



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
INVESTIGATIVE BUREAU ORDERS

SOP 5-8

Effective: 01/12/18 Review Due: 01/12/19 Replaces: 11/19/15

## **5-8 CRIME SCENE SPECIALISTS**

### **5-8-1 Purpose**

The primary function of the Crime Scene Specialist (CSS) will be the recognition, identification, and collection of physical evidence at crime scenes.

### **5-8-2 Policy**

The CSS activities will be coordinated with the needs of Field Services personnel. CSS supervisors will maintain functional control of the CSS.

The CSS training program will expand the knowledge of evidence procedures in the areas of all of the forensic disciplines provided by the Scientific Evidence Division (SED).

Proper collection, preservation, and recognition of evidence will be on a timely basis and in accordance with approved procedures. Procedures will be updated based on court decisions pertaining to rules of evidence, the latest technology available and best practices.

Training will be implemented where needed to ensure a high level of expertise among CSS personnel. Supervisors assigned to the SED will identify areas where individual personnel need improvement to maintain the highest proficiency. Training will be implemented to improve skills as needed. SED personnel will provide on-the-job training as needed for individuals. Refresher courses will be provided to all CSS personnel as a means of maintaining overall proficiency.

Communication will be maintained between all investigative divisions in an effort to coordinate services with ongoing criminal investigations. Information will be disseminated that will assist in completing investigations.

### **5-8-3 Definition**

#### **A. Crime Scene Specialist (CSS)**

A civilian (CSS) employee charged with the responsibility of recognition, collection and preservation of physical evidence at crime scenes and the proper submission of that evidence to SED Personnel for analysis. Crime Scene Specialists are responsible for all CSS activities as outlined in the program.

### **5-8-4 Duties and Responsibilities**

#### **A. Lieutenant**

1. The Crime Scene Investigations Section Lieutenant will report to the Commander of the Scientific Evidence Division



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2. The Crime Scene Investigations Section Lieutenant will have supervisory responsibility over the CSS supervisors, Property Crime Reporting Technician Supervisors, the Major Crime Scene Team sergeant and the Photo Lab supervisor.

B. Supervisor

1. The CSS supervisors will report directly to the Crime Scene Investigations Section Lieutenant.
2. CSS supervisor's primary responsibility is to ensure that the services delivered by the CSS are of the highest possible quality.
3. CSS supervisors will maintain quality control by regularly monitoring their personnel.
  - a. Random inspections of evidence submitted by CSS to Evidence.
    - i. Proper marking, initialing and tagging.
    - ii. Proper packaging and preservation.
    - iii. Proper photograph quality and procedure.
  - b. Regular formal inspection of personnel, vehicles, and CSS equipment.
    - i. CSS and vehicles will be inspected monthly.
    - ii. Vehicle inspection forms will be forwarded to the Crime Scene Investigation Section Lieutenant each month.
    - iii. Repair and maintenance of CSS equipment will be coordinated through appropriate SED personnel.

C. Crime Scene Specialist

1. CSS members will work shift hours that fulfill the needs of the section to provide the most efficient coverage of calls on a citywide basis.
2. Duty hours will be flexible to meet the needs of the department.
3. CSS members will respond to violent crimes first, property crimes second and administrative assignments third.
4. CSS members will respond to crime scenes involving the following, although not limited to:
  - a. Deaths that are not expected and are unnatural in nature or serious injury calls.
  - b. Armed Robberies
  - c. Criminal Sexual Penetration crimes
  - d. Discharge of duty firearm, except for training or recreational purposes.
  - e. Fatal and serious injury crashes.
  - f. CSS should not be routinely dispatched to misdemeanor calls, with the exception of domestic violence calls.
  - g. As requested by Albuquerque Police Department personnel.



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5. Assist patrol officers or detectives from other details to identify MO's or special circumstances that exist.
6. Assist other agencies on approval of the CSS supervisor.
7. Be able to assist or train personnel in crime scene procedures.
8. Assist the Major Crime Scene Team at crime scenes as required.
9. Will monitor Radio calls while at crime scenes to assure availability in case of emergency situations.
10. In the event that a Field Services Supervisor is unavailable, CSS will respond for the purpose of photographing the alleged injuries of all. Officers, suspects, and/or prisoners involved in resistance in any manner which would require a use of force report.
11. CSS will maintain a monthly worksheet.
12. CSS will write reports on all CSS calls for service when evidence is collected. If evidence is not collected the CSS will notify the officer taking the initial report to make reference in his/her report that no evidence was collected. The CSS will also add remarks to their call indicating whether or not evidence was collected and what type of evidence.

**5-8-5 Rules and Procedures**

A. General Investigations

1. Collection of biological evidence at a crime scene
  - a. If the sample is moist, a sterile swab can be used to collect the sample.
  - b. If the sample is dried, the sterile swab should be moistened with distilled water to collect the sample.
  - c. All biological evidence shall be packaged in paper.
  - d. Photos should be taken with and without an indicator prior to collecting.
  - e. A service request shall be submitted to the proper SED unit for analysis.
2. Collection of DNA based on a search warrant or consent
  - a. If cooperative, the CSS will simply ask the donor to open their mouth and perform a buccal swab.
  - b. If uncooperative and a warrant is in place, officers may have to restrain the subject so a buccal swab can be performed.



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3. Photographs

- a. When needed, overalls, mid-range and close-ups should be taken at crime scenes (with and without indicators).
- b. When photographing injuries, photographs shall be taken with and without scales.
- c. CSS will not put more than one incident on any one memory card.

4. Latent Fingerprints

- a. Due to the lack of actionable evidence, as a normal practice, exterior latent fingerprints are not collected from non-point of entry locations or exterior point of entry locations, for auto burglaries and auto thefts. However, crime scene investigators should use discretion, based upon their training, experience and the evaluation of other circumstances of the investigation, and proceed with the collection of non-point of entry or exterior point of entry location latent fingerprints, if appropriate, on a case-by-case basis or upon the request of a supervisor.
- b. Elimination prints should be taken from victims for use by latent examiners.

5. Proper PPE should be worn when the possibility exists of coming into contact with bodily fluids.

6. The standard indicator system should be used when documenting all crime scenes, as described below:

- |                    |                          |                   |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| a – cartridge      | g – glass                | m – miscellaneous |
| b – blood          | h – hair and other trace | n – drugs         |
| c – cartridge case | i – bullet hole (or      | p – bullet        |
| cl – clothing      | impact site)             | s – DNA swab      |
| d – documents      | k – knife                |                   |
| f – firearms       | l – latent work needed   |                   |

B. Vehicle Crashes and Auto Theft

1. Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes

- a. A CSS will respond to the scene if assistance is requested.
- b. The CSS will photograph the scene.
  - i. Injured parties will be photographed.
  - ii. Vehicles and evidence will be photographed.
  - iii. Photographs will also be taken at driver's eye level to indicate approach path of all vehicles.
- c. The Office of the Medical Investigator will be responsible for obtaining inked fingerprints of the decedent if necessary.
- d. The CSS will assist the crash investigator as needed, working as a team.



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2. Crashes Involving City Vehicles

- a. Field Services Supervisors should take photographs.
- b. The CSS will respond to the scene if the city agency involved does not send a photographer and if the damage is significant or the injuries are severe.
- c. Photos of the scene will be taken from long, medium, and short range, including close-ups of damages.

3. Auto Theft/Recovered Stolen Vehicles

- a. Take overall photographs of the vehicle, if necessary (extensive damage).
- b. Take close-up photographs of damages to the vehicle, including damage to the ignition.
- c. Photograph all evidence prior to collection.
- d. Process the vehicle and evidence for latent fingerprints (see 5-8-4-A-4) and possible biological evidence.
- e. Collect and preserve all evidence.
- f. The CSS will fill out a service request form for analysis of evidence by SED personnel if necessary.

C. Towing and Sealing of the Vehicle(s)

1. A CSS will process the exterior and seal the vehicle.
2. The CSS will follow the wrecker to the Metropolitan Forensic Science Center to allow access through the gates only if involving homicide, life-threatening injuries, criminal sexual penetration, or robbery.
3. Unless inside storage is necessary, vehicles are to be parked on the west side of the vehicle exam area, or on the east side of the garage doors.
  - a. Do not park the vehicle on the red access panel or behind the crime van.
4. The CSS will complete all information on the Vehicle Board located inside the garage before leaving.

5. Vehicle Processing Timeframe

- a. Vehicles must be processed within 48-hours, excluding weekends.
  - i. If it is not, it will be towed to the original wrecker company's yard.
  - ii. The Case Agent must contact a Criminalistics supervisor with the information.
- b. Vehicles towed on a Friday must be processed by 1600 hours the following Tuesday.

6. Post Vehicle Evidentiary Processing



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- a. After processing, the original wrecker company will be contacted to tow the vehicle to their yard.
- b. Arrangements to release the vehicle to the owner will not be made by APD personnel because towing charges need to be paid by the owner.

D. Crimes Against Children and Sex Crimes

1. Child Abuse

- a. The CSS will notify his/her supervisor if available.
- b. The CSS will photograph the suspected abused child with the exception of the male/female genital area to include the anus. If abuse is suspected in this area, the SANE Unit, Para Los Ninos, or the Child Abuse Response Team (CART) will be contacted to obtain these photographs.
- c. Close-up photographs will be taken of any injuries on the child especially pattern-type injuries. Photos will be taken with and without scales.
- d. The CSS will photograph the environment where the child was found.
- e. If the child may die, notify his/her supervisor or the Major Crime Scene Supervisor on-call of the situation. They will make the determination to begin the callout procedure.
- f. Photographs should be taken of parents or responsible adults and examined for injuries or bruising, i.e. bruised hands. Photos will be taken with and without scales.
- g. Children's bodies decompose faster than adults, so OMI will remove the body upon their arrival. In order to preserve evidence, the CSS will take photos of the body's position prior to removal by OMI.

2. Criminal Sexual Penetration

- a. The CSS will proceed to the location of the victim to photograph and collect or ensure the collection of physical evidence unless they have been transported to the S.A.N.E facility. The CSS will document, by name, what person evidence is received from if the CSS does not witness the collection.
- b. The CSS will find out if the location of occurrence can be identified.
  - i. If so, the CSS will completely process the scene for latent and other evidence including all biological evidence (hair, blood, semen, trace, etc.)
    - The location of physical evidence will be photographed with and without indicators.
    - If the CSS is unable to tag into Evidence the piece of cloth or article which has bodily fluids on it, the same procedure for collecting blood will be used.
  - ii. Photograph the crime scene in its entirety (overalls).
  - iii. The victim and his/her injuries should be photographed.
  - iv. Scales should be used when photographing pattern-type injuries.
  - v. Photos should be taken of the offender if possible.
  - vi. Determine if the victim is wearing the same clothing as when the attack took place, if not, try to find both sets and tag both.
  - vii. Biological evidence that has been dried may be tagged into Evidence. No liquid items should be frozen, i.e., blood tubes.



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E. Violent Crime Scenes/Unexplained Death

1. A CSS shall be dispatched on any violent crime or unexpected, unnatural death.
  - a. Upon arrival, the CSS shall have initial authority over the crime scene.
  - b. The CSS will contact the initial officer to determine the circumstances, in order to establish the property boundaries and secure all evidence associated with the crime scene.
  - c. All unauthorized personnel will be cleared from within the crime scene boundaries. The CSS may request additional assistance from other officers in securing the boundaries.
  - d. In cases of suspicious unexplained death, the CSS will contact the OMI. The CSS may consult with the OMI investigator about the determination.
  - e. The CSS supervisor will be notified of the situation and extent of injuries.
  - f. If the injuries are life threatening, or resulting in death, the responding CSS, after consulting with a CSS supervisor, will determine if there is a need for the Major Crime Scene Team (MCST), and if so, initiate an MCST call-out. The CSS will also notify Radio Control of life threatening injuries or death.
  - g. The victim will not be removed from the scene prior to the investigation if he/she is declared dead at the scene by medical personnel.
  - h. If the victim was transported to the hospital, is being treated and is still alive, the CSS supervisor will notify Radio Control. Radio Control will initiate a Violent Crimes call out.
  - i. In the event the victim of a violent crime has died as a result of their injuries at the scene, during transport to a hospital, or at the hospital during the initial assessment of the call, a CSS Supervisor will notify Radio Control and a Homicide call out will be initiated.
  - j. Regardless of investigative case responsibility, the Major Crime Scene Team is responsible for processing the entire scene.
  - k. The CSS shall take overall photographs of the crime scene area from outside the crime scene boundaries.
  - l. The CSS will photograph persons, vehicles, and other objects that he/she deems necessary. If the victim will be moved before the arrival of the Major Crime Scene Team, an attempt should be made to photograph the victim's position in order to preserve evidence.
  - m. The CSS will brief the CSS supervisor and Major Crime Scene Team personnel upon their arrival.
  - n. For non-life-threatening injuries, the CSS will process the crime scene.

F. Apparent Natural Death

1. Crime Scene Specialists will not be dispatched to apparent natural death calls.
  - a. OMI will be notified and respond to all apparent natural death calls. If OMI finds the death suspicious in nature, then a CSS will be dispatched.



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G. Suicide

1. A CSS will be dispatched to all suicide calls.
2. The Crime Scene Specialist will be responsible for the collection and preservation of evidence, and for requesting evidence analysis by personnel at the Crime Lab.
3. The dispatched officer may request that the CSS collect any other evidence that may be pertinent to the investigation.

H. Robberies/Burglaries

1. Process the point of entry and exit for latent prints.
2. Check point of entry and exit for other trace evidence, such as hair or fibers.
3. Process items touched or handled by the offender for latent prints.
4. Photograph the scene, if necessary, using long, medium and short range. Evidence will be photographed both with and without indicator cards prior to collection.
5. The CSS will submit a Service Request Form, if needed, to SED personnel for analysis of evidence.
6. Paper items handled by the offender will be tagged into evidence and a service request form filled out for latent print processing by the Latent Print Detail.
7. The CSS will identify, collect, and properly package and preserve all evidence, including blood, clothing, weapons, etc.

I. Use of Force

1. A CSS may be called to photograph use of force incidents.
2. On any claims of excessive force, unnecessary force, alleged injury, injury of prisoners, and all prisoners arrested for resisting arrest, officers will request either a Field Supervisor who has been issued a camera, or a CSS to take the photographs.
3. If the suspect has been transported to the Prisoner Transport Center (PTC), the PTC Sergeant or other PTC personnel will take the photographs.
4. A CSS will be called to take photographs on any battery or injury of a police officer.
5. The digital images will be tagged into evidence.

J. Photographing of Prisoners





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1. The CSS will note the prisoner's name, arresting officer's name, the date and time that the photographs were taken on the photo envelope.
2. The digital images will be tagged into the evidence management system and then stored in the Forensic Photography Unit.
3. A report will be generated.
4. If the prisoner refused to be photographed, the CSS will take only those photographs possible without forcing the prisoner.

K. Evidence

1. Tagging Evidence

- a. All evidence will be tagged into evidence using the OIM at any police substation or the Metropolitan Forensic Science Center.

2. Evaluation of Evidence Submitted to SED

- a. When a problem dealing with evidence is encountered, the SED personnel will bring the problem to the appropriate SED supervisor. The CSS supervisor will counsel the CSS on the problem and seek a long-term solution to the issue at hand.
- b. The CSS supervisor will use the information for counseling, retraining, evaluations, and any disciplinary action needed.

3. Use of Refrigerator and Evidence Storage Lockers

- a. In order to provide 24-hour evidence storage, evidence lockers have been provided in the triage room of the MFSC.
- b. CSS will fill out the evidence logbook also located in the MFSC triage room.
- c. All items of evidence, confiscated property and found items will be placed in the triage room lockers at the MFSC by the end of their tour of duty.
- d. CSS collecting evidence, property, or found items will be held responsible for proper preservation and safeguarding of evidence until it has been turned into the MFSC triage room.
- e. Only items of evidence that will physically fit into the locker should be deposited.
- f. To facilitate special needs during closed hours, the Communications Section will have a call-out list of Evidence personnel on-call.
- g. Evidence that is deposited in the locker will be tagged properly.
- h. CSS and Evidence Room personnel will complete the evidence log upon each deposit and retrieval of evidence from the locker or refrigerator.

L. Dispatching CSS

1. CSS will be dispatched to:



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- a. Homicides
- b. Unexpected or unnatural deaths.
- c. All felonies involving physical evidence.

2. CSS calls (10-64) will be prioritized using the following guidelines:

- a. Priority 4 - Violent crime resulting in great bodily injury or death and needed to determine if a Major Crime Scene Team call-out is needed.
- b. Priority 5 - Violent crime (aggravated battery) which will not result in a MCST call-out, suicides, suspicious unattended/unexpected deaths.
- c. Priority 6 - Calls where an officer is standing by (use of force, recovered stolen vehicle, domestic violence, etc.).
- d. Priority 7 - Photo call only or comments are left when an officer leaves the scene.
- e. CSS may be dispatched to burglary calls if no 64 calls are holding, but the last in-service CSS should not be dispatched to a burglary call.

- i. CSS should not be dispatched to any burglary where the possibility exists that an offender may still be present, the location has a direct hazard or other unsafe situations exist.

f. CSS will not clear for lunch or log off if a 10-64 priority 4 or 5 call is holding, unless cleared by their supervisor.

g. CSS will not log 61 during the last hour of their shift without supervisor approval.

3. When a CSS is dispatched to a call that the CSS believes to be inappropriate, the CSS will try to resolve the matter through their chain of command.

M. CSS to Notify Sergeant/Supervisor on Specific Calls

1. A CSS will notify the on-duty CSS supervisor by radio or cell phone on the nature of the following calls:

- a. Homicide
- b. Suicide
- c. Shootings, stabbing
- d. Department personnel injured or killed
- e. Requests for service by outside agencies
- f. Child abuse calls
- g. Any call of a potentially sensational nature