of personal cellphones or devices for routine crime scene documentation with the exception of perishable evidence and exigent circumstances

Crime scene personnel using a digital camera, video recorder, or department issued cellphone will transfer the photographs and recordings into the Department archiving system using ADAMS. Officers will transfer each series of photographs associated with a case to ADAMS as soon as possible after the incident. The case officer and detective shall include in their narrative and in the property section of AFR that the digital photos/ recordings have been submitted into ADAMS. Officers and detectives may only use the ADAMS viewer to view their own cases or cases with which they have been associated. Viewing of other cases is prohibited. ADAMS is equipped with an audit trail.

Original digital photographs shall not be altered or manipulated in any manner. Should any photograph need to be enhanced for investigative purposes, officers or detectives shall save the original digital photograph and any enhanced photograph with a different and distinctive file name from each other in the same case.

If a crime scene requires 3D imaging to be captured by using a FARO or Lecia system, the finished product shall be transferred onto a thumb drive and entered into the BEAST as a separate item number.

Any non-Department personnel seeking copies of digital media shall make the request through the Records Unit. Officers and Detectives seeking copies of digital media shall make the request by submitting a Forensic Services Unit (FSU) request to Records. Records shall process the FSU request or forward the request to the appropriate person in Records, depending on the storage medium for the specific case. Records release and retention policies will apply.

Color photographs may be printed by the Records Unit, if needed, for further case investigation or at the request of anyone needing color photographs. In the event the photographs will accompany a Blue Team





report or are needed for the graffiti follow up, the officer may print their own. Officers should use the ADAMS viewer prior to requesting colored copies.

Those documenting a crime scene with photography shall ensure that proper photography techniques are used. Overall, mid-range and close up photos shall be taken. A scale shall be used in close-up photography.

Documentation <CALEA 83.2.6><CALEA 84.1.1 (c)>

All personnel shall complete an offense report documenting an accurate record of their role in connection with the investigation. The incident report should include:

- Arrival date and time
- Location
- Name of victims, suspects, and witnesses, if known
- Action taken at the scene
- Photographs or measurements taken
- List of physical evidence recovered
- Case number
- Any reasons for which evidence was not collected or photographs not taken at a crime scene

Any officer collecting physical evidence shall prepare a supplement report to the incident report and provide a BEAST Property Record for the case file. Any time an officer generates an offense report or accident report and evidentiary photographs or video are taken, the date, time and location the photographs/video were taken will be recorded in the report.

When submitting physical evidence, officers shall record the item in the BEAST with the following information for each item of evidence:

- Date and time the evidence was collected
- The collecting officer's DSN
- The description of the item (including make, model, and serial number, if any)
- The source or location from which the item was obtained

Coordination with District Attorney

A Criminal Investigations Unit sergeant or designees shall attempt to meet with the District Attorney's Office to discuss the latest information concerning investigative and crime scene practices and capabilities and discuss any investigative practice and procedural concerns from the District Attorney and the courts.

