



SYKESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Crime Scene Operations

General Order 6-35 Effective: 10/11/17

Authorized by: *Michael A. Spaulding* Chief of Police

I. PURPOSE

To provide the procedures for crime scene operations by members of the Sykesville Police Department.

II. POLICY

The Sykesville Police Department will thoroughly process crime scenes, collision scenes, and the scenes of incidents in which the collection, documentation, and preservation of physical evidence is necessary.

III. PROCEDURES

- A. The primary responsibility of the first officer on the scene of any crime, motor vehicle collision, or other incident, is to make the scene safe for other officers, and/or fire rescue personnel responding to the scene. This may include stopping vehicle and pedestrian traffic in the area, securing possible weapons, and locating and securing possible suspects/witnesses.
- B. After determining the scene is safe, officers will then assist any injured person and report the number and type of injuries to dispatch for relay to fire rescue personnel. No attempt will be made to rescue or move obviously deceased persons.
- C. After assisting any injured person, the officer will then secure the scene and prevent the loss or contamination of possible evidence. This will include separating possible witnesses and suspects, establishing a perimeter, removing unnecessary personnel from inside the perimeter, establishing a security sign-in log, and denying access to unauthorized personnel.
- D. When the scene is secure, the first officer on the scene will determine the seriousness of the incident and obtain the necessary information for the report. The officer will then advise the on-duty patrol supervisor of the incident and request criminal investigators, additional evidence unit personnel, etc., as necessary. Crime Scene Investigators are available through either the Carroll County Sheriff's Office or the Maryland State Police. The availability and response time will dictate which agency to request. If a Criminal Investigator has already been requested from one of the above agencies, then crime scene processing will be accomplished by that same agency.
- E. The patrol officer or criminal investigator is responsible for all evidence he/she collects, stores (secured away from main scene), or develops through processing.

The officer will insure that all evidence he/she is responsible for is properly packaged and tagged, and that the appropriate property held report is completed.

- F. The Evidence Technician assigned to a crime scene is responsible for all evidence not previously collected or stored at the crime scene, and for processing the scene for additional evidence. Processing includes, but is not limited to, photographing, sketching, developing fingerprints, and locating and collecting physical evidence. The evidence technician will ensure that all evidence he/she collects or develops is packaged, tagged, documented, and that chain of custody is maintained.
- G. Police Department personnel assigned to process a crime scene, will conduct a primary search of the scene to obtain an overview of the situation and determine the extent of the scene and what equipment is needed. The evidence technician assigned to process the scene will determine if the scene needs to be photographed and/or sketched. If photographs or sketches are necessary, they should be done first. After primary photographs and measurements have been taken, the assigned officer will collect items of physical evidence going from smallest known item to the largest known item (when practical) in each room or area of the scene. After known physical evidence has been collected, the scene will be processed for fingerprints. Before clearing the scene the assigned officer will conduct a final search of the scene and a search of the area just outside the secured area. The processing officer will prepare a written report containing a detailed list of any items collected as evidence and the collection procedures.
- H. All evidence collected will be packaged, sealed, and preserved in accordance to procedures established and published by the Maryland State Police Forensic Sciences Division. A copy of these procedures is available through that agency.

All items submitted as evidence will be sealed in an appropriate container. The Incident Report number will be written on the container. At no time will an officer place a mark or in any way deface any item taken into Police Department custody as evidence.

I. Crime Scene Photography

- 1. All felony crimes against persons, domestic violence cases, racial, religious, ethnic hate crimes, death investigations (regardless of manner), fatal and near fatal motor vehicle collisions, motor vehicle collisions involving government vehicles, and any other incident at the discretion of the investigating officer, will be photographed utilizing the officer's assigned digital camera. The photographs shall show the perimeter of the scene to establish location, an overview of the scene from each of the four basic geographic angles (example: north, east, south, west), and close up photographs of items of specific evidence.

2. Primary photographs will be made with the scene "as is", or as the officer found it. The primary photographs will not contain any scales or other objects foreign to the scene. Officers on the scene will not in any way or for any reason replace or reconstruct any evidence or scene for any purpose. After primary photographs have been made, secondary photographs may be made with scales or identification items.
3. The officer photographing any crime scene using his/her assigned digital camera will attach the photos to the Incident Report through the RMS.
4. Incidents involving any death that will result in an autopsy being conducted at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner for the State of Maryland will likewise be photographed utilizing the officer's assigned digital camera. The photographs will show the position of the body prior to removal (if possible), the conditions of the area where the body was found, and any mechanism of injury. When possible, these photographs will be forwarded to the OCME prior to the autopsy.
5. When any member of this agency video-tapes any crime scene under active investigation, whether on or off-duty or using departmental or personal video equipment, the equipment will have its audio recording function turned off. This paragraph does not affect or prevent the use of audio and video recording of suspected intoxicated or impaired motor vehicle drivers, or interviews of witnesses or suspects. The member making the video tape will submit a supplemental report detailing the nature of the video and the nomenclature of the equipment used.

J. Latent Fingerprints

1. Processing and development of latent fingerprints may employ various techniques and supplies including but not limited to regular colored powders, bichromatic or magnetic powders, cyanoacrylate fuming, iodine fuming, ninhydrin, silver nitrate, physical developer, and use of the forensic light source.
2. Any officer or evidence technician developing latent fingerprints from a crime scene will fill-in the following information on the back of each latent print lift card:
 - a. Incident Number
 - b. Date print developed
 - c. Officer developing the print
 - d. Location print was developed

When developed prints are not able to be lifted onto latent print lift cards, the prints may be photographed with scale for submission and analysis.

3. Any officer developing latent prints will submit them to the Crime Scene Evidence Unit with a completed MSP Form 67 (chain of custody form). The developed prints will be submitted to the MSP Latent Print Unit in an approved envelope. Latent fingerprints will remain on file with the State Police and should not be entered into the Police Department Property Record system. Officers will submit known suspect information and elimination prints of known victims with the latent lift cards.
4. Officers submitting items of evidence for processing for prints will submit the item to the Crime Scene Evidence Unit with an appropriate entry in the "Evidence" section of the Incident Report. The Crime Scene Unit will determine if the item can be processed "in house" or be sent to another laboratory for processing.

K. Crime Scene Unit Equipment

1. The Sykesville Police Department will maintain a sufficient amount of basic crime scene processing supplies for the purpose of crime scene and collision scene investigation. For any serious crimes, the appropriate allied agency will be requested to perform the crime scene investigation.
2. Officers should maintain routine fingerprinting, collection, and photography supplies in their regular assigned patrol vehicles.

L. Computer Equipment

1. Whenever computer related equipment is being collected as part of an investigation, the evidence technician or criminal investigator should contact the Maryland State Police Computer Crimes Unit for instruction. If notified ahead of time, a representative from the MSP Computer Crimes Unit can respond with officers for collection, documentation, and submission of computer equipment.
2. Computer related items collected by Crime Scene or Criminal Investigations personnel should be submitted into evidence by completing the "Evidence" section of the Incident Report and marking the items appropriately for lab analysis, if required.

M. Crime Scene Reports

Sykesville Police Department personnel assigned to process a crime scene will prepare a written report using the case number assigned the original Incident

Report. In the report the officer will describe the crime scene in detail, and will describe what actions he/she took to process the scene in accordance with procedures set forth in this general order. The report will also contain a detailed list of any items collected as evidence. If the officer decided not to follow the established crime scene procedures, he/she will be required to explain what actions he/she did take and why the procedures were not followed. This is not to discourage officers from using their own judgement on how to process a scene, only to document how the scene was processed. If the scene was not processed at all, the reporting officer will be required to indicate why in his/her incident report.

Officers processing scenes for other agencies are also required to complete an Incident Report entitled "Assist other agency".

IV. CANCELLATIONS

This General Order cancels and replaces the following policies: General Order 83.2, entitled Crime Scene Operations, dated December 31, 2001.