

Crime Scene and the EMS Professional



Drew Fried, EMT-CC
Certified Healthcare Safety
Professional

Crime Scene

- A Crime Scene is
 - The area of response that involves the commission of a crime
 - Involves any area that leads to and from the scene
 - Any area that involves physical evidence such as a weapon or blood
 - **CRITICAL FACTOR** - Emergency Responders have a major role in assisting law enforcement with identifying and preserving evidence, but must not lose sight of patient care.

EMS at Crime Scenes

- The goal of performing EMS at crime scenes is to provide high-quality patient care while preserving evidence.
- NEVER jeopardize patient care for the sake of evidence. However, do not perform patient care with disregard for the criminal investigation that will follow.
- Be aware you may have to justify your actions to Law Enforcement and the District Attorney after the fact.

Scene Safety

- Ambulance or rescue crews may arrive before police.
- **MAKE SURE** the scene is safety to enter.
- Determine if the scene is a crime scene.



Scene Safety

- If the scene is safe to enter
 - Do so carefully
 - Attempt not to disturb anything
 - Remember patient care comes first
- ***Critical Factor:*** Do not become so involved with the scene that the patients suffers.

Crime Scene Entrance

- When you enter
 - Be observant to your surroundings
 - Make a mental note as to the location of the patient, any blood, weapons, or articles of clothing that seem out of place.

Crime Scene Entrance

- At times it may be necessary to move furniture to gain access to the patient
 - Note where furniture was
 - Where it was moved to
 - Any physical evidence moved and who moved it.

Crime Scene Documentation

- Describe EMS Observations of the Scene
 - Patient position
 - Injuries
 - Conditions at scene
 - Lights
 - Curtains
 - Signs of forced entry
 - Statements of persons at scene
 - Statements of patient

Crime Scene Documentation

- Described the evidence that was moved
 - Note the size, shape, color, and
 - How the evidence was moved and by whom.

Critical Factor. As the first responder on the scene your observations are important, so you might need to sketch the scene.

Securing the Crime Scene

- In most cases securing the crime scene is easy
 - Just close the door
 - Use barrier tape
 - Do not use anything from the scene



Securing the Crime Scene

- After you have secured the crime scene no one should be allowed to enter until PD arrives
- This includes your partner, your supervisor, and other emergency responders

Working the crime scene

- Avoid contaminating the crime scene
 - Do not walk through any body fluids that have collected at the scene
 - Do not place equipment in body fluids.

Critical Factor: This will contaminate the scene and evidence



Working the Crime Scene



- Protect physical Evidence
 - This includes clothing you need to remove to treat the patient
 - Red bag all clothing separate from other bio hazard waste
 - Cut around blood not thought it
 - Turn over to law enforcement as soon as possible

Working the Crime Scene

- Do not smoke or use ash trays
- Do not use the toilet or telephone
- Do not run water in the sink

- This might all seem like common sense but it has happened and scenes have been contaminated



Evidence Preservation by Emergency Responders

- Minimize the number of people working in the area
- Check the soles of boots or shoes when personnel exit the scene for blood and other fluids.

Arrival at the Crime Scene

- Do not lose sight that patient care comes first
- Make sure the scene is safe
- Look at the scene and make a general impression of the scene and patient
- Look at the scene for weapons, odors, and body fluids



Scene Size Up

- Ensure the scene is safe
- Take body substance isolation and PPE protection
- Identify the MOI
- Number of Patients
- Determine the need for additional resources
- Determine need for C-Spine precaution
- **PROVIDE PATIENT CARE**

Critical Factor

- An initial scene size up should include a basic crime scene evaluation
- Look for
 - Chemicals on scene
 - Debris fields
 - Suspicious persons
 - Odors
 - Weapons
 - Devices

Case Study



WMD Crime Scene Scenario

**U.S.
Department of
Homeland Security**



Crime Scene Video Review

- Dispatcher failed to gather all available information about the scene
- Second caller was not given a chance to relay important information
- First unit failed to establish command
- No initial size up was completed
- Firefighters sprayed down lab and equipment
- EMS entered without SCBA
- Clothing from victim taken from scene by EMS
- Medics threw away receipts

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- Law enforcement failed to secure scene
 - Law enforcement failed to question bystanders
 - Additional resources should have been requested sooner

- Drew Fried
defried@optonline.net