

# CRIME SCENE REMINDER CARD



## "Interview, Examine, Photograph, Sketch, Process"

### PRIMARY SCENE

### SECONDARY SCENE

#### *BURGLARY CHECK LIST*

- |                              |                                      |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Photograph                | 7. Fingerprints (Latents)            |
| 2. Tool Marks                | 8. Glass Standards                   |
| 3. Paint Standards           | 9. Soil Standards                    |
| 4. Safe Insulation Standards | 10. Hairs and Fibers                 |
| 5. Foot Prints               | 11. DNA                              |
| 6. Tire Tracks               | 12. Other evidence relative to crime |

#### *HOMICIDE CHECK LIST*

- |                                |                                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. 1-11 on Burglary Check List | 8. Clothing of Suspect              |
| 2. Hair Standard               | 9. Other evidence relative to crime |
| 3. Fingernail Scrapings        | 10. Weapons                         |
| 4. Blood Standards             | 11. Major Case Prints               |
| 5. Blood Sample (Scene)        | 12. Identification Photos           |
| 6. Close-up Photos of wounds   | 13. Attend Autopsy/Collect Evidence |
| 7. Clothing of Victim          |                                     |

#### *SEXUAL ASSAULT CHECK LIST*

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Clothing of Victim     | 8. All Bloodstains  |
| 2. Clothing of Suspect    | 9. Bed Linens   |
| 3. All Stains Present     | 10. Latent Prints   |
| 4. Location of Occurrence | 11. Hairs and Fibers                                      |
| 5. Sexual Assault Kit     | 12. DNA   |
| 6. Suspects Standards     | 13. If forced entry include 1-9<br>on burglary check list |
| 7. Fingernail Scrapings   |   |



## **The Reminder Card Explanation**

**By Hayden B. Baldwin**

The crime scene reminder card was designed by me several years ago, back then we called it a "Crime Scene Check List Card". But the reality of it is that it is not a "check list" in the sense that you need to have one of each item before you leave the crime scene but simply a reminder list to make sure you didn't forget something! So therefore the name changed from a Check List card to a Reminder card.

The front of the card has printed on it "Interview, Examine, Photograph, Sketch, Process". This is the simplified version of the steps in processing a crime scene.

### **Crime Scene Processing Protocol**

In the endeavor of completing a work task certain criteria to complete the work task is needed. Crime scene processing is no different in that respect than to other work related tasks such as exchanging a motor in a car, painting a landscape scene or preparing a meal. There are certain tasks related to each work objective. In the field of crime scene processing several books have been written on what these tasks are and how they should be incorporated into the field of crime scene processing. Yet each book varies only in the technique used, not in a change of the basic protocol used for the processing of crime scenes.

A few years ago I attended a lecture on "25 Ways to process a crime scene." It was probably the most boring lecture I've attended in years, but it did highlight one point that most of us have taken for granted. How do you explain to someone the mechanics of thoroughly processing a crime scene? It sounds simple, but in fact crime scene processing is a very intricate and interwoven multiple task function. It is difficult to explain to someone the exact protocol that will be used at every crime scene. Each crime scene is different and

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may require a different approach to processing the scene. However there is a basic crime scene protocol that should be adhered to in all crime scenes. These basic functions or tasks are as follows: INTERVIEW, EXAMINE, PHOTOGRAPH, SKETCH and PROCESS.

Interview is the first step in processing a crime scene. The crime scene technician must interview the first officer at the scene or the victim to ascertain the "theory" of the case. Basically what allegedly happened, what crime took place, and how was the crime committed. This information may not be factual information but it will give the crime scene technician a base from which to start.

Examine the crime scene as the second step in the protocol. Examine the scene for what? To ascertain if the "theory" of the case is substantiated by what the crime scene technician observes. Examining the scene to identify possible items of evidentiary nature, identify point of entry and point of exit, and getting the general layout of the crime scene.

Photograph the crime scene is the third step in the protocol. Photographing the crime scene to record a pictorial view of what the scene looks like and to record items of possible evidence. Crime scene photographs are generally taken in two categories, overall views and items of evidence.

Sketch the crime scene is the fourth step in the protocol. A rough sketch is completed by the crime scene technician to demonstrate the layout of the crime scene or to identify the exact position of the deceased victim or evidence within the crime scene. A crime scene sketch may not be completed on every case, however some form of sketching usually occurs in most cases, i.e., on a fingerprint lift card to identify exactly where the latent was recovered.

The last step in the protocol is to process the crime scene. Process the scene for what? The crime scene technician will process the crime scene for evidence, both physical and testimonial evidence. It is the crime scene technician's responsibility to identify, evaluate and collect physical evidence from the crime scene for further analysis by a crime laboratory.

The above five steps in the protocol of crime scene processing is intermingled with each other step. If the "theory" of the case dictates that the intruder forcibly entered the

residence through a window then the crime scene technician will need to examine the window area for footwear patterns, tool marks, trace evidence and latent finger prints. Upon finding such items of evidence the technician will need to photograph their location and possibly complete a sketch showing the exact location of the evidence or perhaps a sketch of the footwear pattern. This intermingling of the steps in the protocol will continue throughout the processing of the crime scene. Of course interwoven throughout these five steps is the recording of the crime scene by photographs, sketches, and field notes.

This protocol should be used in all crime scenes. Whether the crime scene is a recovered stolen vehicle or a multiple homicide where several crime scenes are involved the basic protocol is the same: INTERVIEW, EXAMINE, PHOTOGRAPH, SKETCH and PROCESS.

The card is printed with that protocol, “Interview, Examine, Photography, Sketch, Process” as just a reminder of these steps.

The second printing on the front of the card simply says “Primary Scene” and “Secondary Scene”. Again just a reminder that all crime scenes have two areas of the crime scene, a primary area and a secondary area. The primary area is where the main objective of the crime was located and the secondary area which is all avenues leading to that main area. Evidence, both physical and testimonial will be found in both areas. If the secondary area is not secured then valuable evidence could be missed or destroyed.

Inside the card under the heading of “Burglary” is a list of reminders specific for burglaries.

## BURGLARY CHECK LIST

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Photograph                | 7. Fingerprints (Latents)                 |
| 2. Tool Marks                | 8. Glass Standards                        |
| 3. Paint Standards           | 9. Soil Standards                         |
| 4. Safe Insulation Standards | 10. Hairs and Fibers                      |
| 5. Foot Prints               | 11. DNA                                   |
| 6. Tire Tracks               | 12. Other evidence relative to the crime. |

1. Photography – as a reminder, was the entire scene photographed? Were general, intermediate and close-up photos taken? The documentation of the scene is so important. We must document it well enough so others can see what we had seen at the crime scene. The sole purpose of photographing the crime scene is show others what we saw.
2. Tool Marks – any indication of a forced entry with a tool must be documented, photographed and collected. The crucial steps here is collecting, or duplicating the striations caused by the tool for comparison. General characteristics may be found to indicate the type of tool while the striations may indicate the individual characteristics need for a positive identification.
3. Paint Standards – if the toll was used against a painted surface then a paint standard must be collected for comparison to the toll once it has been found. The paint may have transferred from the object pried to the tool and/or may have transferred from the tool to the object.
4. Safe Insulation – another form of trace evidence and sometimes unique evidence. Safe insulation can be unique to that particular safe, individual and class characteristics.
5. Foot Prints – Both two dimensional and three dimensional footprints may be found in the crime scene. Footwear is extremely important evidence and must not be overlooked or destroyed.
6. Tire Tracks – similar to foot prints above. Can be used to identify type of vehicle and has both class and individual characteristics.
7. Fingerprints – Latent (invisible), Patent (visible) and Plastic (three dimensional) prints can be found at all crime scenes. Fingerprint evidence can be enhanced by powders or chemicals. Inked fingerprints (Standards) need to be collected from the victims for comparison to those found in the scene.
8. Glass Standards – if any glass was broken at the crime scene it must be collected as a standard for comparison to the glass that may be found on the suspects clothing or embedded in their shoes.
9. Soil Standards – if there are footwear or tire tracks found in soil at the crime scene then soil standards should be collected. The soil microscopy could reveal trace material that is unique to the area.
10. Hairs and Fibers – If found at crime scene could contain unique identifiers and standards must be collected for comparison. Hair can be used for DNA
11. DNA – DNA is possible from where the suspect touched or left at the crime scene. DNA can not be contaminated only cross-contaminated. Fingerprint powders will not destroy DNA. Fingerprint smudges may be good source for suspects DNA.
12. Other evidence relative to crime – evidence sometimes depends on the location of the crime (indoor, outside or in a vehicle) and environmental conditions. Each crime scene is unique because of the location, environment and people. No two crime scenes are identical.

The type of crime will indicate the type of evidence that may be found. Such as a burglary by definition of law indicates the entering or breaking into a habitable structure with the intent to steal objects from such structure. Evidence not only identifies the suspect but also proves the elements of a crime, plus gives an association of the suspect to the crime.

## HOMICIDE CHECK LIST

1. 1-11 on Burglary Check List
2. Hair Standard
3. Fingernail Scrapings
4. Blood Standards
5. Blood Sample (Scene)
6. Close-up Photos of wounds
7. Clothing of Victim
8. Clothing of Suspect
9. Other evidence relative to crime
10. Weapons
11. Major Case Prints
12. Identification Photos
13. Attend Autopsy/Collect Evidence

1. Review the items on the burglary list
2. Hair Standard – Hair standards from the victim and those who had lawful access to the crime scene.
3. Fingernail Scrapings – The fingernails of the victim may contain trace material or biological material from the scene or suspect.
4. Blood Standards – Blood or at minimum a DNA standard may need to be collected from the victim and those with lawful access to the crime scene. Blood may also be used for other purposes than DNA, possibly toxicology for drugs or alcohol, perhaps even for transmitted diseases.
5. Blood Sample (scene) – Samples of blood need be collected from the scene. This is accomplished by swabs or scraping, need PPE when collecting. Don't forget to document blood stain patterns.
6. Close-up Photos of wounds – All wounds should be photographed with and without a scale. Injuries visible at the scene should be photographed. Blood patterns on clothing should be photographed before body is moved.
7. Clothing of Victim – The victims clothing very important because of trace evidence and blood patterns on the clothing. Great care must be used in removing the clothing so trace evidence is not lost. Wet clothing should always be packaged in paper and allowed to dry.
8. All Bloodstains – Must be documented (photographed and sketched) and sampled. Not all blood stains may belong to the victim, some may be the suspect(s) or from multiple victims.
9. Other evidence relative to crime - evidence sometimes depends on the location of the crime (indoor, outside or in a vehicle) and environmental conditions.

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Each crime scene is unique because of the location, environment and people.  
No two crime scenes are identical.

10. Weapons – weapons must be documented and packaged properly, including a complete description. Weapons must be secured to prevent accidents from handling or transportation. Evidence boxes are recommended.
11. Major Case Prints – Major case prints are inked prints from all ridge surfaces of the hand and if bare foot in crime scene then of the feet. This is used to compare to latent prints found at the crime scene.
12. Identification Photos – photos must be taken of the victim for use in the identification process and should be taken after the victim has been cleaned.
13. Attend Autopsy/Collect Evidence – a complete autopsy should be preformed on all death investigations. Attending the autopsy gives the investigator the ability to see things they may have missed at the crime scene. The pathologist was not at the scene so the investigator / CSI must be attendance. Evidence is collected as it is at the crime scene and documented, packaged and sealed.

All death investigations should be handled as a homicide. Every death investigation should be thoroughly processed and documented. You only have one time at a crime scene.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT CHECK LIST

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Clothing of Victim     | 8. All Bloodstains  |
| 2. Clothing of Suspect    | 9. Bed Linens   |
| 3. All Stains Present     | 10. Latent Prints   |
| 4. Location of Occurrence | 11. Hairs and Fibers                                      |
| 5. Sexual Assault Kit     | 12. DNA   |
| 6. Suspects Standards     | 13. If forced entry include 1-9<br>on burglary check list |
| 7. Fingernail Scrapings   |   |
- 
1. Clothing of the victim – The clothing of the victim may contain trace material and biological fluids. Careful documentation of where the clothing was found and the condition of the clothing may be pertinent to the case. The clothing should be examined at the scene with a UV light, Blue Light or Forensic Light Source to identify stains.
  2. Clothing of Suspect – The clothing of the suspect may contain trace material and biological fluid and must be protected from additional contamination. The suspects clothing should be examined as mentioned above for trace and stains.
  3. All Stains Present – A visual examination of the scene along with the use of a forensic light source will help identify stains present. Seminal, Vaginal Fluid, Urine and Saliva may fluoresce under UV or “blue light”. Seminal fluid will not

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fluoresce if still wet. Blood does not fluoresce under any light frequencies, it will only darken.

4. Location of Occurrence – The location of the sexual assault may determine additional evidence or at least confine the evidence.
5. Sexual Assault Kit – Most officer have no idea what is in the sexual assault kit, if you don't then you should get one to find out! Keep the kits out of the sun, they contain biological material, must be kept in room temperature or below.
6. Suspects Standards – if a suspect is identified the crime lab will want their standards. This may include hair (pubic, head or body) and DNA.
7. Fingernail Scrapings – The suspect may have trace material under their nails or biological evidence. Exam, Photo and collect.
8. All Bloodstains - Must be documented (photographed and sketched) and sampled. Not all blood stains may belong to the victim, some may be the suspect(s) or from multiple victims.
9. Bed Linens – When practical examine the linens with a UV or Blue light, mark all stains, package in paper to let dry and transport. Besides stains the linens may also contain trace evidence.
10. Latent Prints – Besides the “normal” processing technique for prints there may also be latents made visible by a UV or blue light. There is always a possibility the suspect may have left latent prints on the victim.
11. Hairs and Fibers - If found at crime scene could contain unique identifiers and standards must be collected for comparison. Hair can be used for DNA
12. DNA - DNA is possible from where the suspect touched or left at the crime scene. DNA can not be contaminated only cross-contaminated. Fingerprint powders will not destroy DNA. Fingerprint smudges may be good source for suspects DNA. May also find DNA in suspects clothing left at scene.
13. If Forced Entry into building the include 1-9 on burglary checklist.

The victim in a sexual assault should be wrapped in a sheet before leaving the scene to help prevent the loss or contamination of trace evidence. All injuries must be photographed at the time of the incident, a few days later and then again a week later. Bruises take time to appear.

In all cases where biological fluid is suspected the officer must wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), there is no exception to that rule. All sexual assaults and death investigations require a minimum PPE of double gloving, mask and booties.

Decontamination of personnel and equipment should be done on a regular basis to prevent cross contamination from other crime scenes.

Physical evidence is the same in a burglary scene or multiple homicide scene. A fingerprint is a fingerprint no matter what kind of crime scene it was found in. The technique to find it

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is the same no matter what the crime was, so why don't we process all crime scene the same?

The REMINDER card helps us by reminding us of the evidence that can be left behind.

The first important task is a secured crime scene, then documentation. Thorough documentation is notes, photograph and sketches. All play an important role in interpreting the crime scene and showing others what was at the scene. We need to show them what we saw.

The basic protocol: "Interview, Examine, Photograph, Sketch, Process" whether it is a simple burglary or multiple death scene, the protocol is the same.

Don't forget the Primary Scene and Secondary Scene!