



USING THIS GUIDE

This companion Learner's Guide is intended to assist in the delivery of the video material in an interactive and thought-provoking manner. It provides suggestions to help facilitate most sections of the video. The goal is for the learner to engage in consideration of the topic and how it relates to them and to their agency. The guide may be used by persons of all experience levels to help them get the most out of the material.

VIEW THE VIDEO

To access this video online, visit the [POST Learning Portal](#).

ABOUT THIS VIDEO

This training program is designed to enhance the ability of California's first responders to identify, collect, and preserve evidence at crime scenes in support of the judicial process. This program is targeted toward field personnel who are looking for a broader understanding of key concepts and techniques that will enhance their approach to crime scene processing and additional avenues of collaboration.

Program segments include the initial investigation, evidence identification, evidence documentation, collection, and preservation of crime scene evidence, as well as collaboration with local forensic personnel and other jurisdictions.

This program uses scenarios, discussion, and subject matter interviews to highlight key points throughout the lesson.

GUIDE CONTENTS

The learner should review all video and guide materials in this course. This guide may be used for additional resources and information. At the conclusion of the facilitated discussions, learners should focus on resources available for affected personnel and any specific agency policies related to the subject.

Program Overview

Lists the main teaching points and provides general information that is examined in greater detail within each scenario.

Chapters

Each chapter features a brief overview and Key Learning Points to assist with quick review of the material during presentation.



KEY LEARNING POINTS

CHAPTER 1 INITIAL INVESTIGATION

Officers are dispatched to an unknown circumstances call, arrive, clear the scene, and begin identifying evidence.

The initial approach to a scene is critical for evidence and case outcomes.

- Prioritize subject description.
- Evidence is critical in determining crime types and suspect intent.
- Interview witnesses early.
- Open-ended & Clarifying Questions:
 - Basic interview tactics are paramount in information collection.
 - Proper foundational questions positively affect the course of the investigation.
- Interview timeliness affects information detail.

Fresh crimes require additional considerations:

- treatment of injuries
- deteriorating evidence
- suspect location
- available resources allocation

Reassessing investigative approaches is necessary throughout an investigation.

- Ensure you have legal right to location.

Available databases offer differing values and timeliness for investigations.

- AFIS versus CODIS



CHAPTER 1 INITIAL INVESTIGATION

SUGGESTED
FACILITATION
QUESTIONS AND
COMMON RESPONSES

How can bias affect an investigation?

- May lead to unreasoned conclusions.
 - Quick decisions may limit the boundaries both physically and mentally to a particular outcome.
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How would a rapid suspect description and establishing containment aid the investigation?

- Improve opportunities for suspect apprehension.
 - Reduce detention of wrong suspect.
 - Improve utilization of resources.
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How would you approach a scene differently if you were approaching tactically, versus approaching with a forensic mindset?

- Tactically: Looking for people, weapons, and things that can injure or hurt you.
 - Forensically: Where you step, see, and things that may inform you how the incident occurred.
 - Knowing that you will change the scene and minimizing that change.
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What efforts aid you in approaching every crime scene objectively?

- Open mind
 - Constantly asking questions
 - Repetition of consistent good collection and identification habits
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How would your scene arrival and search have been different from the officers?

Answers will vary.

What specific recording devices in the area may have additional evidence?

- Doorbell and surveillance cameras
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Describe how regularly reassessing your approach during an investigation is beneficial.



KEY LEARNING POINTS

CHAPTER 2 – EVIDENCE IDENTIFICATION

Officers display initial evidence identification and processing with shoe tracks found on scene.

Identify All Possible Evidence

- Deteriorating evidence needs prompt protection and processing.
- Body-worn cameras allow scene walkthrough narratives.

Transfer of Evidence (Locard's Exchange Principle)

- Careful to prevent bringing trace evidence into scene.
- Mindful to minimize impact of investigator's presence.

Start Outside, Work Inward

- Once established, a crime scene perimeter cannot be expanded so start big.

Accidental Evidence

- Photographing early aids in a scene's visual preservation.
- Items may become more significant as the investigation develops.

Approach Methodically with an Open Mind

- Evidence discovery affects ongoing interviews.
- Be willing to re-evaluate assumptions.

Forensic Thinking

- Thinking forensically is critical before and during investigations.
 - Awareness of evidence processing practices enhances investigative practices.
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CHAPTER 2 – EVIDENCE IDENTIFICATION

SUGGESTED FACILITATION QUESTIONS AND COMMON RESPONSES

What is the single most important step in evidence?

- **Identifying** evidence
No seizing, processing, packaging, etc. happens if it's not identified.
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Describe "forensic thinking."

- The crime; thinking about M.O.s
 - Types of physical evidence and how it links people to the incident
 - Instruments of the crime, understanding how it all can be used later
 - Knowing ahead of time what types of evidence to look for
 - Knowing how an item should be documented, collected and preserved
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What photographic and scene processing equipment should be accessible to initial investigators?

Digital Camera, Markers, Lighting equipment
(May vary by agency ability/budget)

How would your initial scene processing differ from the officers?

Answers will vary.

Describe various situations where evidence transfers at a scene.

- During a walkthrough
 - During collection
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CHAPTER 3 – SCENE DOCUMENTATION

KEY LEARNING POINTS

Officers working on-scene display teamwork in managing the critical aspect of documentation in scene processing.

Teamwork on-scene is often most effective.

Overlap photographs and take many.

The first on scene has the greatest opportunities for evidence identification.

Document evidence in its initial state.

Methods of video recording vary and may include a walk-through with or without audio narration.

Prioritize perishable evidence.

Write down notable observations using all five senses including:

- smells like chemicals, drugs, or cigarette smoke, body odors,
- sounds like music w/ volume, dogs barking, etc.
- weather conditions, time of day, lighting

Sketches highlight important elements in a scene in relation to each other including elevation.

Video documentation before and after all work is recommended.



CHAPTER 3 – SCENE DOCUMENTATION

SUGGESTED FACILITATION QUESTIONS AND COMMON RESPONSES

Describe specific search areas needing processing and documentation:

- Overall house exterior,
- Fence w/ both sides
- Flowerbed tracks
- Tracks leading to entry
- Entry point/wall
- Interior wide
- Interior room
- Interior evidence items

Describe when should video/photographic documentation of a scene occur?

- Initial scene: Initial items and then during in-progress processing e.g., with #cards
- As new evidence is identified
- Prior to breaking down/leaving the scene

What are some benefits to the team approach of evidence documentation?

- A second set of eyes may see something.
- Discussion allows analysis and refinement of approach.

What are some "downstream" benefits to video of a crime scene?

- Shows relationships between items
- Narrative helps observer see what investigator sees
- May pick up accidental evidence
- Allows Judicial System to interact and view crime scene

What conditions could warrant prioritizing the processing of perishable evidence?

- Time, wind, rain, and heat, or the threat of any of these conditions are examples.



CHAPTER 4 – EVIDENCE COLLECTION

KEY LEARNING POINTS

Officers begin packaging evidence from the scene, including duct tape and a sample for DNA processing.

Objectivity is required to find available evidence.

Seizure and packaging protocols are paramount in evidence collection.

Proper evidence handling requires investigators to work within their training and capabilities.

Elimination prints should be considered where fingerprints are evidence.

Legible, consistent, and detailed labeling is essential for an investigation.

Be methodical and consistent in collection practices.

“Tag and Bag,” not “bag and tag.”



CHAPTER 4 – EVIDENCE COLLECTION

SUGGESTED
FACILITATION
QUESTIONS AND
COMMON RESPONSES

Identify the risks that come with glove use.

- Wiping away evidence
 - Introducing contaminants
 - Removing trace evidence
 - Taking hazards with you
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Describe the considerations that exist for collecting blood evidence.

- cross-contamination
 - elimination samples
 - packaging to protect sample
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Why should gloves come straight from the box rather than out of a pocket or pouch?

- cross-contamination w/DNA
 - cross-contamination with trace evidence from outside scene or other scenes
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What measures to protect the evidence did these officers display?

- Careful with moving in and out of crime scene
 - Used good glove protocol
 - Worked as a team to tag and bag
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How can a single officer best manage cross-contamination concerns while packaging evidence?

- Same methodical practice w/documentation every case
 - Follow good glove protocol
 - Prepare all supplies then collect
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Why is it important to utilize a consistent packaging system?



CHAPTER 5 – EVIDENCE PRESERVATION

KEY LEARNING POINTS

Evidence is transferred into a property room where processing options are discussed.

The overall purpose of evidence is to determine truth.

Proper storage helps preserve evidence.

Packaging in Paper vs. plastic bags.

Gloves, shoe covers, Tyvek® suits protect both you and the evidence from contamination.

Glove management protects against inadvertent contamination of crime scene.

How to protect against what you might contribute accidentally.

CODIS hit versus a Case-to-Case hit.



<p>SUGGESTED FACILITATION QUESTIONS AND COMMON RESPONSES</p>	<p>CHAPTER 5 – EVIDENCE PRESERVATION</p> <hr/> <p>What details are included with crime scene log?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All persons within the scene • Purpose in the scene • Time in and out • Documentation on collection if any <hr/> <p>How can case-to-case "hits" occur and aid in investigations overall?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking cases based on a DNA profile • CODIS hit to a known offender <hr/> <p>What are the benefits of a DNA exclusionary sample?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes "unknown (officer)" profile from evidence submitted to national • Removes known persons at scene (like victim) from evidence submitted to national • Is maintained in local database • Shortens number of profiles submitted • Helps clean up 'mixed' sample <hr/> <p>What is the chain of custody?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From identification, to documentation, collection, processing, storage, and eventually presentation during judicial process accounts for an item of evidence. <hr/> <p>Who can assist you with identifying additional evidence-processing options?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local lab and technicians • Regional lab and technicians <hr/> <p>What is your policy on documenting the transfer of custody?</p> <p>Answers will vary.</p> <hr/>
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Explain the evidence storage issues within your patrol car needing mitigation?

- Locked cases
 - Vehicles get hot
 - Shared fleet key between units
 - Who else can access the item?
 - Was this the item you collected?
 - Loose items may damage packaging
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Describe actions you take to prevent unnecessarily contributing evidence to a scene.

- Double gloving and proper glove handling
 - Preventing additions to scene w/ control
 - Boot/shoe covers
 - Tyvek® suit or equivalent
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<p>KEY LEARNING POINTS</p>	<p>CHAPTER 6 – COLLABORATION</p> <p>During patrol briefing, the supervisor reviews evidentiary issues and commends an officer's efforts that identified a suspect in other cases.</p> <hr/> <p>Evidence can link different crimes, not just suspects.</p> <hr/> <p>Good investigative procedures can aid well beyond a single case.</p> <hr/> <p>Criminals travel interjurisdictionally.</p> <hr/> <p>Trace evidence may build patterns.</p> <hr/> <p>Databases like AFIS, CODIS and NIBEN can connect cases.</p> <hr/> <p>Understand evidence analysis requirements and collaborate w/ crime lab.</p> <hr/>
<p>SUGGESTED FACILITATION QUESTIONS AND COMMON RESPONSES</p>	<p>What is the power of forensic evidence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forensic evidence connects cases and crimes together even when no apparent connection exists. <hr/> <p>How does collaborating with your forensic staff assist in investigations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understanding of capabilities of the lab • Improving collection and communication <hr/> <p>Describe a case where your actions benefitted beyond the single incident. Answers will vary.</p> <hr/> <p>Describe the status of local inter-jurisdictional investigative relationships. Answers will vary.</p> <hr/>



How can you enhance collaboration with your local crime lab?

- Request a tour.
 - Speak with field personnel and lab personnel.
 - Request guidance.
 - Ask questions.
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**CONCLUSION****After completing this course, learners should better understand:**

- Interview Witnesses Early,
 - Prioritize Suspect Description,
 - Use Open-ended and Clarifying Questions,
 - Know your Legal Right to Access Location,
 - Benefits of AFIS versus CODIS,
 - Constantly Reassess
 - Identify All Possible Evidence,
 - Transfer of Evidence,
 - Start Outside Work Inward,
 - Accidental Evidence,
 - Approach Methodically,
 - Use Forensic Thinking
 - Document in Original State,
 - Have a Method for Recording,
 - Overlap Photos,
 - Prioritize Perishable Evidence,
 - Notable Observations,
 - Sketch Important Elements,
 - Before & After Videos.
 - Clear, Detailed Labelling,
 - Careful Handling of Evidence,
 - Make the Best of a Mess,
 - Photos: Large, Scale in Frame,
 - Tag Then Bag,
 - Use Teamwork When Possible
 - Set a Large Perimeter,
 - Entry Log: Time in/out Reason,
 - Proper Storage for Preservation,
 - Use & Dispose PPE Properly,
 - ID Systems: CODIS, AFIS, NIBIN,
 - Exclusionary DNA Sample
 - Inter-Jurisdictional Collaboration
 - Forensics As a Case Management Tool
 - Database systems connect cases
 - Consult Forensic Personnel
 - Understand Evidence Analysis Requirements
 - Collaborate with Crime Lab(s)
 - Be aware of Lab Capabilities
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