

Los Angeles Police Department
LD 30 Crime Scenes, Evidence and Forensics
EV5 Property Crimes
S8 Preservation of Evidence

Date Revised: October/2019

Course Goal: Peace officers must have a general understanding of the total range of basic criminal investigation procedures in order to make the appropriate decisions regarding the identification and preservation of physical evidence at the scene of a crime

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the goal of a criminal investigation. **[30.I.A]**
- Perform the steps of a preliminary criminal investigation, including: Proceed safely to the scene, Determine need for emergency medical services and aid any injured persons, Verify that a crime, if any, has occurred, Identify and arrest the suspect(s), if appropriate, As soon as possible, provide dispatch with any suspect information including physical descriptions, direction of flight, mode of travel, and other pertinent information, Contain and protect the crime scene and cause the proper collection of physical evidence, Locate and interview victim(s) and/or witness(es) and identify other sources of information, Collect all available information necessary to write a clear and accurate report (who, what, when, where, why and how). **[30.I.B] [30.I.B.1] [30.I.B.2] [30.I.B.3] [30.I.B.4] [30.I.B.5] [30.I.B.6] [30.I.B.7] [30.I.B.8]**
- Demonstrate actions peace officers may employ to preserve possible physical evidence at a crime scene. **[30.I.C]**
- Identify the primary purpose of the Initial survey of a crime scene, Crime scene search, identify criteria for allowing crime scene photographs to be admitted as evidence by the court, identify elements to be included on a crime scene diagram. **[30.I.D] [30.I.D.1] [30.I.D.2]**
- Identify criteria for allowing crime scene photographs to be admitted as evidence in court. **[30.I.E]**
- Identify elements to be included on a crime scene diagram. **[30.I.F]**
- Demonstrate appropriate precautions that should be taken prior to collection and removal of physical evidence from a crime scene. **[30.II.A]**
- Identify the purpose of collecting control/known samples. **[30.II.B]**
- Identify the primary reason for establishing a chain of custody record. **[30.II.C]**
- Prepare the information that should be noted on a chain of custody record. **[30.II.D]**
- Identify the three forms of fingerprint impressions that may be found at a crime scene. **[30.II.E]**
- Apply the basic steps for developing latent fingerprints. **[30.II.F]**
- Identify general guidelines for collecting and processing physical evidence that may be located at a crime scene. **[30.II.G]**

Session Time: 1 Hour

Resources:

- Scenario room with props.

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<p>b. Identification and arrest of a suspect.</p> <p>c. Gathering of evidence for presentation in a court of law.</p> <p>5. The ultimate goal of any criminal investigation is the successful prosecution of the guilty and the exoneration of the innocent.</p> <p>6. The preliminary investigation begins when the responding officers first receives the call. It continues through the writing and filing of the primary officer's investigative report.</p> <p>7. Involved individuals. Individuals involved in the investigative process may include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reporting parties, responding officers. b. Investigating officers, c. Victims. witnesses, d. Evidence technicians, e. Medical examiners, f. Forensic scientists, attorneys. <p>8. Components of a preliminary investigation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Officer safety when approaching scene. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Scan area to identify potential physical evidence of reported crime while en-route. 2) Scan scene(s) for occupational hazard(s). 3) Position vehicle in such a manner as not to compromise potential evidence and/or officer/public safety. 4) Stage emergency medical services and/or fire personnel. 5) Direct back up units. 	<p>Ask: During in a criminal investigation what do you think our ultimate goal is?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To successfully prosecute the guilty • To exonerate the innocent. <p>Ask: When do you think the preliminary investigation begins?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First receive the call • On to through the completion of the investigative report. <p>Ask: During any investigation, who might be the people involved in the investigative process?</p> <p>Lecture: Involved Individuals</p> <p>Distribute: Crime scene investigation guideline handout.</p> <p>[30.I.B]</p> <p>Lecture: The components of a preliminary investigation</p> <p>[30.I.B.1]</p> <p>Lecture: Officer Safety</p> <p>Inform: The recruits that in the field every radio call are different and how the investigation is handled will be different too.</p>
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<p>and/or statements made by suspects themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">c) Physical evidence at the crime scene.d) If sufficient probable cause exists to believe the suspect is guilty of a crime, the suspect can be taken into custody.e) A search of the suspect incident to the custodial arrest may include a full search. Searches incident to arrest can be more inclusive than cursory/frisk searches for weapons only. <p>4) Provide dispatch with pertinent information as soon as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) If suspect(s) have fled the scene, officers should provide dispatch and other field units with information.b) Conduct crime broadcast.c) Additional broadcasts can be made if/when additional information is obtained during the preliminary investigation. <p>5) Preliminary Investigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Secure and protect the crime scene.b) Determine jurisdiction.c) Identify and preserve possible evidence.d) Locate and interview victim(s), and or witness (es).e) Identify other possible sources of information. <p>6) Report.</p>	<p>[30.I.B.5] Lecture: Provide Suspect Information</p> <p>[30.I.B.6] Lecture: Secure Crime Scene</p> <p>[30.I.B.7] Lecture: Locate Victim(s)</p> <p>[30.I.B.8] Lecture: Collect Available Information</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Collect available information necessary to write a clear and effective investigative report.b) Officers should begin taking field notes as soon as possible. Notes should reflect information needed to report on who, what, where, when, how, and why of the crime. <p>7) Follow-up investigations. Actions taken by officers involved in the preliminary investigation can have a direct impact on follow-up law enforcement actions.</p> <p>B. Preservation of a Crime Scene.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. The crime scene itself is a form of evidence and should be treated by officers just as carefully as any other form of evidence.2. Role of responding officer.<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. It is the responsibility of the initial primary responding officer to secure and protect the integrity of the crime scene until officially and properly relieved.b. Initially, officers should not touch anything or do anything that could alter a crime scene in any way except to preserve life or administer aid to a victim.3. Contamination, crime scenes must be carefully protected and secured from any intentional or unintentional forms of contamination.4. Protecting the crime scene. Establish a perimeter.<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. An inner perimeter should include that	<p style="text-align: center;">[30.I.C] Lecture: Protect Crime Scene</p>
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<p>area which contains specific evidence of the crime.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">b. An outer perimeter may be established as a means of securing and controlling access to the inner perimeter.c. Access to the inner perimeter should be limited to only those authorized individuals directly related to the criminal investigation.d. A perimeter should be larger than is apparently necessary. One rule to follow is to double the distance from the center of the crime scene to the farthest location of any piece of evidence. <p>5. Assign personnel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The primary responding officer should assign law enforcement personnel to maintain inner and outer perimeters.b. If necessary, assistance for perimeter containment may be obtained from those other than law enforcement personnel.c. Tape can be used to establish clear boundaries to maintain crime scene integrity.d. Use cones and other traffic barricades to restrict access to the area.e. Vehicles or other items can be strategically positioned to block traffic. <p>6. Maintain a crime scene log.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Record information on who had access to the crime scene.b. Include information date, time personnel entered location and left, Name and rank, id number reason for	
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<p>entering.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">7. Evidence protection.<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Evidence within a crime scene may be moved, damaged, or obliterated by even the smallest disturbance.b. Initial responding officers must take actions to protect physical evidence.c. action may be necessary to protect the evidence such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">1) Providing a tent covering to protect from rain or sunlight.2) Erecting temporary walls or barriers to reduce wind contamination.3) Using cardboard to temporarily cover tire tracks or footprints.d. If movement of evidence is required due to possible damage or contamination or officer safety, officers should:<ul style="list-style-type: none">1) Notify appropriate personnel of the action taken.2) Document and photograph, if appropriate, the original location and condition of the evidence.3) Document all actions taken. <p>C. Crime Scene Surveys and Searches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. The initial survey should consist of securing the scene, and noting immediately visible evidence and denying entry to the scene until properly relieved and calling for needed resources.2. Once a crime scene has been secured, an initial survey should be undertaken to identify the kind and amount of evidence that may exist in the designated area. The purpose of conducting such a survey is to	<p>[30.I.D] Lecture: Primary Purpose for Crime Scene [30.I.D.1] Lecture: Initial Survey of Crime Scene</p>
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<p>give responding officers an opportunity to assess the amount of time, equipment, and personnel that may be needed to actually collect and process the evidence.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Officers should proceed cautiously through the crime scene area, being careful not to touch, step on or disturb, or remove any possible evidence when conducting the initial survey.4. For personal protection and for the protection of the evidence itself, officers may be required to wear items such as latex gloves, shoe covers, or other forms of protective clothing when conducting an initial crime scene survey.5. Crime scene search.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Locate physical evidence that indicates a crime has taken place.b. Identify individual(s) who may have committed the crime.c. Everyone assisting in the search for evidence should be made aware of the:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Type of crime that has taken place.2) Type of items that may be associated with the crime.3) Perimeters of the area to be searched.4) Searching pattern that will be used. <p>D. 5 Basic Search Patterns.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Line Pattern: Officer begins at one corner of the crime scene and searches back and forth across the area, moving in parallel straight lines.2. Quadrant Pattern: Crime scene area is divided into fourths or specified	<p style="text-align: center;">[30.I.D.2] Lecture: Crime Scene Searches</p>
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<p>quadrants. Quadrants are searched one at a time by the officer(s).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Grid Search: Officer(s) begin searching at one corner and proceed, searching one block at a time.4. Spiral Pattern: Officer begins searching by circling the outer perimeter of the crime scene. Officer continues spiraling in an ever-smaller circle toward the center of the crime scene area.5. Wheel Patter: The circle is divided into manageable pie-shaped wedges (or “spokes” as on a wheel). Each wedge or section between spokes is searched one at a time. <p>E. Photographs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Photographs of a crime scene can record exactly how the scene appeared and how the evidence was found at the scene.2. Crime scene photographs are often used in a court of law as a form of demonstrative evidence.3. Photographs may be admissible as evidence if they:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Show an object or person relevant to the crime.b. Accurately represent, without distortion, the object or scene photographed.c. If they are marked properly to identify contents and location and are not used solely to appeal to the emotions or prejudice the court or jury.d. Photographs can be taken of the area where the crime has taken place, all visible items of evidence at the scene, Close shots showing details of injuries,	<p>[30.I.E] Lecture: Crime Scene Photographs</p>
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<p>bodies, or individual items of evidence.</p> <p>F. Crime Scene Sketches and Diagrams.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sketches and diagrams can be used to supplement photographs and provide this additional information regarding the crime scene. Crime scene sketches and diagrams can:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Provide clear and concise descriptions of all pieces of evidence.b. Show the relationship of items to each other.c. Show measured distances between items.d. Illustrate positions and movement of involved parties (e.g., victims, suspects, witnesses).e. Assist the reporting officer in writing comprehensive investigative reports.f. Illustrate the crime scene without extra clutter.2. A crime scene sketch is a rough drawing and it contains details and measurements that will be used when the final accurate diagram is later drawn. A crime scene sketch should:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Be drawn at the crime scene,b. Be complete enough to stand alone.c. Include measurements pinpointing the location of all major items ofd. Physical evidence and critical features of the scene (e.g., furniture, plants,e. Personal possessions, etc.).3. A crime scene diagram is a measured drawing showing the location of all important items, particularly items of physical evidence.	<p>[30.I.F] Lecture: Crime Scene Diagrams</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Layout of the entire scene,b. Measured locations within the crime scene of each piece of evidence,c. Locations of significant features of the scene, andd. Spatial relationship between items. <p>4. Diagram content and elements. Final crime scene diagrams should include specific types of information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Diagramming Officer's name, rank and ID.b. Full name of anyone assisting in taking measurements.c. Time and date the initial crime scene sketch was drawn.d. Crime classification (e.g., burglary, homicide, etc.)e. Case number (if known)f. Major discernible items of physical evidence and critical features.g. All possible entrances and exits (e.g., doors, windows, attic access, etc.)h. Location and Position. <p>II.</p> <p>A. Handling Evidence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Evidence can take any size, shape, or form. It may be obvious or imperceptible to the naked eye. Even if an item may not have obvious evidentiary value to an officer, it should be properly secured and identified.2. Common errors made in the handling of evidence.<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Identify items of possible evidentiary value.b. Use the appropriate techniques for properly collecting a specific type of	
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<p>evidence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">c. Submit sufficient quantities of evidence.d. Protect evidence from contamination.e. Submit control/known standard to be used for comparison purposes.f. Maintain the chain of custody. <p>3. Precautions, Prior to beginning the actual collection process, officers should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Photographing evidence to demonstrate its appearance when found.b. Diagraming the location and position of items of evidence to aid in later reconstructions of the scene.c. Taking notes regarding the physical appearance of evidence to document the condition in which it was found.d. Wearing appropriate clothing such as disposable gloves and nonrestrictive, noninterfering clothing. <p>4. Perishable/ fragile evidence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The first officers at a crime scene should immediately observe and record any evidence that could be easily lost, damaged, contaminated, or destroyed by environmental elements or the presence of other individuals at the scene. Such perishable/fragile evidence should be noted, photographed, documented, and collected first.b. Trace evidence is evidence that is very small; it usually cannot be seen with the naked eye without close scrutiny. Transfer evidence is evidence that is	<p>[30.II.A] Lecture: Collection of Evidence</p>
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<p>transferred or passed when two objects touch.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">c. The searching officer should examine the object or area from an angle. Special considerations may arise when searching for trace and transfer evidence at a crime scene.d. Depending on the nature of the crime and the conditions, responding officers may need to take action to protect perishable/fragile evidence until it can be properly documented and collected. <p>5. Control/ known standard. In order to establish a link between a piece of evidence and a person or a crime scene, the unique identity of the object must be shown to the exclusion of all other similar objects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Control Standard: Demonstrates a normal condition of a surface or other object.b. Known Standard: Compare with items of evidence from an unknown source. <p>6. Peace officers should use the same care and precautions when collecting, packaging, and marking known standards and controls as they would for any other form of evidence. This includes maintaining the proper chain of custody.</p> <p>7. The ability to properly collect and preserve evidence may depend on officers having access to the appropriate equipment such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Camerasb. Measuring equipment.c. Documentation Materials.	<p>[30.II.B] Lecture: Collecting Samples</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">d. Collection Equipment.e. Packaging Equipment.8. Packaging evidence.<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Physical evidence can be damaged, lost, contaminated, or changed during handling and transportation. All pieces of evidence must be carefully packaged separately, using new and clean containers and packaging materials.b. Being aware of the types of containers that can be used with specific types of evidence will aid officers in making the appropriate selections during the collection process.9. Sealing evidence.<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. To maintain the chain of custody, each container containing a piece of evidence should be properly sealed.b. Evidence tape can be used to seal all containers (i.e., boxes, envelopes, vials, etc.) in such a way that they cannot be opened without breaking the seal. The person packaging the evidence should sign or initial and date the seal using permanent ink so that the marking extends from the seal onto the container.10. Marking and labeling evidence.<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. To ensure that evidence presented in court is the same evidence collected at the crime scene, the outside of each container or wrapped item should be identified and labeled separately.b. If the item is not packaged inside some form of container that can then be marked, an evidence tag should be	
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<p>carefully attached to the item with the case information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Collecting officer's name.2) Collecting officer's identification number (i.e., serial/badge number).3) Time and date the evidence was collected.4) Location where the evidence was collected.5) Content description (including quantity and size).6) Type of crime (e.g., burglary, homicide). <p>11. Unless agency policy is to the contrary, officers should not place any markings directly on an item of evidence itself. Marking evidence in this manner may affect or even destroy its evidentiary value.</p> <p>12. Evidence technicians are specially trained individuals who respond to the crime scene at the request of the officer. Once at the scene, they may be involved in collecting, preserving, and transporting physical evidence.</p> <p>13. Larger urban law enforcement agencies may be equipped with evidence collection technicians and large investigative units including mobile crime unit.</p> <p>B. Chain of Custody.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. For any piece of evidence to be considered valid and reliable by the court, it must be accounted for from the time it is collected at the scene until it is presented in court.2. The chain of custody is the written,	<p>[30.II.C] Lecture: Chain of Custody</p> <p>[30.II.D] Lecture: Documentation for Chain of</p>
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<p>witnessed, unbroken record of all individuals who maintained control or had access to any physical evidence. A complete and accurate chain of custody record is absolutely essential in establishing the validity and integrity of evidence in court.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Court testimony. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Officers may be asked in court to positively identify evidence and testify regarding who, when, how that evidence was recovered at the time of the incident. b. The chain of custody begins when an item is first collected as evidence. From this time, supplying complete, clear, concise information and using appropriate documentation techniques will aid in keeping the chain of custody intact. 4. Property that is recovered fall under 3 categories evidence, non-evidence or personal property. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Evidence: Property which may be related to a crime or investigation, or implicate or clear a person of a criminal charge. b. Non-evidence: Property that comes into law enforcement custody, but cannot be connected to a crime. (e.g Found property.) c. Personal Property: Property which a person had in possession at the time of arrest that has no evidentiary value. 5. Handling evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Anyone who handles evidence officially accepts custody of that 	<p>Custody</p>
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<p>3. Precautions.</p> <p>a. Fingerprints are a form of perishable/fragile evidence that can be easily smeared or destroyed. Because of this, officers at a crime scene should always:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Handle items as little as possible.2) Pick up items by holding areas least likely to contain a print.3) Keep in mind that wearing gloves or using handkerchiefs, while keeping their own prints off an item, may also wipe away any prints already on the item.4) Bring any portable object with fingerprints on it to the lab whenever possible, rather than attempting to process the object for fingerprints at the crime scene. <p>b. If an item is large or bulky, the portion bearing the fingerprints may be detached and brought to the lab.</p> <p>c. There are three forms of fingerprint evidence that can be found at a crime scene: visible fingerprints, plastic fingerprints, and latent fingerprints. Each form requires different techniques for identification and collection.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Visible: Impression was left behind in blood, paint, grease, oil, or similar materials.2) Plastic: Impression was left on soft substances such as heavy grease, melted candle wax, soap, putty around a window, or similar materials.	
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<p>3) Latent: Impression was left by secretions from perspiration or oils on the skin, most commonly found and invisible to the naked eye until developed.</p> <p>D. Developing Latent Prints.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Any fingerprint left on a porous surface will require chemical development procedures which should be done only by a trained specialist in a laboratory or other controlled area.2. Any fingerprint left on a nonporous surface may be developed (made visible to the naked eye) by the use of special powders which adhere to the fingerprint itself.3. A nonporous surface is any surface that does not absorb liquids or oils (e.g., plastic, glass, etc.)4. Officers who believe latent prints exist on an item with a porous surface should:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Carefully place each item in a separate container to avoid contamination.b. Mark, seal, and label the container, noting "to be processed for latent prints" clearly on the label.c. Document the collection in their notes and in the investigative report.5. Lifting latent fingerprints.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Lifting a latent fingerprint refers to the process of removing a developed latent fingerprint from the surface where it was found.b. Latent prints should be photographed in place prior to any attempt to lift the fingerprint from the surface.6. Technique / General guidelines	
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<p>a. Cellulose tape</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Make sure tape begins with a ¼ inch section folder over.2) Affix the loose end of a roll of appropriate size transparent cellulose tape (e.g., two inch wide) next to the developed fingerprint with one hand while holding onto the roll with the other hand.3) Beginning at the affixed end, slide thumb along tape to gently force it down over the developed fingerprint.4) Beginning at the affixed roll end, carefully peel the tape from the surface.5) Place the tape containing the lifted fingerprint onto a latent fingerprint card.6) When developed fingerprint is properly secured to the card, sever the remaining tape from the roll. <p>b. Preassembled lifter.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Apply and peel off lifter “patch” to the surface containing the developed latent print using the same initial technique as with cellulose tape.2) Place cellophane tape over the adhesive (“sticky”) side of the lifter to protect the print. <p>c. If the lifter is opaque, examine and photograph the lifted fingerprint on the reverse side only. (Photographs should be printed with the negatives reversed.)</p> <p>7. Latent fingerprint cards.</p>	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Lifted prints are placed on special latent print cards. Each card should be labeled with the following information:<ul style="list-style-type: none">1) Date/time.2) Case title or number.3) Collector's name and signature.4) Sketch of exact location where latent fingerprint was found.5) Description of item that latent fingerprint was found on.6) Any other required identification numbers (e.g., case number, evidence item number, etc.)E. Collecting and Processing Evidence.<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. General guidelines.<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Be aware of and comply with specific agency policies and procedures for evidence collection and packaging.b. Document the existence, condition, and location of each piece of evidence within the crime scene using photographs, sketches/diagrams, and written entries in the field notes. Include information regarding exact location, color, pattern, size, shape, etc.c. Collect and package all evidence in an appropriate manner, using techniques that will not harm or compromise the evidentiary value of the item.d. After each piece of evidence is packaged, seal with evidence tape, label, and process according to specific agency policies and procedures.e. Document the collection of each piece of evidence collected, along with the	<p>[30.II.G] Lecture: Guidelines for Collecting Evidence</p>
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<p>techniques used for collection and packaging in field notes and investigative report.</p> <p>f. When applicable, collect, package and process control/known standard samples in the same manner as the corresponding evidence samples from the crime scene.</p>	
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