

Crime Scene Integrity

305.1 CRIME SCENE INTEGRITY PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance in handling a major crime or disaster.

305.2 CRIME SCENE INTEGRITY POLICY

It is the policy of the Unified Police Department to secure crime or disaster scenes so that evidence is preserved, and to identify and mitigate the dangers associated with a major crime or disaster scene for the safety of the community and those required to enter or work near the scene.

305.3 SCENE RESPONSIBILITY

The first officer at the scene of a crime or major incident is generally responsible for the immediate safety of the public and preservation of the scene. Officers shall also consider officer safety and the safety of those persons entering or exiting the area, including those rendering medical aid to any injured parties. Once an officer has assumed or been assigned to maintain the integrity and security of the crime or disaster scene, the officer shall maintain the crime or disaster scene until they are properly relieved by a supervisor or other designated person.

305.4 CRIME SCENE INTEGRITY FIRST RESPONDER CONSIDERATIONS

The following list generally describes the first responder's function at a crime or disaster scene. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive, is not necessarily in order and may be altered according to the demands of each situation:

- (a) Broadcast emergency information, including requests for additional assistance and resources.
- (b) Provide for the general safety of those within the immediate area by mitigating, reducing, or eliminating threats or dangers.
- (c) Locate or identify suspects and determine whether dangerous suspects are still within the area.
- (d) Provide first aid to injured parties if it can be done safely.
- (e) Evacuate the location safely as required or appropriate.
- (f) Secure the inner perimeter.
- (g) Protect items of apparent evidentiary value.
- (h) Secure an outer perimeter.
- (i) Identify potential witnesses.
- (j) Start a chronological log noting critical times and personnel allowed access.

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305.5 INITIAL INVESTIGATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

The officer assigned the call shall have the responsibility for the crime scene and the initial investigation. If it is necessary to declare the situation an incident and establish incident command, that first arriving officer shall be the Incident Commander (until properly relieved). Such responsibility shall continue until the initial investigation is completed.

The initial officer shall be responsible for the completion of a General Offense report and for assisting the investigators at the crime scene, if needed.

305.6 SEARCHES

Officers arriving at crime or disaster scenes are often faced with the immediate need to search for and render aid to victims, and to determine if suspects are present and continue to pose a threat. Once officers are satisfied that no additional suspects are present and/or there are no injured persons to be treated, those exigent circumstances will likely no longer exist. Officers should thereafter secure the scene and conduct no further search until additional or alternate authority for the search is obtained, such as consent or a search warrant.

305.6.1 EVIDENCE GATHERING

The assigned officer or detective may call for assistance from the Forensic Investigations Unit to assist in the gathering of evidence and search of the crime scene. Forensic Investigations Analysts will have the responsibility and authority to document, process, and collect evidence from the scene.

Physical evidence will not be disturbed unnecessarily until it has been documented and/or photographed in place. Items that might bear fingerprints or other evidence particles shall be handled in such a way as to prevent destruction or contamination. Evidence shall be described in detail, including its location, condition, and the circumstances under which it was found, in UPD reports and Evidence forms.

Evidence must always be accounted for. An unbroken chain of custody of evidence is important in the prosecution of a case. Care should be taken to limit the number of officers in the chain and prevent the chain from being broken. Officers will document in notes and reports each “link” in the chain or changing of hands of all evidence.

305.7 CRIME SCENE LOGS

Crime scene logs will be used to record the names, organizations, arrival/departure times, and purpose of every person entering a crime scene. At incidents such as homicides, robberies, assault resulting in serious bodily injuries, Officer-involved shootings, or any other situation where it is necessary to establish a secure crime scene, a crime scene log will be employed.

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305.8 CRIME SCENE CLEAN-UP

If an officer responds to a crime scene that contains biological hazardous materials the officer may provide the property owner(s) with information for clean-up.

If the UPD is directly involved in the spill of bio-hazard material (e.g., officer-involved shooting or traffic accident), the officer(s) may provide the property owner(s) with information for clean-up and advise them to contact Risk Management for reimbursement of the cost of clean-up.

305.9 EXECUTION OF HEALTH ORDERS

Any sworn member of the UPD may assist in enforcement of orders of restriction issued by the Department of Health or local health authority for the purpose of preventing the spread of any contagious, infectious, or communicable disease (UCA 26-6b-3; UCA 26-6b-3.2).