

PURPOSE:

Law enforcement agencies stress that their first priority on any crime scene is the preservation of life with reconstruction of the crime scene second. EMS personnel can be of assistance by adhering to the following guidelines regarding crime scene response.

PROCEDURE:

A. Response and Arrival

1. Be conscious of physical and weather conditions around the site. Tire tracks of suspect vehicles are often located in or adjacent to a driveway.
2. Do not park the ambulance/apparatus on any tire tracks or skid marks.
3. Limit the number of personnel allowed onto the scene. Consult with law enforcement on the scene to direct placement of vehicles and route of personnel onto the scene.
4. Report the names of the crew who entered the scene to law enforcement for follow-up.
5. If the crime scene is in a dwelling, consider putting booties on your feet. Otherwise, your footwear may be confiscated as evidence until cleared.

B. Access and Treatment

1. Select a single route to the victim. Maintaining a single route decreases the chance of altering or destroying evidence or tracking blood over a suspect's footprints.
2. Note the location of furniture, weapons, and other articles, and avoid disturbing them. If they need to be moved, someone should note the location the article was moved from, by whom it was moved, and where it was placed.
3. Leave all EMS generated debris, including items that are contaminated with blood or body fluid. You may collect any needles/sharps used and dispose of through established channels.
4. Be conscious of any statements made by the victim or other persons at the crime scene. Write down what these statements were and report to the investigating officers.
5. Note the specific garments worn by the patient at the time of treatment. When removing clothing for assessment/treatment, do not cut through any holes that may have been made by a knife, bullet, or other object. Do not throw any clothing away. Keep with the patient or give to law enforcement.
6. The victim should be placed on a clean sheet when ready for transport. At the hospital, please try to obtain the sheet once the victim is moved off of it, fold it carefully in on itself, and give it to the investigating officers. This is especially important in close contact crimes such as rape, serious assault and death cases.

C. Documentation

1. A detailed report is important in case you are later called to testify in court. An incident report should be completed and should cover your observations, conversations with family or witnesses, location of response vehicles and equipment, furniture, weapons, clothing that has been moved, items that were handled and your route to the victim.
2. An Unusual Event Report may be helpful for you to complete. This is a protected document and if you are called to court may be used by you to refresh your memory of aspects of the call that are not included in the Patient Care Report.
3. Note any inconsistencies or unusual findings in your assessment, but do not offer any judgements about the crime scene.

REMINDER:

Any location can be, or become, a crime scene. When responding, and upon arrival if something does not appear to be right, notify law enforcement. If you suspect a crime scene and law enforcement is not present, secure area and document what you see. If scene safety is questionable, leave and stage at a safe distance until the scene is cleared by law enforcement