

Study Guide: Crime Scene Procedures & Legal Considerations

Exam Preparation

- Focus on the **training objectives**—these will be on the state exam.
 - Study **bolded or italicized terms** in your lesson plan.
 - Definitions are key—expect them in test questions.
 - The exam includes **19 questions** from this section.
 - If the instructor explicitly stated, "This is a test question," it will likely appear on the exam.
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Key Topics

Legal Aspects & Crime Scene Management

1. **Consent & Legal Status**
 - Know when and how you can legally act at a scene.
 - Be familiar with **search warrants**, **exigent circumstances**, and **search incident to arrest**.
2. **First Priority on Any Call** (Test Question)
 - **Safety first.**
 - Administer emergency care if needed.
 - Secure the crime scene and limit unnecessary entry.
 - Establish a **crime scene log**.
3. **Officer Positioning at a Crime Scene**
 - **First officer:** Controls the **front left side** of the scene.
 - **Second officer:** Controls the **right side** of the scene.
4. **Roping Off the Crime Scene**
 - Give yourself **enough room** to preserve evidence.
 - Properly position **officers to maintain security**.

Crime Scene Investigation Procedures

1. **Search Methods:**
 - **Spiral** (rarely used)
 - **Grid**
 - **Strip (straight line)**
 - **Quadrant/Zone**

2. Handling & Collecting Evidence

- Different **types of evidence** collected for different crimes (e.g., sexual assault vs. property crime).
- **Proper packaging:** Paper is preferred except for specific cases.
- **Fingerprinting Methods:** Gel lifters, fingerprint powder, and micro-silver—know when to use each.

3. Crime Scene Documentation

- **Photography:** Follow proper sequence; include a ruler for scale.
- **Video Recording:** **Mute the audio** to avoid capturing unintended conversations.
- **Crime Scene Sketching:** Know triangulation, rectangular coordinates, and baseline methods.

4. Entry into the Crime Scene

- **Walkthrough Objectives:**
 - Identify **potential evidence**.
 - Establish a **safe path** to avoid contamination.
 - **Mentally reconstruct** events to verify statements.

Witnesses, Statements & Interviews

1. Three Basic Sources of Statements:

- **Witness**
- **Victim**
- **Suspect**

2. Show-Up Identification

- Bring the **witness to the suspect**, not the other way around.

3. Discovery Process:

- **Required case documents:**
 - Incident report
 - Supplements
 - Chain of custody records
 - Witness statements
 - Field notes

Death Investigations

1. **First Priority in Unknown Death Cases**
 - **Identify the victim.**
2. **Postmortem Changes:**
 - **Rigor Mortis:** Muscle stiffening.
 - **Livor Mortis:** Settling of blood (**postmortem lividity**).
3. **Understanding MO (Modus Operandi)**
 - Helps **predict future actions** and **link suspects to other crimes**.

Surveillance & Digital Evidence

1. **Purpose of Surveillance:**
 - **Gathering information** (not just evidence).
2. **Handling Digital Evidence:**
 - Always **turn off** electronic devices before transporting them.

Crime Scene Protection

1. **Why Protect the Scene?**
 - Prevent **destruction or removal** of evidence.
 - Prevent **introduction of new evidence** that could compromise the case.
2. **Locating Witnesses:**
 - Canvassing the area.
 - Checking for surveillance footage.

5 W's + 1 H for Investigations

1. **Who**
 2. **What**
 3. **When**
 4. **Where**
 5. **Why**
 6. **How**
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Final Exam Tips

- Everything in the **lesson plan** is fair game for the test.
- The topics covered above have historically appeared on past exams.
- Focus on **definitions**, **legal concepts**, and **procedural steps**.
- If it was emphasized in class, study it!

Class Review Summary

Exam Preparation

- **Training Objectives:** Focus on anything listed in the training objectives—these will be on the state test.
- **Key Areas to Study:**
 - Definitions
 - Bolded or italicized terms in lesson plans
 - Anything the instructor explicitly mentioned as a test question
- **Test Details:** The exam will have **19 questions** from this block.

Important Topics

Legal Aspects

1. **Consent:** Understanding legal status at a scene—what you can and cannot do.
2. **Search Warrants:** Be familiar with:
 - **Exigent circumstances**
 - **Search incident to arrest**
 - **Consent searches**
3. **First Priority on Any Call: Safety** (This is a test question).
4. **Scene Management:**
 - Administer emergency care if needed.
 - Protect the crime scene (limit unnecessary entry).
 - Establish a crime scene perimeter.
 - Keep a **crime scene log**.
 - Ensure officers take **proper positions** (First officer: front left; Second officer: right side).
 - Rope off enough space to prevent evidence contamination.

Crime Scene Procedures

- **Search Methods:**
 - **Spiral** (rarely used)
 - **Grid**
 - **Strip (or straight line)**
 - **Quadrant/Zone**
- **Handling Evidence:**
 - Know what evidence to collect for different crimes (e.g., **sexual assault vs. property crime**).
 - Proper **packaging** (paper is preferred except for specific exceptions).
 - **Fingerprinting Methods:** Gel lifters, fingerprint powder, micro-silver (know when to use each).
 - **Types of Evidence:** Physical, digital, circumstantial, testimonial.
- **Crime Scene Documentation:**
 - Proper **photography sequence** (include a scale like a ruler).
 - Crime scene **videoing** should be **muted** to avoid capturing unnecessary audio.
 - Required details on **photographs** introduced as evidence (location, case number, officer name, etc.).
 - **Sketching Techniques:** Triangulation, rectangular coordinates, and baseline methods.

Witness & Suspect Interactions

- **Statements & Interviews:** Three basic sources:
 - **Witness**
 - **Victim**
 - **Suspect**
- **Eyewitness Testimony:** Least reliable type of evidence—people misremember details frequently.
- **Show-Up Identification:** Witness is brought to the suspect, not the other way around.
- **Discovery Process:** Case file should include:
 - Incident report
 - Supplements
 - Chain of custody records
 - Witness statements
 - Field notes

Death Investigations

- **First Step:** Identify the victim.
- **Postmortem Changes:**
 - **Rigor mortis:** Muscle stiffening.
 - **Livor mortis:** Settling of blood (also called postmortem lividity).
- **MO (Modus Operandi):** Understanding a suspect's pattern can help predict future actions.

Surveillance & Digital Evidence

- **Purpose of Surveillance:** Gathering information (not just evidence).

- **Handling Digital Evidence:** Always **turn off** electronic devices before transporting them.

Final Exam Tips

- **Crime Scene Entry Procedures:**
 - Walkthrough to:
 - Identify **potential evidence**.
 - Establish a **safe path**.
 - Mentally trace events to compare with witness statements.
- **Crime Scene Protection:** Prevent destruction or removal of evidence.
- **Locating Witnesses:** Surveillance footage, canvassing the area.

5 W's + 1 H for Investigations

1. **Who**
2. **What**
3. **When**
4. **Where**
5. **Why**
6. **How**

Everything in your **lesson plan** is fair game for the test, but these are the key areas they historically focus on.