

BATON ROUGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

General Order
No.302

Effective Date
06-01-1995

Revised Date
10-19-2009

Subject: Crime Scene

Reviewed 9/1/16

POLICY

It is the policy of this department to secure and preserve all evidence present at a crime scene. This serves two purposes: analysis of the evidence may lead to the apprehension of the perpetrator and proper presentation in court will lead to their conviction.

The department has established a Crime Scene Unit available twenty four hours a day. Also, the services of the Louisiana State Police Crime Laboratory are available for major crimes. However, due to budget and manpower restrictions, much of the evidence collection will be done by field officers and investigators.

In all cases except major crime scenes, it will be the investigating officer's responsibility to collect, preserve and package evidence located at the scene. It will also be the officer's responsibility to deliver evidence to the appropriate location, consistent with departmental policy. This includes latent fingerprints, any still or video photography, as well as other physical evidence. (Photographs will include Digital photography, Digital Video photography, Polaroid, Negative photography, VHS recordings, etc.).

As stated above, Crime Scene should be called out to major cases only. However, it should be noted that if a case arises where someone outside the Criminal Investigations Bureau deems a response by Crime Scene necessary, the following must occur. A supervisor will be responsible for requesting Crime Scene and consult with a Crime Scene supervisor to discuss the case. Major crime scene processing will take priority over all other cases.

The following procedure has been established to define areas of responsibility and regulate the instances for which specialized units are called out.

DEFINITIONS

Crime Scene

Area that contains or may possibly contain evidence related to the ensuing investigation.

Yellow Perimeter Tape

The tape that is yellow in color and identified with "Police Do Not Cross" printed on it.

Red Crime Scene Tape

The tape that is red in color and identified with "Investigator Only" printed on it.

Outer Perimeter

The area outside the crime scene used to keep the general public away from the crime scene.

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Securing of Tape

The yellow perimeter tape and red crime scene tape will be tied or otherwise secured so that it may be placed around the areas, such that persons would realize that there is one entry into the restricted areas.

PROCEDURES

I. Major Crime Scene

For the purposes of this order only, the following shall be considered major crime scenes:

- A. All criminal calls in which a death or life threatening injury has occurred.
 - 1. Life threatening is construed to mean an injury where death is imminent or a distinct probability.
 - 2. Cases where the person has died of natural causes and this fact is easily verifiable by physician or other means are not considered major crime scenes.
- B. Bank Robberies
- C. Armed robberies and simple robberies where the victim has been injured.
- D. Armed robberies where an attempted murder has occurred.
- E. Officer involved shootings.
- F. Officer involved traffic accident.
- G. Injured officer or suspect.
- H. Attempted murder of a police officer.
- I. Rape.

II. Responsibilities of Patrol Division

- A. The Uniform Patrol Division will have primary investigative responsibility for minor traffic crashes and those involving departmental vehicles. Traffic fatalities will be handled by the Traffic Homicide Division.
- B. In all other major crime scenes patrol officers will be responsible for preserving the scene until relieved by a supervisor or the investigator working the case.

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- C. The following procedures shall apply to major crime scenes:
1. Once a crime scene has been discovered or identified by a responding officer, that officer shall assume immediate responsibility for securing the scene from further contamination. The preferred method for securing the initial scene is through the use of yellow perimeter tape.
 2. The responding supervisor, investigator, or crime scene tech shall have the responsibility of identifying the crime scene by securing this specific area utilizing red crime scene tape; this may require the removal of the yellow perimeter tape. Immediate efforts should be made to keep unauthorized people out of this area.
 3. Once the total area of the crime scene is determined, the incident commander shall establish an outer perimeter, identified with yellow perimeter tape, used to keep the general public away from the crime scene.
 4. Once the red crime scene tape is in place, entry inside of the tape by officers should be made only in an emergency or by the direction of the investigator. A designated officer shall begin keeping a log of names of any and all official personnel that were present inside the crime scene prior to the erection of the red crime scene tape or any that enters after its erection. Officers in the outer perimeter that did not enter the crime scene will not be placed on the log unless instructed to do so by the investigator. The first officer to reach the scene should normally be the officer to keep the log, unless circumstances dictate otherwise. The initial officer(s) on the scene and officers assisting in securing the scene whose names appear on the log will have their presence in the crime scene documented, in a supplemental report, relative to the action(s) taken while in the crime scene, this shall include time they entered and exited the crime scene, along with the duties performed. This log shall be submitted and attached to a preliminary or supplemental report of the incident.
 5. Nothing in this policy shall restrict the action of expanding the area considered the crime scene, after its erection, as additional evidence that should be protected outside of it is located.
 6. No officer present at a crime scene shall remove, disturb, touch, alter or in any way tamper with any evidence found herein except as required by their official duties and in accordance with established departmental procedures. No officer shall photograph or record (audio or video) for reproduction anything at a crime scene except as required by their official duties.

III. Responsibility of Criminal Investigation Bureau

- A. The Criminal Investigation Bureau has primary investigative responsibility for all other major crimes. The investigator in charge will determine what evidence shall be collected and what photographs will be taken. (This will also include the acquisition of any reference samples that may subsequently be required).
- B. The investigator may request support from uniform patrol to secure the scene and will direct personnel from the Crime Scene.

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- C. It will be the responsibility of the investigator working the case to prepare the offense report of the incident as well as any investigative supplemental reports required.
- D. In the event the investigator deems necessary that additional property not directly related to the crime be tagged, he may acquire the assistance from Uniform Patrol to collect the property. This will ensure that the evidence collected by Crime Scene will be processed separately.
- E. Vehicles may be towed and stored at a selected facility for processing if the investigator deems necessary.

IV. Responsibility of the Crime Scene Personnel

- A. Personnel from the Crime Scene will be called out only on major crime scenes. The Crime Scene shall be called out only when there is evidence to collect or photographs to be taken.
- B. It is not the responsibility of Crime Scene personnel to locate evidence. The officer or investigator working the case will be in charge of the scene. He will direct Crime Scene personnel regarding what evidence shall be collected or what photographs shall be taken.
- C. Crime Scene personnel will be responsible for the collection and preservation of all physical and photographic evidence processed at a scene or for reference samples. Materials and substances collected from a known source may be sent to LSP Crime Lab for comparison with physical evidence collected, at the request of the case officer. If evidence must be subsequently transported to the LSP crime laboratory for analysis, this shall be noted and a Request for Scientific Analysis form attached.
- D. If a video recording of the crime scene is requested by the case officer, the scene will be recorded in its pristine state, noting all evidence with overall and close-up shots. Once the video is completed, overall photographs and close-up photos will be taken with or without scale and photo markers.

V. On Scene Response of LSP Crime Lab

- A. It will be the responsibility of Crime Scene personnel to analyze the crime scene and to determine if the LSP Crime lab should be called out. Under no circumstances will the LSP Crime lab be called to the scene prior to the notification of Crime Scene lab personnel.

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- B. If the scene is of such magnitude that it is obvious the LSP Crime lab will be required, the investigating officer may advise the responding Crime Scene lab officer and arrange for a simultaneous response.
- C. If a disagreement results as to whether or not on scene response by LSP Crime lab is required, the supervisor of the Detective working the case will make the decision. It will be his responsibility to justify the call out via departmental memorandum addressed to the Chief of Police.

VI. Processing Vehicles At The LSP Crime Lab

- A. If a vehicle is believed to contain evidence and the Crime Scene lab officer is unable to process it at the scene, it shall be brought to the LSP Crime lab for analysis.
- B. An official storage wrecker shall be summoned to the scene to transport the vehicle. An officer shall supervise the wrecker driver to ensure evidence is not destroyed during the towing process. If necessary, a roll back wrecker shall be used.
- C. A Request for Scientific Analysis shall be completed, entering the vehicle description where appropriate. Arrangements shall be made to notify LSP technicians of the vehicle's estimated time of arrival at the facility. All vehicles delivered to the crime lab shall be accompanied by an officer.
- D. The officer accompanying the vehicle to the lab shall complete a supplemental report to that effect. Copies of the Request for Scientific Analysis and wrecker form shall be attached to this report.