



San Diego Community College District Police Department Policy and Procedures

6.05 CRIME SCENE PROTECTION &
PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

EFF. 10/01/19

I. PURPOSE

This Department procedure establishes guidelines for the responsibilities and procedures associated with field investigations.

II. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all members of the Department.

III. PROCEDURES

Successful disposition of criminal cases will often depend upon the thoroughness of the preliminary investigation, the quality of the information recorded, and the discovery and proper collection of physical evidence.

A. Protecting the Crime Scene

1. The welfare of an injured victim or suspect is of primary importance.
2. Providing for complete crime scene protection is the responsibility of the first officer on the scene.
3. Officers should immediately identify and isolate all victims, witnesses, and suspects.
4. Deceased persons should never be moved before the arrival of the Medical Examiner, unless the safety of the officers is threatened. Only then is it permissible to move the body.
5. Remove all unauthorized persons from within the area to be protected, including fellow officers. Tact and judgment must be exercised to avoid alienating potential witnesses.

6. Include and protect the entire geographical or physical area involved in the crime.
7. Include and protect all known items of evidence and other items which may have potential evidentiary value.
8. Deny access to all unauthorized persons, including fellow officers.
9. Prevent any possibility of contamination or alteration of the crime scene, preserving it exactly as it was when observed by the first officer on the scene.
10. Minimize movement within the crime scene by everyone.
 - a. Do not touch or move anything without a valid reason.
 - b. Weapons should never be handled unless there is an obvious threat to the safety of the officers or the evidence is in danger of being contaminated (i.e., outside crime scene, inclement weather).
 - c. In the event it is necessary to move anything, be sure to inform investigators of your actions. The evidence should be photographed in place prior to moving it, if possible. Make appropriate notations in your written reports regarding the position the evidence was originally found in, as well as how and why it was moved.

B. Collection and Preservation of Evidence

1. In most cases, it is the responsibility of the assigned reporting officer to do the following:
 - a. Search for, collect, preserve, and properly report, any physical evidence located at the scene. This would include, but is not limited to, latent fingerprints, footprints, tool marks, or evidence that could easily be lost or destroyed.
 - b. Absence of evidence, when significant to the case, will also be recorded.
2. At complicated or serious crime scenes, or other scenes that require a high level of expertise, an SDPD Field Evidence Technicians can be utilized in the collection and preservation of evidence. Field Evidence Technicians will not perform routine evidence collection for other officers.
3. In cases where a vehicle is the sexual assault crime scene, the vehicle shall be impounded. Officers must contact the SDPD Watch Commander's Office at (619) 531-2205 and arrange access to the Police Vehicle Impound facility. The Police

Vehicle Impound facility is located at the SDPD's Traffic Division at 9265 Aero Drive. Officers need to advise the Watch Commander with the reason for the impound and description of the vehicle. The Watch Commander will remotely unlock the storage door and provide callers the alarm code, which is needed to deactivate the alarm.

4. The secure vehicle impound facility shall be limited to the storage of vehicles impounded for evidentiary reasons associated with Sex Crimes, Robbery, and/or Homicide cases only. Prior authorization shall always be obtained from the Watch Commander's Office.

C. Witness Checks

A complete witness check of the immediate area where the crime occurred will be made by, or at the direction of, the reporting officer(s).

1. Witness checks will be conducted in conjunction with the preliminary investigation unless circumstances prevent a search for witnesses.
2. If a witness check is not possible in conjunction with the preliminary investigation, the reporting officer should consider returning later in the shift or the next day to complete the witness check. If returning within a reasonable time frame is not possible, the investigating officer should request that a member of another watch or investigative unit complete the check when warranted.
3. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of persons interviewed during a witness check will be documented on the appropriate ARJIS form. If an address is checked and no one is home, this information will also be documented so investigators will know which homes should be checked during the follow-up investigation.
4. All witnesses and witness statements shall be recorded in the narrative of the preliminary police report.
5. The reporting officer is responsible for ensuring that all witness statements are documented, including those that are hostile, false, inflammatory, and/or contradictory.
6. Witness information derived from external sources such as flyers, bulletins, and wanted posters shall be detailed in the arrest and crime case reports. When possible, copies should be attached to the reports.

D. Description of Reported Property Losses

1. A clear and complete description of any property loss is to be itemized on the crime report form.
2. Serial numbers, model numbers, brand names, and any other identifying marks are to be listed.
3. Obtain complete descriptions and loss totals at the time the initial report is taken. This expedites the timely entry of stolen property items into the computer system and minimizes handling of the case report by other personnel.

E. Investigations Unit Notification and Detective Call-Out

1. If the crime is of such a magnitude that an immediate investigation by off-duty detectives is warranted, the Investigative Sergeant is to be contacted and given the facts of the case. If justified, the Investigative Sergeant will initiate the detective call-back.
2. Officers conducting the initial investigation are to notify the Investigations Unit if any of the following conditions exist:
 - a. Any felony with an extensive property loss;
 - b. Felony crimes against persons involving serious injury, officer injury or an extensive crime scene; or,
 - c. Any crimes that are sensitive to the District.

F. Instruction to Victims

Marsy's Law Compliance - In January 2009, the Victims' Bill Of Rights Act of 2008 (Marsy's Law) was enacted. Penal Code Section 679.026 (c)(1) mandates that all crime victims be provided with an informational card advising them of various rights to which they are entitled. To comply with Marsy's Law, officers will provide a Marsy Right's Card to all crime victims at the time of initial contact. In the event the officer conducting the initial investigation was not able to provide the card to the victim, the officer will then mail the card to the known address for the victim.

G. Doubtful Crime Cases

1. Periodically, officers are dispatched to investigate incidents that lack all the necessary crime elements or seem questionable to the reporting officer. In those instances, officers shall:
 - a. Complete an ARJIS-2 with the available facts and information.
 - b. Under the section labeled "Code Section and Description," officers will enter ZZ981153 to designate the report as an "Incident Only Report" rather than a crime report.
2. If reasonable doubt exists as to the presence of a necessary element, the incident should be discussed with a supervisor. If the doubt is not resolved, an "Incident Report" should be completed.

H. Completion of Reports Prior to End of Shift

Patrol officers are responsible for the completion of their assigned reports and for obtaining approval of their completed reports. Unless an officer has approval from a supervisor, all reports and preliminary investigations must be completed prior to securing from duty at the end of the officer's shift.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS REPORTING

- A. Generally the first uniformed officer arriving at a crime scene will be responsible for caring for injured victims, protecting the crime scene, preserving evidence, identifying witnesses, and initiating a preliminary investigation. In those cases where College Police are responsible for conducting the preliminary investigation, the first College Police Officer at the scene will conduct the investigation and complete the crime report.

In cases where the San Diego Police Department is responsible for conducting the preliminary investigation, College Police will offer assistance and will submit officers' reports as appropriate for inclusion in the crime or arrest report.

- B. The San Diego Community College District Police will assume responsibility for preliminary investigations of the following cases:
1. Burglaries occurring on District property;
 2. Vandalism occurring on District property;

3. Robberies occurring on District property;
 4. Thefts, including auto theft;
 5. Assaults;
 6. Weapons cases;
 7. Traffic Accidents, except as noted in Section III, C below;
 8. Domestic violence incidents;
 9. Bomb threats and arson investigations;
 10. Suicides where there are no suspicious circumstances; and,
 11. All other crimes not described in Section III, C below
- C. The San Diego Police Department will assume responsibility for preliminary investigations of the following cases:
1. Homicides;
 2. Kidnapping;
 3. Traffic Accidents, including hit and runs, resulting in death or injuries requiring hospitalization;
 4. Bombings and cases involving suspicious packages or discovered bombs, explosives or destructive devices.
- D. Officers may request specialized resources from the San Diego Police Department while retaining responsibility for preliminary investigation of the case. For a description of specialized resources available see Department Procedure 2.07.
- E. All instances of injuries or illness occurring on District property will be reported on a San Diego Community College Illness/Injury Report, whether or not a crime or traffic accident report is completed. The first College Police Officer on the scene will be responsible for completing this report.

V. LAW ENFORCEMENT VICTIMS OF CRIME

When a member of the criminal justice system (peace officer, law enforcement officer,

officer of the court, correctional officer or custodial officer), is the victim of a crime, the following procedures should be followed, in addition to those listed above.

- A. The victim officer shall not complete his/her own crime report. The crime shall be investigated and reported by a member of the agency having jurisdiction over the investigation or crime, other than the victim officer.
- B. Victim officers shall not provide personal identifying information that could later become public record, such as their residential address, telephone number or Social Security number. Instead, they shall use the Department's address and telephone number for contact purposes. Victim officers should also provide their Department identification number in place of a government-issued identification number. The exception to this would be officers who are involved in traffic collisions shall provide their California Driver's License to the investigating officer.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS PROCEDURES

College Police Officers are expected to be familiar with San Diego Police preliminary investigation procedures including the following:

San Diego Police Department Procedure number:

- 1.31 Press Identification Cards
- 4.10 Procedures Relating to Repossessions
- 6.07 Latent Print Documentation and Transmittal Procedures

VII. EXTENDED PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS

For information regarding conduct of Extended Preliminary Investigations, see Department Procedure 3.03.