



OFFICER
MEDIA GROUP

OFFICER.COM

OFFICER
THE OFFICIAL MEDIA GROUP OF THE POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

BASIC CRIME SCENE SAFETY

What everyone
needs to know
before approaching
a scene.



LOCARD'S Principle: If you touch a surface at a crime scene, you will take a trace element with you and leave one behind.



- ▶ Maintaining safety at crime scenes is imperative and there is never an excuse for not adhering to proper protocol. In this course we will discuss the potential hazards that may be present at a crime scene as well as what steps should be taken to remain safe and what equipment you should always have with you at every scene.

WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE GOAL OF LAW
ENFORCEMENT EACH DAY?
MAKE IT HOME SAFELY.



Definitions of crime scene, protocol, hazard, biohazard.

Crime scene: a location where a criminal activity occurred.

Protocol: standard policy regarding a particular order to handle a situation.

Hazard: a dangerous object or situation that could result in harm.

Biohazard: a biological danger that may be visible or invisible.



- ▶ Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): particular equipment or gear made to keep exposure and contamination at bay.
- ▶ Types of PPE: gloves, puncture proof gloves in some cases, booties, Tyvek suit, goggles, masks (N95 or respiratory depending on the situation). These are the most common types of PPE.

DID YOU KNOW BOOTIES ARE NOT ONLY FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION BUT CAN ALSO KEEP YOU FROM CONTAMINATING THE SCENE? THEY ARE ALSO GREAT RESOURCES FOR TRACE EVIDENCE AND SHOULD BE COLLECTED.



DISPOSABLE BOOTIES

- ▶ Potential Crime Scene Hazards:
- ▶ Poor air quality
- ▶ Syringes and other sharp objects
- ▶ Biohazards, biohazards, biohazards!
- ▶ Unknown weapons (or unknown status of weapons such as loaded guns)
- ▶ Drugs such as Fentanyl
- ▶ Toxins-fumes, etc.
- ▶ Lack of scene security





SAFETY FIRST! MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ALL OF YOUR GEAR ON!



BIOHAZARDS WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR AND HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF



Any biohazards that are collected should be placed in a biohazard bag. If sharps are found such as syringes, if they are not of any evidentiary value they need to be properly disposed of. If other items are collected that have any type of biohazards material on them they must be labeled as such for the protection of any one handling the evidence.



TYPES OF BIOHAZARDS:

BLOOD

BODY FLUIDS-URINE, FECES, SEMEN, VAGINAL FLUID

SHARP OBJECTS WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN USED FOR INJECTION

TOXIC FUMES

Always wear gloves!

In some instances you should
double glove.





DRUGS TO WATCH OUT FOR:

- CHEMICALS ASSOCIATED WITH METH
- FENTANYL
- ANY TYPE OF UNKNOWN NARCOTIC



SECURITY CONCERNS AT CRIME SCENES

This is another topic that should be addressed before even approaching the crime scenes. A crime scene should always be made safe before it is processed. Responding officers must clear the house or area to ensure there are no threats. Also, officers should be stationed as security in the event someone attempts to tamper with the scene or in case the suspect returns to the area.



The reason for crime scene security is to protect the investigators working the scene as well as the evidence that is inside the crime scene. It is a common occurrence where the perpetrator will return to the scene. Whether this is out of pure curiosity or it is with a specific motive in mind, it happens more often than you would think.

One example, I was working a homicide scene that had taken place in an RV park and while I was on location, the suspect's brother drove by several times and officers had to deter him from returning. For this reason and for overall security in general, there is always at least one, (if not more), officer guarding the area. Never let your guard down at a crime scene no matter what your role is. Just because the crime already took place, doesn't mean another one can't occur.



PPE-GLOVES

GLOVES SHOULD BE WORN AT ALL TIMES AT A CRIME SCENE. THIS IS SO THAT YOU DON'T CONTAMINATE ANY PART OF THE SCENE AND YOU ARE ALSO PROTECTED FROM HARM.



Disposable gloves-
protects against most biohazards.

Note: there are different “grades” of gloves to consider as well based on thickness and material: latex, nitrile, etc.



PUNCTURE RESISTANT GLOVES



These are great to have around for those scenes that are more than likely to contain sharps.



RESOURCES:

[HTTPS://WWW.EVIDENCEMAGAZINE.COM/INDEX.PHP?OPTION=COM_CONTENT&TASK=VIEW&ID=1622](https://www.evidencemagazine.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1622)

[HTTPS://WWW.CRIME-SCENE-INVESITGATOR.NET/HAZARDS.HTML](https://www.crime-scene-investigator.net/HAZARDS.HTML)

[HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/DOCUMENTS/SCIENTIFIC/CRIME_SCENE_AWARENESS_EBOOK.PDF](https://www.unodc.org/documents/scientific/crime_scene_awareness_ebook.pdf)

Above are a few articles to look at that entail the necessity for safety at all crime scenes.



MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE EVIDENCE AT THE CRIME SCENE IS ALSO PART OF CRIME SCENE SAFETY.

You are at the scene to help preserve evidence that may lead to an arrest. Make sure the evidence itself is not tampered with and the proper personnel arrive to process the scene. (this is also why a crime scene log is very important)



ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR CRIME SCENE SAFETY AND SECURITY:

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=EUFHXRIWSCU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUFHXRIWSCU)

CREDIT: YOUTUBE/HOSEI IMAGING

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=KVQR-TAIS14](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVQR-TAIS14)

CREDIT: YOUTUBE/FUTURE LEARN



CONCLUSION:

REMEMBER TO ALWAYS BE ON THE LOOK OUT FOR POTENTIAL HAZARDS. SITUATIONAL AWARENESS SHOULD BE JUST AS APPARENT AT A CRIME SCENE AS IT IS ON THE STREET.