1-35 CRIME SCENE SPECIALISTS UNIT

Related SOP(s), Form(s), Other Resource(s), and Rescinded Special Order(s):

A. Related SOP(s)

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<td>Collection, Submission, and Disposition of Evidence, Confiscated and</td>
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B. Form(s)

- Permission to Search for Body Samples
- PD 4201 Request for Forensic Service
- PD 4201B Chain of Custody for In-Person Transfers
- PD 4202 Laboratory Firearms Evidence Trace Request
- PD 4204 Cartridge Placement Guide

C. Other Resource(s)

- None

D. Rescinded Special Order(s)

- None

1-35-1 Purpose

It is the purpose of this policy to provide the Crime Scene Specialist (CSS) Unit with procedures on how to recognize, identify, and collect forensically significant evidence at crime scenes.

1-35-2 Policy

It is the policy of the Albuquerque Police Department (Department) to have the Crime Scene Specialists (CSS) Unit personnel properly collect, preserve, and recognize evidence on a timely basis by following approved procedures. Procedures will be updated based on court decisions about rules of evidence, the latest technology available, and best practices.

1-35-3 Definitions

A. Crime Scene Specialist (CSS)
A Department civilian employee is responsible for recognizing, collecting, and preserving all forensically significant evidence at crime scenes and properly submitting that evidence to Scientific Evidence Division (SED) personnel for analysis.

B. Life-threatening Injury

Any injury that involves serious physical harm that may result in significant or permanent disfigurement or the loss of a major bodily organ or function, including, but not limited to, the loss of a limb, paralysis, or the loss of eyesight, that may necessitate medical or surgical intervention to prevent permanent impairment; that could potentially cause a significant reduction in the quality of life; or that has the likelihood of causing death.

C. Serious Crimes Call-Out

A serious crimes call-out is generated when an individual sustains a life-threatening injury that creates a substantial risk of death, causes death or serious and protracted disfigurement, or causes impairment of the function of any bodily organ or limb.

1-35-4 Duties and Responsibilities

A. Criminalistics Lieutenant

1. The Crime Scene Investigations Section Lieutenant will report to the Commander of the SED.

2. The Crime Scene Investigations Section Lieutenant will have supervisory responsibility for the CSS Unit supervisors, Property Crime Reporting Technician supervisors, the Major Crime Scene Team (MCST) Sergeant and the Photo Lab Forensic Photography Unit supervisor.

B. Crime Scene Specialist Unit Supervisor

1. The CSS Unit supervisors will report directly to the Crime Scene Investigations Section Criminalistics Lieutenant.

2. The CSS Unit supervisor’s primary responsibility is to ensure the services delivered by the CSS Unit are of the highest possible quality.

3. The CSS Unit supervisors will maintain quality control by regularly monitoring their personnel.

   a. The supervisor conducts random inspections of evidence submitted by the CSS Unit to the Evidence/Disposition Unit to verify evidence is properly.
i. Proper marking, initialing, and tagging;
ii. Proper packaging and preservation; and
iii. For proper photographs, are of high quality and follow the proper procedure.

b. The supervisor conducts a regular formal inspection of personnel, vehicles, and CSS Unit equipment.
   i. CSS Unit and vehicles shall be inspected monthly.
   ii. Vehicle inspection forms shall be forwarded to the Crime Scene Investigation Section Lieutenant each month.
   iii. Repair and maintenance of CSS Unit equipment shall be coordinated through appropriate SED personnel.

C. Crime Scene Specialist (CSS)

1. The CSS members will work shift hours that fulfill the needs of the section to provide the most efficient coverage of calls on a city-wide basis.

2. The CSS’s duty hours will be flexible to meet the needs of the department.

3. The CSS members will respond to violent crimes first, property crimes second, and administrative assignments third.

4. At the request of the Emergency Communications Center (ECC), CSS Unit members shall respond to crime scenes involving, including, but not limited to, the following, although but not limited to:
   a. Unexpected deaths that are unnatural in nature;
   b. Serious injury calls;
   c. Armed robberies;
   d. Criminal sexual penetration crimes;
   e. Discharge of duty weapon, except for training purposes;
   f. Fatal and serious injury crashes;
   g. Domestic violence calls;
   h. Property crimes:
      i. All levels of use of force and shows of force calls, consistent with SOP Use of Force—Review and Investigation by Department Personnel;
      j. Gunshot detection system follow-up canvasses, consistent with SOP Gunshot Detection Procedure;
   k. Homicides;
   l. All felonies involving forensically-significant evidence; and
   m. Any crime scene, as requested by Department SED supervisors.

5. The CSS shall assist patrol officers, Field Services Bureau (FSB) sworn personnel, or detectives from other units to identify crime characteristics or special circumstances that exist.
6. The CSS shall assist other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies as approved by the CSS Unit supervisor.

7. The CSS shall assist and/or train personnel in crime scene procedures.

8. The CSS shall assist the Major Crime Scene Team (MCST) at crime scenes, as required.
   a. The CSS shall identify the inner crime scene perimeter and secure it with red crime scene tape.

9. Monitor radio calls while at crime scenes to assure availability in case of emergency situations.

10. If a Field Services sworn supervisor is unavailable, the CSS shall respond for the purpose of photographing the alleged injuries of all sworn personnel, suspects, and/or prisoners involved in resistance in any manner which would require a Level 1 use of force report, consistent with SOP Use of Force—Review and Investigation by Department Personnel.

11. The CSS shall maintain a weekly and monthly worksheet.

12. The CSS shall write Uniform Incident Reports and Supplemental Reports on all CSS Unit calls for service when evidence is collected. If evidence is not collected, the CSS Unit personnel will notify the officer-sworn personnel taking the initial report to reference in their report that no evidence was collected. The CSS Unit personnel will also add remarks to their call indicating whether or not evidence was collected and what type of evidence.

### 1-35-5 Rules and Procedures

A. CSS Unit personnel shall follow all guidelines in SOP—Collection, Submission, and Disposition of Evidence and Property.

B. Use of Evidence Storage Lockers:
   1. The CSS shall provide twenty-four (24)-hour evidence storage lockers are provided in the triage room of the Metropolitan Forensic Science Center (MFSC or “Crime Lab”).
   2. The CSS shall fill out the evidence storage locker logbook also located in the MFSC triage room.
3. The CSS shall place all items of evidence, confiscated property, and found items will be placed in the triage room evidence storage lockers at the MFSC by the end of their shift.

4. The CSS is responsible for collecting evidence, property, or found items and is will be held responsible for the proper preservation and safeguarding of evidence until it has been turned into the MFSC triage room.

5. Only items of evidence that physically fit into the locker should be deposited. Any items that do not fit in the locker shall be placed in the triage room.

6. To facilitate special needs during closed hours, the ECC Communications Section will have a call-out list of Evidence/Disposition Unit personnel who are on-call.

7. Evidence deposited in the evidence storage locker shall will be tagged properly.

8. CSS Unit personnel and Evidence Room Evidence/Disposition Unit personnel will enter into the evidence management system the evidence that is deposited and retrieved complete the evidence log upon each deposit and retrieval of evidence from the evidence storage locker.

C. Dispatching the Crime Scene Specialist Unit

1. CSS will be dispatched to:
   a. Homicides;
   b. Unexpected or unnatural deaths; and
   c. All felonies involving forensically significant evidence.

2. CSS Unit personnel calls (10-64) shall will be prioritized using the following guidelines:
   a. Priority 6: Fatal vehicle crashes; juvenile calls with serious injury; and violent crimes resulting in great bodily injury or death, which is required to and needed to determine if a Major Crime Scene Team (MCST) Serious Crimes call-out is needed.
   b. Priority 7: Unless there is an articulate reason for deviation, or as directed by an SED supervisor, the following calls should be dispatched in the listed order: Violent crime (aggravated battery) which will not result in an MCST call-out, suicides, suspicious unattended/unexpected deaths.
      i. Gunshot detection (ShotSpotter);
      ii. Serious injury;
      iii. Use of force;
      iv. Show of force;
      v. Criminal sexual penetration;
      vi. Juvenile calls without serious injury;
      vii. Suicide;
viii. Domestic violence;
ix. Unattended or unexpected death; 
x. Felonies involving evidence collection; and 
b.xi. Property crime.
c. Priority 8 - Calls where an officer is standing by (use of force, recovered stolen 
vehicle, domestic violence, etc.). 
d.c. Priority 8: 
i. Processing a warrant; 
ii. Accidental discharge of a weapon or intermediate weapon system by sworn 
personnel; and 
ii.iii. Photo call only or comments are left when an officer leaves the scene.

e. If there is only one CSS on duty, that CSS shall not be dispatched 
to a burglary property crime call.

i. CSS Unit personnel should not be dispatched on primary calls if there is no 
offender information (i.e., name and date of birth). 
b. CSS Unit personnel should not be dispatched to any burglary property crime 
where the possibility exists that an offender may still be present, the location 
has a direct hazard, or other unsafe situations exist.

ii.

3. CSS Unit personnel shall not clear for lunch or log off if a 10-64, Priority 6 or 
Priority 7 call is holding, unless cleared by their supervisor.

3.4. When a CSS Unit personnel is dispatched to a call they believe to be inappropriate, the CSS they shall try to resolve the matter 
through their chain of command.

4.5. A CSS Unit personnel shall notify the on-duty CSS Unit supervisor or SED 
supervisor Sergeant by radio or cell phone on the nature of the following calls:

a. Homicide; 
b. Suicide; 
c. Shootings; 
c.d. Stabbings; 
d.e. All Department personnel (sworn and civilian) injured or killed; 
e.f. A request for service by outside agencies; 
f.g. Child abuse calls; and 
g.h. Any call potentially that may be widely of a potentially 
sensational nature.

D. Crime Scene Specialist Unit Training
1. The CSS Unit personnel training program will expand the knowledge of evidence procedures in the areas of all of the forensic disciplines provided by the SED.

2. Training shall be implemented where needed to ensure a high level of expertise among CSS Unit personnel.

3. Supervisors assigned to the SED shall identify areas where individual personnel need improvement to maintain the highest proficiency.

4. Training shall be implemented to improve skills as needed.

5. SED personnel shall provide on-the-job training as needed for individuals new CSS Unit personnel.

6. Refresher courses shall be provided to all CSS Unit personnel as a means of maintaining overall proficiency.

E. Due to the possibility of significant psychological trauma caused by the investigation of violent crimes, CSS Unit personnel shall attend a Behavioral Health Wellness Sciences Section (BSS) appointment biannually.