

# BALTIMORE CITY

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# PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## GENERAL ORDER 13-16 SECTION G-9

### CRIME SCENE COLLECTION/PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE Revisions Approved: June 12, 2018

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This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. Directive
- II. Purpose
- III. Procedures
- IV. Handling Physical Evidence
- V. Handling and Packaging Special Evidence
- VI. Effective Date

#### **I. DIRECTIVE**

It is the policy of the Baltimore City School Police Force (“BCSPF”) that all sworn personnel understand and follow applicable procedures established herein to effectively protect and preserve evidence, conduct initial investigations, and perform other essential tasks at the first responding officers at crime scenes.

#### **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to provide officers with guidelines for responding to and dealing effectively with the operational demands at evidence crime scenes.

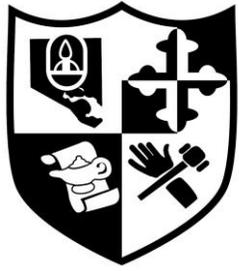
#### **III. PROCEDURES**

In order to ensure the proper preservation and collection of evidence of major crimes, the first responding BCSPF officer will request the services of the Baltimore Police Department Crime Lab. BCSPF officers must make this request through the Communications Center.

Once on the scene, the crime lab technician is in charge of the collection of evidence. The BCSPF officer should assist the technician as directed. The crime lab technician should provide written reports on all cases to which crime lab is called.

##### **A. Initial Response**

1. First responding officers shall initiate the preliminary investigation or as otherwise directed by a superior officer or until the scene is released to the BPD or other law enforcement agency of jurisdiction.



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2. Provide superior officers and BPD personnel (if applicable) arriving at the scene with complete information on the offense and the measures taken thus far by officers and others.

#### **B. Preservation of the Crime Scene**

1. Responding officers shall enter major crime scenes only for purposes of aiding victims or bystanders in need of immediate assistance, apprehending perpetrators, or securing the area.
2. Other entries shall be permitted only under the direction of a supervisor.
3. Officers making initial entries for the above purposes shall, where feasible, avoid touching, walking upon, moving objects or otherwise altering or contaminating the crime scene.
4. Define the boundaries of the crime scene to include all areas that may reasonably be searched for evidence. As necessary, considering the nature and seriousness of the crime, officers should do the following.
  - a. Request backup assistance to restrict access to the crime scene and control any onlookers.
  - b. Erect barricade tape, rope or cordon off, lock or otherwise secure the immediate crime scene and restrict access to defined crime perimeters.
  - c. Record any alterations made at the crime scene due to emergency assistance to victims, the actions of persons reporting the crime, handling of any items of evidentiary value or other actions.
5. Restrict all persons from the crime scene who are not directly involved in the investigation. In the case of homicides or other major crimes, BPD personnel shall ensure that the identities of all persons entering the crime scene are recorded.
6. Homicides and other major crime scenes should be approached only as needed in single, defined line in order to avoid destruction of footprints and other impressions and the contamination of scent trails that may be useful in canine searches. The "place last seen" of kidnapped or missing persons should also be protected in a similar manner.
7. If there is a question as to how to preserve a piece of evidence, the Baltimore Police Department Crime Lab shall be contacted.
8. All officers should have crime scene tape at their disposal.

#### **C. Collection of Evidence**

1. The Baltimore Police Department will provide crime lab technician service on 24



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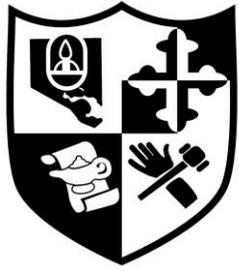
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- hour basis to process crime scenes/traffic collisions.
2. The Baltimore Police Department's crime lab technicians have access to equipment and supplies used for processing scenes for the following purpose:
    - a. Recovery of latent fingerprints
    - b. Photography
    - c. Sketch of the scene
    - d. Collection and preservation of physical evidence
  3. The collection and labeling of evidence is the responsibility of the Baltimore Police Crime Lab personnel, Crime Lab personnel are trained in the collection, processing and preserving physical evidence in the field. BCSPF officers shall not engage in collection of items of potential evidentiary value. However, each officer shall become familiar with the process of handling evidence.
    - a. When legally available, samples from known sources, i.e., suspects, should be collected and submitted with evidence samples for comparison purposes.
    - b. When it becomes necessary, a Court Order may be obtained to compel an individual to submit to the collection of evidence (blood, hair, glass, paint, etc.).
  4. When called to the scene of a crime, lab personnel shall complete the report to accurately record the events at the scene. Complete reports will include, at a minimum:
    - a. Case number
    - b. Date and time of arrival at the scene
    - c. Location of the crime
    - d. Name of the victims, if known
    - e. Name of the suspects, if known
    - f. Name of witnesses, if known
    - g. Any measurements taken
    - h. Note if any photographs taken
    - i. Evidence report(s)
    - j. Arrest report(s)
    - k. Date and time called and name of responding technician
  5. The Baltimore Police Department's Crime Lab is responsible for photographing



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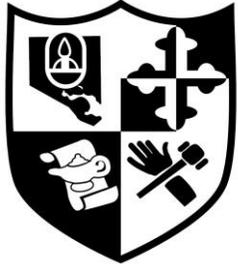
- crime scenes. In photographing the crime scene, the technician shall:
- a. Take any necessary photographs of the crime scene and/or victim.
  - b. Color photographs will be taken on all crime scenes unless black and white is specifically required.
  - c. A Central Complaint number (CC#) photograph is always the first shot any roll of film.
  - d. A CC# is included in all photographs of tire and footwear prints or imprints.
  - e. A CC# is included in all photographs of latent prints.
  - f. All photographs by number, description, and color will be recorded on the appropriate forms.
  - g. The case number, appropriate time, date, and location will be recorded on the photograph or in the report.
  - h. At all crime scenes or related service calls, the first photograph taken will be of the CC# in large script on a negative envelope.
  - i. Subsequent photographs on a roll of film will relate to this CC# until a photograph of another CC# is taken.
6. The Baltimore Police Department's Crime Lab is responsible for processing, developing, lifting, and labeling all fingerprints.
- a. All latent print and elimination's will be submitted directly to the latent finger print unit.
  - b. When latent print lifts are submitted, they are enclosed in a negative envelope stamped fingerprint lift jacket.
  - c. Complete, good quality sets (finger, tips, and palms) of elimination prints shall be taken of all persons present where latent prints are found, and forwarded to the latent print unit.

#### **IV. HANDLING PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

Officers shall not handle physical evidence unless directed by crime lab personnel or it is necessary for the protection of same. If required, officers shall proceed as follows:

##### **A. Firearms Evidence**

1. Render firearms safe by completely unloading them, prior to packaging.
2. Handle evidentiary firearms as little as possible.



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#### **B. Disarming Firearms**

1. NEVER submit a loaded weapon. If unsure how to make the weapon safe, contact the Firearms Unit.
2. ALWAYS point the firearms in a safe direction prior to disarming.
3. Some firearms require manual cycling to remove ammunition by virtue of extractors and ejectors. Extreme caution should be adhered to in these instances.
4. Pay special attention to automatic weapons. After the magazine has been removed the chamber must also be cleared.

NOTE: The disarming instructions given are not all inclusive of every style of weapon, however, the greater percentage encountered by police officers are covered.

#### **C. Packaging Firearms**

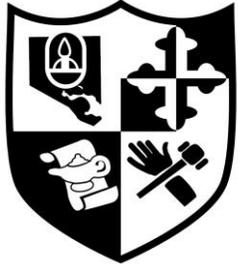
1. Do not use tape of any kind on firearms, ammunition, clips, or magazine.
2. Only one Property Evidence tag and item number is required for a firearm and any ammunition, clip or magazine contained in the firearm.
3. Place the evidence tag on the trigger guard. If the firearm is without a trigger guard, place the evidence tag around the grips of a handgun or the stock of a rifle using only evidence tag wire.
4. Do not insert any object into the barrels, cylinder, chambers, or magazine housing of the firearm. The firearm need only be unloaded completely.
5. For long guns, follow the above procedures; however, tie a clear bag containing the ammunition, clip, magazine, or other parts to the stock of the firearm.

#### **D. Loose Ammunition**

1. Bag loose ammunition in a small clear plastic bag.  
NOTE: The ammunition must not be damp.
2. Bag any clip or magazine in a separate clear bag, and then place them in a larger clear bag with the firearm and tie off the bag.

#### **E. Spent Bullets**

1. Wrap recovered bullets in soft paper and place individually in sealed and labeled envelopes.
2. Submit all evidence bullets recovered at a crime scene, or removed from bodies at the morgue or hospital.
3. Handle bullets as little as possible to prevent damage to identification characteristics



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in the rifling markings and material loss adhering to the bullet.

#### **F. Spent Cartridge Cases**

1. Mark cartridge cases with initials on the inside or outside of the open end.
2. Never mark on or near the primer end of the casing.
3. Wrap each cartridge case separately in soft paper and place the case in individual envelopes to prevent damage to breech-lock, firing pin or other markings by contact with other cartridge cases.

#### **G. Transporting Firearms**

1. All firearms shall be delivered to the Evidence Control Unit. The name of the deliverer must appear on the Property Evidence Tag.

#### **H. Money Evidence Seized**

1. Immediately notify their supervisor when money is seized during an investigation.
2. Count the money in the presence of a supervisor and, if possible, the person from whom the money was seized.

#### **I. Processing Controlled Dangerous Substances (CDS) Evidence**

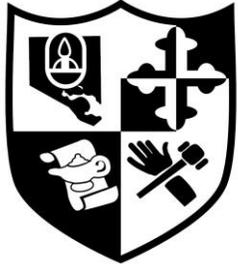
1. Hypodermic syringes with needles must be packaged in a puncture resistant container.
2. Do not bend or break the needle. All hypodermic syringes will be handled as “bio-hazard” contaminated.
3. Plant-like suspected CDS that is damp or contains moisture due to its freshness, shall be packaged in a paper bag. The chain of custody shall be maintained with a standard evidence tag.

#### **V. HANDLING AND PACKAGING SPECIAL EVIDENCE**

Officers shall not handle physical evidence unless directed by crime lab personnel or it is necessary for the protection of same. If required, officers shall proceed as follows:

##### **A. Tool Marks**

1. Evidence includes abrasions or impression left by tools on objects at the scene and various tools found in the possession of the suspects.
2. When submitting evidence for examination, wrap working surfaces of tools in heavy



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paper.

3. Evidence which cannot be readily removed (e.g., door, window, etc.) can be photographed using an inch scale card.

#### **B. Glass**

1. Keep as much of the glass intact as possible. Mark inside and outside.
2. If possible, place between two pieces of cardboard and tape securely.
3. Place clothing containing suspected glass fragments in a bag and tie securely.
4. If a possible physical match is going to be requested, obtain as much of the known glass samples as possible (e.g., glass from suspected headlight, etc.)

#### **C. Paint**

1. Place sample in an evidence fold, seal in an envelope, and mark for identification by officer (e.g., location recovered from, etc.).

#### **D. Soil**

1. Package in pill boxes or cardboard containers and seal securely.  
NOTE: Allow to air dry before sealing.

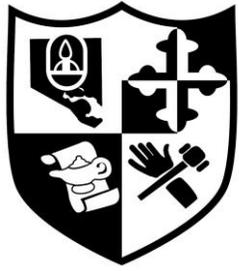
#### **E. Inhalants**

1. Evidence includes cloth, paper bags, plastic bags, and the like, which the defendant may use to inhale vapors.
2. Place evidence suspected of containing an inhalant in a clean, unlined paint can and sealed tightly.
3. Place separate items in different cans.
4. Mark each can by item number, including the officer's initials.
5. Attach a completed evidence tag to the can.

In case of spray cans or tubes containing glue, the use of the unlined paint can is not necessary, provided the original containers are tightly capped. They may be placed in a plastic bag and the evidence tag attached. In cases where there are no covers or caps available, place the items inside an unlined paint can and seal securely.

#### **F. Arson**

1. Use a clean unlined paint can to hold arson debris or any other arson evidence submitted for analysis.



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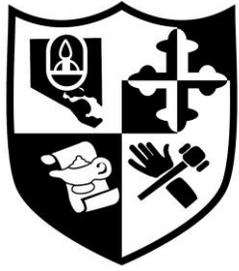
2. Mark the investigator's initials, date, and items number on the can.
3. Attach a completed evidence tag to the can along with the required forms.
4. If there are several items in a case, place them in separate cans and label properly.

#### **G. Blood and Body Fluids**

1. All blood and body fluids and all items contaminated by blood and body fluids should be treated as infectious for communicable diseases, and shall be handled with disposable gloves.
2. Packages containing contaminated items or items suspected of being contaminated shall be clearly labeled with a property evidence bag. The warning "BIO HAZARD" shall be prominently written on the outside of the packaging materials in such a fashion that anyone coming in contact with the item will be aware of the risk.
3. Packages must be marked "BIO HAZARD" include both individuals (pure) body fluid samples and items contaminated with blood or body fluids.
4. Blood and body fluids include blood, blood by-products, semen, vaginal secretions (including vaginal swabs), urine, feces, birth fluids, breast milk, mucous membrane secretions, saliva, fluids from open/weeping sores and infections, whether wet or dry.
5. Packages containing evidence found during searches of body cavities (e.g., narcotics, etc.) shall display on the outside of the package a note describing the location where the evidence was found.

#### **H. Bloodstained Evidence**

1. All items contaminated by blood and body fluids should be treated as infectious for communicable diseases, and shall be handled with disposable gloves.
2. Garments and fabrics include clothes, underwear, bed sheets, pillow cases, curtains, throw covers, etc.
3. Investigator's identifying marks should be put directly on the fabric in ink, away from the stained areas, if possible.
4. Each item should be wrapped separately using paper bags or brown wrapping paper. Never use plastic bags.
5. Wet (moist) stains must be dried out before the wrapping or putrefaction of blood will occur. Drying should be done by exposure to the atmosphere in a secure, well ventilated room not exposed to sunlight or heat.
6. On surfaces such as walls, floors, automobiles, glass, large metallic objects (e.g., car bumper, pipes, etc.) blood can be scraped off into a piece of paper and made into an evidence fold.



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7. In dirt or sand (if the blood is encrusted on the surface) place the crusts into an evidence fold and seal with a piece of cellophane tape before placing inside a pill box.

#### I. Sexual Assault Evidence

1. BPD Detectives are responsible for the investigation and follow-up of rapes, attempted rapes, 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> degree sex offenses and attempts, and sexual child abuse.
2. BPD Detectives are responsible for the proper preservation and collection of evidence in these type of cases and should follow their policies and procedures regarding evidence processing.
3. BCSPF will work with the BPD in these cases as necessary to ensure the proper preservation and collection of evidence.

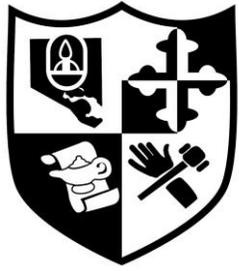
#### J. Interviewing Witnesses

1. Witnesses at the crime scene shall be identified and preliminary interviews conducted as soon as possible.
2. Similarly, the neighborhood surrounding the crime scene should be canvassed in order to identify additional witnesses or others who may have some knowledge of the crime.
3. The purpose and scope of these interviews is to gather as much basic information as possible about the crime at the earliest point possible in order to identify the perpetrator and establish the basis for follow-up investigation.

#### K. Crime Scene Reporting

Under normal circumstances, the BPD post officer shall be responsible for the initial crime/incident report of a Part I crime. In cases where a BCSPF officer was the first to arrive on the scene, they **shall complete a supplemental report** to include at a minimum:

1. Date and time of arrival at the scene.
2. Any relevant weather or situational conditions at the scene, to include the status of the crime scene upon arrival (e.g., fire, crowds, and initial observances, etc.).
3. How the crime was discovered, reported and the relationship of reporting individuals to victims or others, if appropriate.
4. Identity of other officers or emergency personnel present upon arrival and those who responded to the crime scene thereafter.
5. List of all items of evidence gathered at the crime scene, including make, model and



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- serial number if any, the source, person or location obtained from, and the name of the person collecting the item.
6. Physical evidence discovered and officers responsible for collection (special note should be made of any valuables collected at the scene, such as currency or jewelry).
  7. Name, address, and telephone number, or other appropriate identification of witnesses to the crime.
  8. Results of interviews with victims and witnesses to include in particular the identity or best possible description of suspect(s), method of operation, means of escape and other pertinent identifying information.
  9. Name of the BPD officer or detective that assumed responsibility for the investigation and the exact time this occurred.

#### VI. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Order shall be effective on the date of publication.

I certify that I have read and fully understand this Order.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_