



Sheridan Police Department
Policies and Procedures
28.1
Chapter 28 – Call Response
Section 1 – Criminal Investigations

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Signature:

The Sheridan Police Department shall conduct investigations into criminal offenses occurring in the community. The primary purpose of an investigation is to collect facts leading to the identification, arrest, and conviction of an offender and to organize and present the facts for a successful prosecution. The department recognizes successful investigations require training, experience, intelligence, logic, and discipline and expects officers to develop these skills.

28.1.1 Initial Responsibilities

- A. The first officer at the scene of a crime has several immediate responsibilities.
- B. Officers who first arrive at a possible crime scene must take care not to enter hastily. The crime scene may pose a threat to the officer and others that are present:
 - 1. Armed suspects may still be at the scene;
 - 2. Toxic chemicals or infectious materials may be present; or
 - 3. Evidence may be destroyed if the officer enters.
- C. When practicable, officers shall first note the total environment of the scene including, for example, whether doors and windows are open or closed, lights on or off, presence of odors, weather conditions, and the condition and circumstances of the victim.
- D. As the officer approaches the scene, he or she should observe and make notations of persons and vehicles in the general area. This information may provide important investigative leads. If persons are seen leaving the scene, attempts to obtain identification should be made by responding officers.
- E. The first officer on the scene shall attempt to maintain the scene as closely as possible in the condition which it was found. This means that no one shall be allowed to needlessly move about or alter the scene. Persons present, victims or witnesses, shall be isolated or removed from the scene in order to prevent intentional or inadvertent alteration or destruction of evidence.
- F. The first officer on the scene shall render first aid or summon emergency medical treatment if required.
- G. Officers entering a crime scene should activate their body worn camera, if applicable.

28.1.2 Preliminary Investigations

- A. After forming an impression of the entire scene and ensuring that no threat exists, the officer shall proceed with the preliminary investigation.
- B. Officers and/or detectives assigned to conduct preliminary criminal investigations shall include the following actions as part of their investigation:

1. Establish whether a crime has been committed and determine the type of crime and how it was committed;
 2. Define the boundaries of the crime scene and protect it to ensure that evidence is not lost or contaminated;
 3. Develop information through examination of the scene;
 4. In eyewitness cases, secure a description of the suspect, any vehicle involved, and direction of flight. Relay the information to all other units by radio or mobile data terminal. If possible, identify the suspect and take appropriate enforcement action;
 5. Locate and interview the victim and witnesses, record their statements as to what occurred and record their identity, addresses or other necessary data for future reference;
 6. When appropriate, conduct a canvas to ascertain if residents or others in the vicinity have pertinent information.
 7. When appropriate, conduct a canvas to ascertain if any cameras in the vicinity have pertinent footage.
 8. Interrogate suspects; and
 9. Effect the arrest of the criminal.
- C. Occasionally, additional investigation will be required at the end of the shift of the assigned officer. In these cases, the on-duty supervisor shall determine whether the investigation should be discontinued until the assigned officer's next shift, or assigned to the next available officer or a detective. Request for further investigation or follow-up should be made by the on-duty shift supervisor directly to the supervisor of the on-coming shift. Requests should also include a written list of the requested actions to be taken by the next shift to advance the investigation. If a supervisor feels an investigation needs to be transferred to the Criminal Investigation Division the procedure outlined in policy shall be followed.
- D. The on-duty supervisor shall ensure that an adequate and complete preliminary investigation has been made.

28.1.3 Crime Scene Processing

- A. Officers shall search for and collect evidence or likely evidence.
1. In any criminal investigation, the validity of information derived from examination of the physical evidence depends entirely upon the care with which the evidence has been protected from contamination. It is important that items of evidence be collected, handled, and stored in a way that will ensure their integrity, and increase the likelihood that the items will be considered admissible in court proceedings.
 2. Evidence is to be collected, marked and secured according to department procedures . In all cases, no evidence will be collected until photographs and/or video media have been taken. BWC footage does not replace the need for photographs.

28.1.4 Detective Response to Serious Crimes

- A. Certain offenses may require the assignment of a detective to assume responsibility for the investigation or to provide assistance to the assigned patrol officer..
- B. The decision to involve a detective will be based on the nature of the skills and the time required to conduct the investigation.
- C. A detective will be available twenty-four (24) hours a day to assist in an investigation or aid in the processing of a crime scene. When a detective is not on scheduled duty a designated

officer will be “on call” to take detective calls. The detective on-call schedule will be documented on the department electronic scheduling (Schedule Soft) and maintained by the special operations bureau commander or their designee. In the event the on-call criminal investigator is unavailable, the special operations bureau commander will be contacted.

- D. Supervisors are responsible for making the decision to involve a detective. Patrol Officers are not to forward their cases directly to CID for follow-up. Supervisors should consider calling a detective for involvement in high profile cases, serious felonies, and any cases which may require extensive follow-up or expertise. In some circumstances it may be unclear to the supervisor if a detective is needed to immediately respond. Supervisors should err on the side of contacting the on-call detective. Specific cases in which a supervisor should consider a detective’s involvement are;
 - 1. Forcible sexual assault
 - 2. Child sexual assault
 - 3. All unattended deaths / suspected suicides
 - 4. Homicide / Manslaughter
 - 5. Aggravated assault
 - 6. Arson / Explosions
 - 7. Officer involved shooting
 - 8. Kidnapping
 - 9. Armed Robbery
 - 10. Major burglaries
- E. When a supervisor is considering to involve a detective, they shall complete the following seven point assessment in deciding if a detective is needed:
 - 1. Synopsis of report origin (to include where and when the offense was committed).
 - 2. Specific crimes that have been committed.
 - 3. Injuries or damages reported.
 - 4. Potential for future injuries or damages.
 - 5. Suspect information.
 - 6. Whether or not probable cause currently exists for an arrest, and a summary of that probable cause.
 - 7. Follow-up investigation required (tasks to complete, resources needed, and estimated time required)
 - a. Unless urgency of the situation dictates otherwise, the supervisor will type out answers to the seven point assessment, and email them to the detective at the time of the call-out.
 - b. Unless urgency of the situation dictates otherwise, the supervisor will personally contact the detective to notify them of the decision to involve a detective.
 - c. Anytime a major incident, detailed in 28.1.4.D, occurs outside of regular business hours, the above seven point assessment will be completed and forwarded up the chain of command for notification purposes, whether or not a detective is requested.
- F. After a supervisor has called a detective the chain of command will be notified:
 - 1. The detective will notify the special operations bureau commander
 - a. If not available, the detective will notify the patrol operations bureau commander.

2. The special operations bureau commander will be responsible for any needed further notifications..
 3. Notifications will be made as soon as necessary, depending on the seriousness, urgency, and complexity of the call. When in doubt, making notifications should be made as soon as possible..
 4. Notifications should include the email containing the seven point assessment.
- G. Major felony investigations may require a number of different investigative responsibilities to be assigned. Major investigative assignments may include::
1. Team Leader - The Team Leader will:
 - a. Coordinate team efforts so that a complete and thorough investigation is accomplished;
 - b. Contact other personnel to assist with various duties as needed;
 - c. Keep the command staff informed about the specifics of the investigation;
 - d. Monitor the investigation to ensure that all leads are exhausted and the case is properly submitted for prosecution; and
 - e. Be familiar with technology available to the investigators as well as other resources that could assist in the investigation.
 2. Photographer(s) - The photographer will be familiar with up-to-date procedures and equipment for taking quality photographs. The photographer's duties include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Photographing and videotaping the crime scene, including bystanders and vehicles in the area;
 - b. Photographing and videotaping all items relating to the crime; and
 - c. Documenting the photographs taken and cross referencing them with the crime scene diagram.
 3. Diagram - The persons assigned to complete a crime scene diagram will have a working knowledge of the professional procedures for crime scene diagramming and documentation of evidence locations. This person's duties include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Diagramming the crime scene; and
 - b. Documenting within a diagram of the crime scene the location of all evidence and other pertinent information.
 4. Evidence - The persons assigned to collect evidence will be familiar with accepted procedures for the collection, preservation, and storage of all types of evidence, including fingerprints, trace evidence, and DNA. The evidence collector's duties include, but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Collect evidence after ensuring that the evidence has been photographed and, when applicable, included in a diagram;
 - b. Locate and recover latent as well as visible prints;
 - c. Take tool, foot, and tire impressions;
 - d. Ensure that all evidence is properly packaged and secured for later use in the investigation or court proceedings; and
 - e. Ensure that evidence requiring laboratory analysis is properly packaged and submitted for analysis.
 5. Lead Runner(s) - Lead runners will be those individuals assigned to follow active leads throughout the investigation. The coordinator will assign leads.

6. Interviewer(s) -- The interviewers will know the best interview and interrogation techniques and will be proficient in their uses. They will work with the coordinator to determine what interviews are to be performed and will determine the best interview strategies to fit each particular situation.
7. Neighborhood Canvasser(s) - Those assigned to conduct neighborhood canvasses will be familiar with the various techniques for large and small area canvasses and searches. The canvassers should:
 - a. Be familiar with proper interviewing techniques;
 - b. Ensure that all persons in the canvass area are contacted, including those who may have been in the area on business (i.e. - mailman, UPS, meter-reader, etc.); and
 - c. Document in detail who was contacted and the results of each contact.

28.1.5 Follow-Up Investigations

- A. The follow-up investigation is an extension of the preliminary investigation. The purpose of the follow-up is to provide additional investigation in order to affect the arrest of an offender and/or recover stolen property.
- B. Officer or detective follow-up investigation responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:
 1. Research and review internal and external records and reports related to the incident, similar incidents or suspects;
 2. Initiate inquiries into investigative leads to identify the suspect;
 3. Continue the search for witnesses, interview new witnesses and re-interview original witnesses when necessary;
 4. Conduct or initiate appropriate surveillance;
 5. Conduct searches for evidence through warrants or consent of persons involved;
 6. Interrogate those who may be suspects in the case;
 7. The suspect's criminal history should be checked to determine involvement in similar cases;
 8. The use of a photo-lineup may be necessary to form a positive identification of the suspect;
 9. Determine suspect involvement in any other crimes; and
 10. Prepare the case for presentation to the prosecutor or recommend suspension of the investigation if all leads are exhausted.