

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

HOMICIDE MANUAL



FIFTH EDITION

HOMICIDE MANUAL

Acknowledgments

The Los Angeles Police Department's Homicide Manual was first established in 1970 and has not been revised since 2009. Extensive effort has been made to incorporate current investigative procedures to assist Department personnel (particularly detectives) in properly conducting a death/homicide investigation. The Homicide Manual is accessible through the Local Area Network (LAN) via the Department's Home Page under "LAPD Reference."

Detective Services Group-Investigative Analysis Section is responsible for the Homicide Manual revisions. The Homicide Manual is an online document and was developed with and for homicide investigators.

Suggestions for additions, corrections or deletions should be made on an Intradepartmental Correspondence, Form 15.2.00, forwarded through channels to the Officer-In-Charge, Detective Services Group.

Personnel assigned to Detective Services Group-Investigative Analysis Section, and other entities throughout the Department and the City, made significant contributions to the Homicide Manual:

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APPROVED:

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CHAPTER I-INTRODUCTION**

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The reference material in this manual has been designed to aid investigators and covers procedure for conducting death investigations. Experienced homicide investigators have been following the principles outlined in this publication for years; however, it is not always an experienced homicide investigator who is assigned to investigate a death. Detectives assigned to other investigative assignments and patrol officers are also called upon to conduct death investigations. It is imperative that assigned police personnel continue to be provided with pertinent and comprehensive reference material to allow them to complete an investigation in a thorough and systematic manner.

The Department's last publication of the Homicide Manual was in 2009 and there have been no tremendous changes in the way a death investigation is handled. However, the Department has published various orders, notices, and bulletins, designed to improve investigative techniques regarding death investigations. These techniques have been incorporated into this manual and are identified for a death investigation from the first notification to the police, to preparing and presenting a case in court.

This manual is intended to be an extensive guide to time-tested and effective procedures as well as a comprehensive sourcebook of available resources. It is impossible for a single document to provide direction for every death investigation. No two death investigations will be the same and will not be investigated in the same manner. While it is unlikely that every procedure and resource documented in this manual will be utilized in every investigation, each should be given appropriate consideration. Additionally, the adoption and implementation of these procedures should not preclude the use of initiative in an investigation or situation. Commanding Officers and supervisors should encourage all personnel in their command to familiarize themselves with the terminology, suggested techniques, available investigative resources, and readings contained in this manual.

Since the investigating officer of a homicide may either be an officer or detective, the terms detective, homicide investigator, investigator, and investigating officer, are used interchangeably.

The Homicide Manual supplements policy and procedure found in the Los Angeles Police Department Manual. When a section of the Department Manual conflicts

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with a section in the Homicide Manual, the Department Manual **shall** take precedence.

NOTE: *Due to the dynamic nature of legal authorities, information of a legal nature contained herein should be validated prior to taking police action.*

Good note keeping has always been the very foundation of a good death investigation. Accurate, comprehensive, and chronological notes not only facilitate the investigation, but also allow the investigator to present the strongest possible case in court, sometimes years later. If errors in the investigation are to be avoided, the investigator must have a plan based on sound investigative procedures.

The investigation of a death is different from most other types of scientific work. When certain mistakes are made, they cannot be corrected; thus, further work on the case, however well done, may be of no value in solving the crime or the prosecution of the suspect. The homicide investigator has the responsibility of resolving the most serious criminal act that one human being can commit against another. Therefore, a homicide investigator carries a heavy responsibility when called upon to investigate a death, for he or she stands alone in the dead person's shoes to protect the victim's interest against those of everyone else.

1. Definition of "Homicide"

"Homicide," which is simply the killing of one human being by another human being, is not always a criminal act. In some cases, it may be justifiable or excusable. Homicide and murder are not the same. All murders are homicides, but not all homicides are murder. For instance, [California Penal Code section 195](#) says in part that a killing is "excusable" when committed by accident and misfortune, in the heat of passion, upon any sudden and sufficient provocation, or upon a sudden combat, when no undue advantage is taken, nor any dangerous weapon used, and when the killing is not done in a cruel or unusual manner.

[Section 196](#) says killing is "justified" in cases when committed by public officers in overcoming actual resistance or in retaking felons who have been rescued or have escaped. Homicide is also justifiable when committed by any person resisting any attempt to murder any person, or to commit a felony, or to do some great bodily injury upon any person; or when committed in defense of habitation,

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property, or person. Other examples of lawful killing include: state sanctioned death, therapeutic abortion, state ordered execution, and killing in times of war.

2. Applicable Laws

The two most common forms of criminal homicide are murder and manslaughter. Because the associated codes, case laws, and prosecutorial theories are extensive, this sub-section will provide a general overview of relative terms and segments of the law. It is not intended to be a substitute for formal training by a legal expert or attorney.

NOTE: Pursuant to [Section 194](#), “To make the killing either murder or manslaughter, it is not requisite that the party die within three years and a day after the stroke received or the cause of death administered. If death occurs beyond the time of three years and a day, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that the killing was not criminal. The prosecution shall bear the burden of overcoming this presumption. In the computation of time, the whole of the day on which the act was done shall be reckoned the first.”

[California Criminal Jury Instructions](#) (also known as “CALCRIM”) are documents read to jurors prior to deliberating the evidence presented in a jury trial. The instructions explain criminal elements and legal jargon to the common juror. Additionally, each instruction provides authority and related issues to each respective element. As a homicide investigator, familiarity with the jury instructions is not only helpful, but can be instrumental throughout the course of a homicide investigation.

2.1 Murder ([CALCRIM 520](#))

[California Penal Code section 187](#) defines murder as “the unlawful killing of a human being, or a fetus, with malice aforethought.” In 1994, the California Supreme Court in [People v. Davis](#) clarified the meaning of "fetus" within section 187. The court held that viability is not a required element of fetal murder under section 187. However, the prosecution must prove that the fetus progressed beyond the embryonic stage of seven to eight weeks.

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“Malice” means an act was intentional and without legal justification or excuse. Under this section, such malice may be expressed or implied. It is expressed when there is a manifested and deliberate intention to unlawfully take away the life of a fellow human being. It is implied when no considerable provocation appears, or when the circumstances attending the killing show an abandoned and malignant heart.

- [First degree murder \(CALCRIM 521\)](#) is those perpetrated by:
 - Means of a destructive device or explosive,
 - A weapon of mass destruction,
 - Knowing use of ammunition designed primarily to penetrate metal or armor,
 - Poison,
 - Lying in wait,
 - Torture, or
 - By any other kind of willful, deliberate, and premeditated killing, or which is,
 - Committed in the perpetration of, or attempt to perpetrate, arson, rape, carjacking, robbery, burglary, mayhem, kidnapping, train wrecking, or any act punishable under Section [206](#), [286](#), [287](#) (former section 288a), [288](#), [289](#), or
 - Any murder which is perpetrated by means of discharging a firearm from a motor vehicle, intentionally at another person outside of the vehicle with the intent to inflict death.
- All other kinds of murder are of the second degree.

Generally speaking, every person guilty of murder in the first degree shall be punished by death, imprisonment in the state prison for life without the possibility of parole, or imprisonment in the state prison for a term of 25 years to life. Similarly, the penalty for a defendant found guilty of murder in the second degree shall be confinement in the state prison for a term of 15 years to life. Factors such

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as prior incarceration, enhancements, means and motive will compound the punishment and are addressed in the Penal Code.

2.2 [Felony Murder Rule \(CALCRIM 540A-541C\)](#)

California's felony-murder rule creates murder liability for individuals when a human being is killed during the commission or attempted commission of a “dangerous felony.” It does not matter whether the killing was intentional, accidental, negligent, occurred in the immediate flight after committing, or if the defendant was an accomplice. *As long as the defendant was a major participant in one of the enumerated felonies, and either the defendant or a co-conspirator killed another human being, then the felony-murder rule applies.*

On January 1, 2019, [California Senate Bill \(SB\) 1437](#) went into effect and redefined accomplice liability for felony-murder. This bill prohibits “a participant in the perpetration or attempted perpetration of one of the specified first degree murder felonies in which a death occurs from being liable for murder, unless (1) the person was the actual killer or (2) the person was not the actual killer but, with the intent to kill, aided, abetted, counseled, commanded, induced, solicited, requested, or assisted the actual killer, or (3) the person was a major participant in the underlying felony and acted with reckless indifference to human life, unless the victim was a peace officer who was killed in the course of performing his or her duties where the defendant knew or should reasonably have known the victim was a peace officer engaged in the performance of his or her duties.”

The law identifies certain crimes as “dangerous felonies.” These crimes include:

- Robbery in violation of Section [211](#) or [212.5](#).
- Kidnapping in violation of Section [207](#), [209](#), or [209.5](#).
- Rape in violation of Section [261](#).
- Sodomy in violation of Section [286](#).
- The performance of a lewd or lascivious act upon the person of a child under the age of 14 years in violation of Section [288](#).
- Oral copulation in violation of Section [287](#).

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- Burglary in the first or second degree in violation of Section [460](#).
- Arson in violation of subdivision (b) of Section [451](#).
- Train wrecking in violation of Section [219](#).
- Mayhem in violation of Section [203](#).
- Rape by instrument in violation of Section [289](#).
- Carjacking, as defined in Section [215](#)

2.3 Manslaughter ([CALCRIM 570-595](#))

[Per Penal Code section 192](#), there are three kinds of unlawful killing of a human being without malice:

- Voluntary- killing upon a sudden quarrel or heat of passion;
- Involuntary- killing in the commission of an unlawful act, not amounting to felony; or in the commission of a lawful act which might produce death, in an unlawful manner, or without due caution and circumspection; and
- Vehicular- driving a vehicle in the commission of an unlawful act, not amounting to felony, and with/without gross negligence; or driving a vehicle in the commission of a lawful act which might produce death, in an unlawful manner, and with/without gross negligence.

Voluntary manslaughter is punishable by imprisonment in the state prison for 3, 6, or 11 years. Involuntary manslaughter is punishable by imprisonment for 2, 3, or 4 years. Depending upon the conviction and circumstances, vehicular manslaughter may be punishable either by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than 1 year or by imprisonment in the state prison anywhere for 2, 4, 6 or 10 years.

2.4 Accessory ([CALCRIM 440](#))

[Per Penal Code Section 30](#), the parties to crimes are classified as: (1) principals and (2) accessories.

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“Principals” are defined as “All persons concerned in the commission of a crime, whether it be felony or misdemeanor, and whether they directly commit the act constituting the offense, or aid and abet in its commission, or, not being present, have advised and encouraged its commission, and all persons counseling, advising, or encouraging children under the age of fourteen years, or persons who are mentally incapacitated, to commit any crime, or who, by fraud, contrivance, or force, occasion the drunkenness of another for the purpose of causing him to commit any crime, or who, by threats, menaces, command, or coercion, compel another to commit any crime.”

An “accessory” is any “person who, after a felony has been committed, harbors, conceals or aids a principal in such felony, with the intent that said principal may avoid or escape from arrest, trial, conviction or punishment, having knowledge that said principal has committed such felony or has been charged with such felony or convicted thereof.”

2.5 Aiding and Abetting ([CALCRIM 400-401](#))

[California Criminal Jury Instructions](#) (also known as “CALCRIM”) Section 401 states in part, “Someone aids and abets a crime if he or she knows of the perpetrator’s unlawful purpose and he or she specifically intends to, and does in fact, aid, facilitate, promote, encourage, or instigate the perpetrator’s commission of that crime. If all of these requirements are proved, the defendant does not need to actually have been present when the crime was committed to be guilty as an aider and abettor. If (a jury) concludes that defendant was present at the scene of the crime or failed to prevent the crime, (they) may consider that fact in determining whether the defendant was an aider and abettor. However, the fact that a person is present at the scene of a crime or fails to prevent the crime does not, by itself, make him or her an aider and abettor.”

In summary, to aid and abet means “to assist another in the commission of a crime by words or conduct.” The person who aids and abets participates in the commission of a crime by performing some overt act or by giving advice or encouragement. He or she must share the criminal intent of the person who actually commits the crime, but it is not necessary for the aider and abettor to be physically present at the scene of the crime. An aider and abettor is a party to a

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crime and may be criminally liable as a principal, an accessory before the fact, or an accessory after the fact.

3. Common Defenses

There may be times when an individual will attempt to rationalize or justify their reason for killing another person. A killer may exhibit symptoms of mental illness or intoxication. He or she may even be a juvenile or elderly. As a homicide investigator, you must understand how a person's mental state, their physical condition, or their age at the time of the incident may factor into a legal defense to mitigate their culpability. Your ability to clarify the "reasonableness" of their explanation or demonstrate that he or she had the ability to form intent may be the difference between murder, manslaughter, or no crime. A homicide investigator should know what is considered a "reasonable belief" under the law and anticipate how an individual's condition at the time of the crime can influence their defense. There are legal definitions and interpretations for many of the reasons people will give and it will fall to the homicide investigator to address and clarify an individual's rationale during an interview or interrogation.

[CALCRIM Series 3400](#) addresses defenses and insanity:

A. GENERAL DEFENSES

- 3400. Alibi
- 3401. Reserved for Future Use
- 3402. Duress or Threats
- 3403. Necessity
- 3404. Accident ([Pen. Code, § 195](#))
- 3405. Parental Right to Punish a Child
- 3406. Mistake of Fact
- 3407. Defenses: Mistake of Law
- 3408. Entrapment
- 3409. When Conduct of Officer May Not Be Attributed to Defendant
- 3410. Statute of Limitations
- 3411. Mistake of Law As a Defense
- 3412. Compassionate Use ([Health & Saf. Code, § 11362.5](#))
- 3413. Collective or Cooperative Cultivation Defense
([Health & Saf. Code, § 11362.775](#))

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- 3414. Coercion ([Pen. Code, § 236.23](#))
- 3415. Lawful Use Defense ([Health & Saf. Code, § 11362.1](#))
- 3416–3424. Reserved for Future Use

B. IMPAIRMENT DEFENSES

- 3425. Unconsciousness
- 3426. Voluntary Intoxication ([Pen. Code, § 29.4](#))
- 3427. Involuntary Intoxication
- 3428. Mental Impairment: Defense to Specific Intent or Mental State ([Pen. Code, § 28](#))
- 3429. Reasonable Person Standard for Physically Disabled Person
- 3430–3449. Reserved for Future Use

C. INSANITY AND CIVIL COMMITMENTS

- 3450. Insanity: Determination, Effect of Verdict ([Pen. Code, §§ 25, 29.8](#))
- 3451. Present Mental Competence of Defendant
- 3452. Determining Restoration to Sanity ([Pen. Code, § 1026.2](#))
- 3453. Extension of Commitment ([Pen. Code, § 1026.5\(b\)\(1\)](#))
- 3454. Initial Commitment as Sexually Violent Predator ([Welf. & Inst. Code, §§ 6600, 6600.1](#))
- 3454A. Hearing to Determine Current Status Under Sexually Violent Predator Act ([Welf. & Inst. Code, § 6605](#))
- 3455. Mental Incapacity as a Defense ([Pen. Code, §§ 25, 29.8](#))
- 3456. Initial Commitment of Mentally Disordered Offender as Condition of Parole 903
- 3457. Extension of Commitment as Mentally Disordered Offender
- 3458. Extension of Commitment to Division of Juvenile Facilities ([Welf. & Inst. Code, § 1800](#))
- 3459–3469. Reserved for Future Use

D. SELF-DEFENSE AND DEFENSE OF ANOTHER

- 3470. Right to Self-Defense or Defense of Another (Non-Homicide)
- 3471. Right to Self-Defense: Mutual Combat or Initial Aggressor
- 3472. Right to Self-Defense: May Not Be Contrived

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- 3473. Reserved for Future Use
- 3474. Danger No Longer Exists or Attacker Disabled
- 3475. Right to Eject Trespasser from Real Property
- 3476. Right to Defend Real or Personal Property
- 3477. Presumption That Resident Was Reasonably Afraid of Death or Great Bodily Injury ([Pen. Code, § 198.5](#))
- 3478–3499. Reserved for Future Use

3.1 Insanity

There is no functional difference between temporary and permanent insanity under California law. The sole issue is the status of the individual's sanity at the time of the crime. The method of determining this is the two pronged M'Naghten rule.

- The first prong requires that an individual understand the nature and quality of his or her act.
- The second prong requires that they be able to distinguish between right and wrong.

Any person who cannot satisfy both prongs is statutorily insane and a finding of not guilty by reason of insanity will result in commitment to a state mental hospital instead of prison.

3.2 Diminished Actuality (Formally known as Diminished Capacity)

What was formerly known as a "diminished capacity" plea differed in important ways from "not guilty by reason of insanity." "Reason of insanity" is an affirmative defense to crimes. This means a successful plea of insanity will, in most states, result in a verdict of "not guilty" and commission of the defendant to a mental institution. "Diminished capacity" on the other hand, merely resulted in the defendant being convicted of a lesser offense.

California allowed a plea of diminished capacity beginning in the 1950s. But the plea came under intense scrutiny during as the so-called "Twinkie defense," in the 1979 case *California v. White*. Dan White, a former city supervisor, shot and killed the mayor of San Francisco, George Moscone, and another city supervisor, Harvey Milk. The crime displayed a high degree of premeditation: White packed extra

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bullets, climbed through a City Hall window to avoid metal detectors, and shot the two men nine times.

White's attorneys argued diminished capacity and claimed a diet of only junk food had created a chemical imbalance in White's brain, and that he was depressed over his loss of his city supervisor position. Therefore, he was unable to premeditate murder, one of the requirements for first-degree murder.

The jury convicted White of voluntary manslaughter -- the least serious charge for homicide. This caused an uproar against the diminished capacity plea in California, and in 1982, voters overwhelmingly approved a proposition to eliminate the defense.

Now referred to as "diminished actuality," Penal Code Sections [25](#) and [29.4](#) state, in part, that no act committed by a person while in a state of voluntary intoxication is less criminal by reason of his or her having been in that condition. Evidence concerning an accused person's intoxication, trauma, mental illness, disease, or defect shall not be admissible to show or negate capacity to form the particular purpose, intent, motive, malice aforethought, knowledge, or other mental state required for the commission of the crime charged.

The following guidelines can be used to help rebut the defense claims of diminished actuality:

- The suspect's demeanor must be observed at all times to see if there are any indications of the existence or non-existence of diminished actuality. This is true whether the defendant has just been arrested, whether he/she is being transported after the arrest, or while he/she is being interrogated.
- Determine if the suspect speaks rationally and if he/she answers questions in a straight-forward manner. If a defendant appears to conduct him/herself in a rational manner and can intelligently respond to questions, this would be valuable evidence to assist in negating the defense of diminished actuality. If he/she appears unable to control him/herself or is unable to speak in a rational manner, this should be documented in writing and whenever possible, tape recorded.

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- Talk to witnesses at the scene of the crime. Attempt to establish the suspect's demeanor and appearance at the time of the crime and/or the time surrounding the crime. Determine if the suspect screamed, acted irrationally, or if he/she acted in an unemotional, methodical manner. These details are extremely important.

The homicide investigator must remember that he/she has three major areas of concern that must be considered when he/she is investigating the actions and conducting the interrogation of a murder suspect:

- Things the suspect did prior to the crime; e.g., purchased a weapon, kept victim's residence under surveillance, parked the vehicle some distance away, covered license plates, telephoned the victim to determine if he/she was at home, disguised self, consumed alcohol, ingested drugs, made verbal threats, etc.
- Things the defendant did during the crime; e.g., rational, or irrational thinking, how he/she committed the killing, why injuries were inflicted on the victim in a certain area, etc.
- Things the defendant did after the crime; e.g., wiping away finger prints, removing other evidence that would connect him/her to the crime, destroying bloody clothing or the weapon, etc. All three areas are mutually supportive because they may either prove or disprove that the suspect committed the crime. However, the most essential of the three areas is to determine those things the defendant did prior to the crime. Attempt to determine prior planning, premeditation, motives, and other relevant facts, statements or activity that would prove that the crime was not a spontaneous, senseless act, but rather an act embodying the prerequisite of malice aforethought, willfulness, deliberation, and premeditation.

Voluntary intoxication is not a defense to committing a homicide. The fact that a defendant had been drinking prior to the commission of a crime does not establish intoxication or require the giving of instructions to the jury that intoxication may negate the element of specific intent. Where there is reasonable doubt as to the degree of a defendant's intoxication, the court must order the jury to ". . . consider the defendant's state of intoxication in determining whether he/she had specific

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intent to kill with malice aforethought and, if the evidence raised a reasonable doubt as to his/her capacity to form specific intent, the jury must find for the defendant on that issue.”

Since any degree of intoxication may be relevant to prove or disprove diminished actuality, a blood-alcohol sample of the suspect’s blood, urine, or breath (in order of priority) should be sought in all suspected diminished actuality cases when the suspect is in custody within close proximity to the time of the crime.

The investigator should first attempt to obtain the suspect’s consent; if consent cannot be obtained, investigators should author a warrant to draw the suspect's blood.

NOTE: Refer to case law (eg. [Mitchell v. Wisconsin, 139 S. Ct. 2525 \(2019\)](#) and [Missouri v. McNeely, 569 U.S. 141 \(2013\)](#)) regarding warrantless blood draw from DUI suspects.

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The first officer(s) to arrive at the scene of a homicide shall immediately isolate the vicinity where the crime was committed or where the body was found. They shall visually examine or “clear” the crime scene to ensure there are no additional victims or suspects present. Carefully note anything touched and, as soon as possible, make comprehensive notes of the first observations and actions taken. This may be the key to the entire case. The senior officer of the first unit that arrives on the scene shall be responsible for ensuring that crime scene procedures have been implemented and/or completed until relieved by a supervisor or detective. A list of the Homicide Preliminary Investigation Responsibilities for Uniformed Personnel is included in [Appendix A](#).

NOTE: *Entry into a residence is permitted under the 4th Amendment Emergency Aid Exception, which states, “officers may only enter a dwelling without consent or warrant in order to “render emergency assistance to an injured occupant or to protect an occupant from imminent injury,” ([Brigham City v. Stuart \(2006\) 547 U.S. 398, 403](#), and there must be an objectively reasonable basis to believe medical assistance is needed or a person is in danger. [Michigan v. Fisher \(2009\) 558 U.S. 45, 49](#).”*

No one should be permitted to enter the scene until investigating officers arrive and assume control of the investigation. Supervisors and command staff officers shall ensure that the first available officer(s) at scene cordon off and protect the crime scene.

NOTE: *A member of the clergy, a doctor, or paramedics shall be permitted to approach dead or dying persons, but shall be observed at all times, and cautioned to avoid destroying any evidence.*

Officers assigned to any duty at the scene shall remain until they are relieved by the investigating officers ([Refer to LAPD Manual Section 4/238.83](#)). Officers should not mark or collect evidence unless absolutely necessary or disturb the crime scene in any way from its original condition prior to the arrival of the investigating officer (I/O). If the decision is made to collect evidence to prevent destruction due to inclement weather, encroachment by the public or extenuating circumstances such as officer safety, all efforts should be made to photograph and

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document its location prior to doing so. Additionally, officers should take all steps to prevent contamination of any item or surface (wearing gloves, place the item in a paper envelope or box) that may have fingerprints, gunshot residue or DNA on it.

NOTE: *In all cases where the decedent is in public view, the Crime Scene Canopy shall be deployed. Refer to [Office of Operations Order No. 1, dated February 23, 2016, “Deployment and Use of the Crime Scene Canopy Established; and, Crime Scene Canopy Tracking Log Activated.”](#)*

1. Medical Treatment (MT)

Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) fire fighters are often the first responders to the scene of a homicide or death. Rescue ambulance (RA) crews may even transport victims prior to the arrival of police. In such cases, the ambulance crew may be summoned back to the scene when available to provide critical information or clarification. Their observations at scene and en route to the hospital may provide significant leads or critical information to the investigation. While fire fighters are aware of the importance of evidence and trained to take steps to protect it, their mission to preserve life often leads to unintentional contamination of the scene. Items get moved, stepped on or transferred.

Officers who are able to speak with any fire fighters who were present at a scene should document the following:

- LAFD incident number for the death/homicide scene;
- Date and time, and who pronounced death;
- LAFD units (not just the RA unit) at scene;
- Name, employee number and home station of assignment for each fire fighter present (since fire fighters are sometimes assigned to other stations for back fill or on overtime details);
- Observations: Fire fighters may discuss what they personally saw, heard, and did at a scene (the position of victim’s body, their path of travel through the scene, what objects they moved, other pertinent actions), but cannot provide any information that is protected by the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act](#) (HIPAA).

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NOTE: *The LAFD utilizes a computerized “paperless” process to document any pre-hospital care provided to a patient by Emergency Medical Service (EMS) personnel at a scene. The LAFD Pre-Hospital Care Report, which lists the call and patient information as well as the clinical data, cannot be provided to police in the field, however. Once completed, a copy of it may be provided to the investigating division on request. For assistance, investigators should contact any EMS captain or the [LAFD EMS Records Section](#) at (213) 978-3835. For authorization to interview any LAFD employee, to obtain information on employee or to research an incident, contact the [LAFD Arson/Counter-Terrorism Section](#) at (213) 893-9800 option 5.*

There may also be times when officers are the first to arrive at a scene. In such cases, officers should follow established Department policies for requesting an RA, and consider the preservation of life among their top priorities at scene.

2. Notifying the Homicide Investigator

Homicide investigators are rarely the first officers at the scene of a homicide. The body is usually discovered by friends, relatives, or citizens who in turn notify the police or call for an ambulance. Notification to the investigator is usually made through Department channels.

When an investigator is notified that a dead body has been found or that a homicide has occurred, his/her first act should be to make note of the following:

- Date, time, and location where he/she received the call;
- Manner of notification (by radio, telephone or in person);
- Who made the notification (officer’s name, serial number, assignment);
- Location of the body and/or the crime scene(s);
- General circumstances relating to the crime or discovery (radio call, citizen, or anonymous call);
- Status of patrol operations at scene (active perimeter, searches in-progress),
- Name, rank, division of assignment and mobile phone number of the supervisor or senior officer in command at the crime scene;
- Present weather conditions at the scene;
- How many witnesses have been identified, suspects are in custody and/or individuals are being detained AND their locations (at scene, wanting to

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- leave, at the station, at a hospital);
- Have any field show-ups been conducted; and,
- Are there any cultural or language issues or special needs.

The answers to many of these questions will enable the investigator to request additional personnel, the appropriate investigative resources and assistance with any transportation, accommodations, and/or translation issues. Prior to leaving for the crime scene, the investigator should attempt to establish communications with the on-scene supervisor or officer in charge to verify that crime scene procedures have been implemented.

3. Crime Scene Procedures

The preliminary investigation at the crime scene is the most important and possibly the most sensitive aspect of the homicide investigation. The best investigative method at the scene of a death investigation is to treat each case as a criminal homicide until the facts prove differently. Extreme care must be exercised in preserving the scene and any evidence present. Failure to properly protect the scene may also cause irreparable damage to the case. In most cases, this responsibility falls on the first officers to arrive. Officers must remember that it is easier to establish a larger perimeter and then shrink it than to attempt to enlarge a crime scene that was too small.

For example, if the crime scene is outdoors, consider using natural barriers (property lines, intersections) to cordon off a wide area with yellow, crime scene tape or other barricades to effectively secure the scene. Once an area is cordoned off, it can be divided into sectors and systematically examined for evidence. Consideration should be given to designating a location for the media to stage where they can observe the scene, receive updates and report on the incident without impeding the investigation. Other considerations include designating a secure location for the investigative command post (CP) that is out of view of the media and public, and an area where witnesses can be separated and secluded for interviews. Weather conditions may require that efforts be made to protect evidence that could otherwise be altered or destroyed. Crime scene canopies may need to be deployed in the cases where a body is exposed to public view. The procedures for deployment of area crime scene canopies are contained in [Office of Operations Order No. 1, Deployment and Use of the Crime Scene Canopy](#)

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[Established; and, Crime Scene Canopy Tracking Log Activated, dated February 23, 2016.](#)

If communications with on-scene personnel are not practicable, the homicide investigator should ensure that instructions are properly relayed to the uniformed officers at the scene to perform the following procedures:

- **Perimeters:** Ensure an inner and an outer perimeter have been established and that each is large enough to contain and protect all possible evidence.
- **Crime Scene Log** ([LAPD Form 03.11.04](#)): Ensure one has been started and that everyone who arrives at the scene and is assigned a task or enters the crime scene must be logged in and out.
- **Crime Broadcast:** Transmit outstanding suspect and/or vehicle information as soon as possible. Include all known information that might identify the suspect.
- **Locate and Arrest Suspects:** If the whereabouts of the suspect(s) is known, locate and arrest him or her.
- **Crime Scene Diagram:** Using a Crime Scene Sketch ([LAPD Form 03.13.00](#)), complete a diagram of the area surrounding the crime scene without disturbing the immediate crime scene. Include the location of parked vehicles or a diagram depicting where the vehicles were parked, and the vehicle's make, model, color, and license numbers. Also obtain the same information on all vehicles parked in the area and document the presence of overhead street lamps. This will assist with evaluating witness credibility.
- **Canvass:** Have patrol officers begin door knocking locations for possible witnesses and complete an FI for every location contacted, even if no one is present. The Canvass Log used to facilitate documentation is included in [Appendix F](#).
- **Incident History:** Officers should contact the Communications Division watch commander at their assigned dispatch center and request the incident numbers for any other incidents related to the crime. This would include recent and prior calls in the vicinity, and all units at the scene. If possible, officers should attempt to retrieve a hard copy of the current incident for the responding homicide investigators to review.
- **Responder Statements:** Every police officer, detective, and supervisor who responds to the scene of a homicide, who is assigned a task, or enters the

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crime scene, shall complete the detailed Investigative Action/Statement Form (IASF), LAPD [Form 03.11.20](#) before leaving the crime scene unless they are permitted to submit the form at a later time or excused from doing so by the lead investigator. When completing their statements, employees can refer to the Department approved [Officer's Crime Scene Statement Form](#) for suggested contents, descriptions, and details ([Refer to a sample of the form in Appendix A](#)). This form may also be utilized to keep notes and should be attached to the IASF along with any other notes, field interview cards, forms, photographs, and/or recordings the employee may have created.

- **Witness Statements:** Officers should complete Field Interview (FI) cards, which include a brief description of what was witnessed, on all possible witnesses. If the back of the card is not sufficient to write the basic facts, officers should utilize a notebook, form, or paper. Since most officers today carry a portable, audio recorder with them, they should be encouraged to record every witness's statement (i.e., Body Worn Video) . If the individual has no permanent address, obtain the address of a friend or relative where the witness can be contacted. Field Interview cards shall be thoroughly completed and include the name(s) and serial number(s) of the officer(s) who completed the card(s). Once completed and the situation dictates, these should be turned over to the at-scene supervisor for presentation to the homicide investigators upon their arrival. If an individual has no identification, consider seeking consent and using a Department approved digital camera to take photographs of them (facial and full-body). These may be the only photos of this individual and can be invaluable in helping investigators and witnesses identify people and their actions (witnesses, suspects). Fill out the "Subject Photo" form and have the witness or suspect hold the form below their face so the information will appear in the photograph. A "Subject Photo" form is included in [Appendix G](#).

NOTE: *The title "Subject" has nothing to do with juveniles. In this context, the word subject is used because the role of the party is not known (Witness, Suspect).*

- **Utilize Body Worn Video:** Officers should ensure to activate body worn video to obtain potential video evidence or statements made by witnesses or suspects.

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NOTE: *Documentation in the form of note-keeping, audio and/or video recording has always been the very foundation of a good death investigation. Accurate, comprehensive, and chronological notes not only facilitate the investigation, but also allow an investigator to present the strongest possible case in court. All forms, notes, and FI cards should be as detailed as possible since they may be the only reports an employee will be able to review in court to refresh his or her memory, sometimes years later.*

4. Arrival at Scene

The scene where a violent crime or death has occurred can be a very chaotic environment. The presence of the media, potential witnesses, and bystanders combined with the severity of the crime and the on-going police and fire department activity will inevitably contribute to the arriving homicide investigator's anxiety. Many things will need to be done, several of which will require immediate attention. One of the first things an investigating officer should do is take charge. This is most appropriately done by identifying oneself to the supervisor or officer-in-charge, advising them that you have been assigned the case and will now assume command. The homicide investigator(s) is in overall command of a homicide scene and has the authority to exclude everyone from the scene except the Coroner Investigator. This includes news representatives and other police officers, regardless of rank. As soon as practical, the homicide investigator should take time to review and assess the crime scene procedures already in place provide directions, and make adjustments as needed.

For many reasons, it is not uncommon for an investigator to have a vague recollection of when he or she was notified or arrived at the crime scene. It takes only a few moments to make notes, but it is vitally important to the investigation and indicative of the investigator's attention to detail. Therefore, the investigating officer should note the following:

- Time of Arrival at Scene.
- Exact Address and Location of Perimeters
- Initial Brief. Normally, a patrol sergeant or other supervisor will update the arriving investigators and brief them on the status of the crime scene. The general facts will likely include: the source of the call, key witness statements, status of any canvasses, any significant police observations,

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activities, and/or leads.

- Description of the Crime Scene:
 - Exterior Scene (if applicable)- if the body is located outdoors, note if the area is primarily residential or a commercial zone, the types and general sizes of structures, the presence/absence of and/or the description of sidewalks or streets, and the types of surfaces, and/or vehicles;
 - Interior Scene (if applicable)- if the body is located indoors, note the geographical location of the body within the structure, the room description, (the types (example: kitchen, family room), sizes and condition of any windows and doors (locked, unlocked) etc.), the items within (describe the types, locations, and sizes of furniture, rugs, pictures, and appliances etc.), and the floor location if applicable (example: apartment number 2, second floor);
 - Lighting conditions (daytime, nighttime, artificial and ambient sources);
 - Weather and temperature (dry, overcast, wet);
 - Description of the Body (sex, physical and clothing description, anatomical position, presence of blood, types, and locations of visible wounds);
 - General Description and Location of Evidence.

5. Control of Uniformed Personnel

Uniformed officers who have been assigned to protect the scene should be told to remain at their posts until relieved by the homicide investigator. For major incidents, the homicide investigator should consider the use of a field supervisor to coordinate uniformed officers. Ensure that officers are properly deployed at the crime scene to prevent contamination or destruction of evidence. Investigators should make an effort to document or collect any diagrams, notes, and/or work product created by the incident commander or the command post as it can later aid in identifying officers who were present and their assigned tasks should questions arise.

6. Dealing with Detainees

When prioritizing tasks at a scene, homicide investigators should determine the status and location of any person(s) being detained by police.

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7. Dealing with Suspect(s)

7.1 Outstanding

Police should attempt to determine a suspect's location. If the suspect is not in custody, ensure that crime information has been broadcast, if appropriate. When the suspect is known and has fled the scene, a detective or, if necessary, the uniformed watch commander should be contacted and requested to begin checking all available records and systems for background information on the suspect and his or her associates, relatives, vehicles, hangouts, etc. Whenever possible, police should make all efforts to arrest those involved, and if practical, immediately consult with and/or notify the homicide investigator. In the event a homicide investigator wishes to notify or disseminate suspect information to other law enforcement agencies in the region, 24-hour assistance may be obtained from:

- [U.S. Customs & Border Protection](#) at (562) 980-3100,
- [Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)- Los Angeles](#) at (310) 477-6565,
- [California Highway Patrol](#) (CHP) at (818) 240-8200,
- Los Angeles World Airports/[LAX Airport Police](#) at (424) 646-6167,
- LAPD Department Operations Center, Regional Crime Center at (213) 484-6700, and
- LAPD Records & Identification (R&I) Division, Warrant Teletypes Unit (WTU) at (213) 486-8260.

7.2 In Custody

If the suspect is in custody, the homicide investigator must decide whether the suspect should be interrogated at the police station, at the scene, or some other location. Wherever the location may be, homicide investigators should remain flexible. Prior to conducting an interrogation, investigators should consider a multitude of factors such as, knowledge of the scene, familiarity with the evidence, any information provided by witnesses, the suspect's background, or other factors. (See Chapter VII/Section 5, [Interrogation and Interview Techniques](#), for additional discussion on this subject).

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7.3 Transporting a Suspect

The transportation of the suspect to the police station can be a crucial juncture in the investigation. It can be a period where the suspect's attitude hardens towards the victim or the police and could result in an unwillingness to communicate. It can also be a period when the suspect develops remorse. Since it could become a decisive moment for the suspect, it is imperative that the transporting officers or investigators say or do nothing that could cause the suspect to resist subsequent investigative efforts.

The following points are recommended for those who may be charged with the responsibility of transporting the suspect to the station:

- **DO NOT admonish the suspect** or ask the suspect any questions about the crime. This duty should be reserved for the investigator(s) assigned to conducting the interrogation. If the suspect becomes talkative, officers should listen and document any statements when the time is appropriate.
- **DO NOT make any statements or comments** that may be interpreted as an attempt to elicit an incriminating statement or action from the suspect.
- **DO NOT discuss aspects of the case** with the suspect.
- **DO NOT engage the suspect in extended friendly conversation.** This could be interpreted as a "softening up" process and used by the defense to challenge the admissibility of any statements.
- **DO NOT transport a witness** in the same vehicle as the suspect.
- **DO NOT transport multiple suspects** in the same vehicle.
- **DO NOT use gestures or language** that could be interpreted as hostile towards or by the suspect.
- **DO NOT insult or berate** the suspect.
- **DO NOT place the suspect in a holding tank or cell occupied by other arrestees** as other inmates could attempt to dissuade the suspect from cooperating with the investigation and/or agitate the suspect.
- **DO NOT allow suspects to overhear police radio transmissions** or officers' conversations.
- **DO NOT allow the suspect to wash his or her hands, contaminate areas of their body or clothes,** and take care to ensure they do not attempt to alter their appearance in any significant manner.

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NOTE: *Police officers may use a hidden tape recorder and should activate their Digital in Car Video System (DICVS) to record a suspect's statements. A criminal suspect in a police vehicle does not have a reasonable expectation of privacy.*

7.4 Examining a Suspect for Evidence

The examination of a suspect for injuries and evidence should be done by a homicide investigator or by another experienced detective who is assigned the task by the primary investigator. It is important that an experienced investigator conduct the examination in a timely manner to preclude the loss or destruction of evidence and/or misinterpretation of its significance. Photographs depicting the suspect in the clothes he/she was arrested in should be taken by a Technical Investigation Division (TID) photographer. If the investigator observes anything of evidentiary value requiring collection or anything that cannot be collected (injuries, physical abnormalities, dirt, or debris), it is recommended that a Forensic Science Division (FSD) criminalist be summoned and scaled photographs be taken.

In the event uniformed officers are assigned this task, they should be cautioned to use extreme care and directed to preserve the suspect's clothing and shoes for evidence of trace materials. They should take or have photographs taken when there is evidence of trace material or visible injuries that might connect the suspect to the crime. The suspect shall be instructed to undress over a clean piece of paper to prevent loss or destruction of physical evidence. The suspect's clothing and the clean piece of paper shall be booked as evidence. All clothing shall be packaged separately. Anytime a suspect is believed to have handled a firearm and/or in cases where a firearm was used, efforts should be made to sample a suspect's hands using adhesive disks contained in a Gunshot Residue (GSR) kit. Personnel collecting GSR evidence shall completely fill out all required information on the front of the kit (i.e., name of officer and suspect, date and time test completed, time suspect last washed hands) and deliver the completed kit to a homicide investigator unless instructed otherwise. For additional information on GSR evidence and kits, contact the **FSD Trace Analysis Unit** at **(323) 415-8850**.

NOTE: *Depending upon conditions, a significant amount of any gunshot residue on a surface will be lost by the end of the first hour. All of the evidence is likely lost by the end of the sixth hour.*

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8. Dealing with Witnesses

Individuals who witness a crime are vital to the successful outcome of an investigation and prosecution. They should be identified and encouraged to cooperate. Be mindful that people may have prejudice towards police. They may be afraid of helping the police out of fear of retaliation. Others may want to avoid police fearing contact may adversely affect their immigration status. How people are treated at a scene can have a direct impact on the level of their participation. Officers should make great efforts to calm and reassure witnesses and area residents. This can be accomplished by separating them and escorting them to a safe and quiet location that is out of public view where they will feel comfortable.

If a witness agrees, officers should transport them to a police station for a recorded interview with an investigator. Although it may be convenient and effective to have all potential witnesses transported to the police station for interviews, officers may not do so unless the witness voluntarily agrees to accompany the officers. The fact that an individual may have observed a crime or possesses useful information is not an adequate justification for detention. In short, there is no enforceable duty to be a witness ([Refer to LAPD Legal Bulletin, Volume 17, Issue 2, dated July 21, 1993, “Detaining Witnesses to A Homicide.”](#))

NOTE: *Officers should activate their Body Worn Video when making contact with witnesses and ensure their encounters are recorded.*

9. Dealing with Bystanders

Officers and detectives should use courtesy and tact when dealing with curious onlookers. This approach serves several purposes. It will gain cooperation from people and may persuade a witness to come forward and provide valuable information about the crime. There may even be times when a suspect or a suspect’s associate returns to the scene to watch the investigation or attempt to retrieve dropped items. Officers should pay close attention to any bystanders or individuals inquiring about the crime. These people may become subjects of interest at a later point in the investigation.

Officers and detectives may also have to interact with other Department employees who are not assigned to the incident or directly involved in the crime scene

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procedures. The presence of curious employees in and around a scene can result in the unintentional destruction or contamination of evidence. Standing or walking at the crime scene, as well as leaning against walls or doorways, may destroy, or alter valuable evidence such as blood, latent prints, shoeprints, hair, or skin specimens. Should fingerprints, palm prints, or shoe sole impressions be located, all individuals (police, fire, coroner, witnesses, victims) who were at the crime scene may have to be fingerprinted or submit a shoe sole exemplar for elimination purposes. This can be time consuming and can be avoided by ensuring tight controls that limit the number of people who enter the crime scene.

10. Mandatory Reporting of a Death

10.1 Department Operations Center Regional Crime Center

If notification of a death or homicide has not already been made, the homicide investigator shall notify the DOC, Regional Crime Center at **(213) 484-6700** as soon as possible. The crime center is also commonly referred to as the “Department Command Post.”

10.2 Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner

As soon as practical within the first hour of arriving at scene, the homicide investigator shall make telephonic notification of a death to the Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner. Commonly referred to as the “**first call**,” notification shall be made to the Investigations Division watch commander, 24-hour desk at **(323) 343-0722**. If the Coroner is not immediately needed at the scene, the investigating officer shall provide an approximate time when the Coroner Investigator can respond. Particular consideration should be given to those situations in which determining the time of death is a critical issue or in which the recovery of biological evidence is crucial to the investigation. The Coroner Investigator shall be advised of the facts necessary to preclude the possible destruction of evidence. If no time can be estimated, the investigating officer shall arrange to make a second notification to the Investigations Division watch commander when response is appropriate.

When circumstances indicate that the investigation of the death requires the expertise of a specialized investigator (Coroner criminalist, forensic

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anthropologist, cadaver dog handler) or equipment due to the body's location (treacherous terrain, in water), this should be relayed to the Coroner's Investigations Division watch commander to enable the responding investigator to arrange for the appropriate personnel and resources.

NOTE: *In non-criminal death investigations, when a dead body that comes within the jurisdiction of the Coroner ([Refer to LAPD Manual Section 4/238.46](#)) is exposed to public view, the investigating officers shall notify Coroner and be guided by the instructions of the Coroner's representative dispatched to the scene ([Refer to LAPD Manual Section 4/238.23](#)). In all cases where the decedent is in public view, the Crime Scene Canopy shall be deployed. (Refer to [Office of Operations Order No. 1, dated February 23, 2016, "Deployment and Use of the Crime Scene Canopy Established; and, Crime Scene Canopy Tracking Log Activated"](#))*

11. Dying Declarations

When an officer or detective arrives at a scene where the victim is still alive, but death appears imminent, they should attempt to elicit a statement from the victim. Any statement or utterances may later prove invaluable in firmly establishing if a crime occurred and for investigating the circumstances surrounding the crime. A dying declaration is one of the few types of hearsay evidence that may be introduced at the trial. The elements of a dying declaration are simple, and they are substantially as follows:

- The declarant must believe that he or she is going to die and there is no hope of recovery. It is not essential that the declarant be informed by the doctor or by the officers that there is no hope of recovery, only that his or her actions and speech indicate the belief
AND
- The declarant's statement must refer to the manner and circumstances that brought about his or her present condition and ultimate death **AND**
- The declarant must die.

The statement may be used in a criminal trial for the causing of the declarant's death, or in a civil wrongful death suit. It is recommended that the statement be recorded, and best practice is to have the statement recorded with body worn video.

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However, if a recording device is not available, the declaration should be written out and if possible, signed by the declarant. Keep in mind recording and/or a signed statement are not essential requirements. No oath must be administered, nor is it necessary that witnesses be present.

NOTE: *If a victim or suspect is removed from the scene by an ambulance crew prior to the homicide investigator's arrival, the senior officer or supervisor in charge shall assign an officer to accompany the person to the hospital and attempt to elicit a statement, if possible.*

12. Officer–Involved Shooting (OIS) Resulting in Death

Officers may find themselves responding to an incident wherein an LAPD officer discharged a firearm, and an officer or another person is killed. These incidents are investigated by Force Investigation Division (FID) and specific procedures apply. FID has developed special protocols to investigate these incidents. (Refer to LAPD Manual Sections [3/794.10](#) and [4/214.50](#))

The first officer at scene should ensure the following actions occur if they have not already been completed:

- Request a supervisor and additional units. Assess the need for medical personnel and request a rescue ambulance if required.
- Handcuff the suspect, even if the suspect is severely wounded.
- Preserve the scene. If tactically safe, leave all evidence where it is located.
- Coordinate the arrival of responding units and establish a perimeter for scene preservation and for the search of outstanding suspects, if appropriate.
- Ensure the involved officer's service weapon is de-cocked and holstered once the tactical situation is resolved, if appropriate.
- Locate and identify witnesses to the shooting incident.

NOTE: *Pursuant to [Government Code Section 3303](#), a peace officer involved in the use of deadly force is required to provide a Public Safety Statement to a supervisor. Information regarding outstanding suspects, weapons or other information that may impact the public's safety must be divulged.*

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<i>INCIDENT</i>	<i>SITUATION</i>	<i>TYPE OF INJURY</i>			
		<i>NON INJURY</i>	<i>MINOR INJURY</i>	<i>HOSPITALIZED OR SERIOUS INJURY</i>	<i>DEATH</i>
OTHER USE OF FORCE OR LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION RELATED INCIDENTS (NOT TRAFFIC)	UNINTENTIONAL TACTICAL OR NON- TACTICAL DISCHARGE	FID	FID	FID	FID
OFFICER INVOLVED SHOOTING	ALL ANIMAL SHOOTINGS	FID	FID	FID	FID
	ACCIDENTAL	FID	FID	FID	FID
		FID	FID	FID	FID
USE OF UPPER BODY CONTROL HOLD	INTENTIONAL	FID	FID	FID	FID

**CHAPTER III: CRIME SCENE
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1. Pronouncing Death

It shall be the responsibility of the ambulance crew, except when a person is obviously dead, to determine if death has occurred. If person is obviously dead, pronouncement can be made by Department personnel. The date and time of death as determined must be recorded.

2. Examination of the Scene

A crime scene examination and evaluation should be conducted in a methodical manner so the homicide investigator can assess the progress already made and plan any secondary searches to avoid duplication of efforts. However, prior to beginning any examination or search, officers and investigators must first know and adhere to the laws that govern their actions.

The Fourth Amendment of the Constitution is the foundation for the laws regarding search and seizure and the issuance of warrants based on probable cause. It states, “the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.” Over the years, courts have determined what constitutes a search or seizure under the Fourth Amendment. The following section includes case law in regard to search and seizure and should not be considered a substitute for formal instruction.

2.1 Laws Pertaining to Searches

- In the case of [Mincey v. Arizona, 437 U.S. 385, 57 L. Ed. 2d. 290 \(1978\)](#), the United States Supreme Court ruled that no “Murder Scene” exception to the Fourth Amendment exists that would permit a warrantless search of a major crime scene. As a result, police shall conduct searches of the homicide crime scene only after legal requirements have been met. The court in Mincey had no difficulty in allowing the cursory search of the

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apartment for additional suspects or victims because the court realized the emergency nature of such a search, which is essential to the safety of possible victims and the officers.

- In the case of the [People v. Block, 6 Supreme Court of California 3d. 239 \(1971\)](#), the court ruled that the police are still free to seize: (1) any evidence that is in plain view during the course of their cursory search, (2) any evidence within “arms reach” of the suspect, or (3) any evidence in other rooms where additional victims or suspects may reasonably be located.
- In the case of the [People v. Freeny, 37 Court of Appeals of California 3d. 20 \(1974\)](#), the court ruled that, when officers determine evidence may be present in areas beyond the scope of a cursory search of the premises, they may do what is reasonable to secure the location in order to prevent the disappearance of evidence of the crime while waiting for the issuance of a search warrant. The officers should have a reasonable belief that evidence may be destroyed if the premises are not secured. No unnecessary restrictions should be placed on non-arrestee residents who may be present.

While there are many acceptable ways to conduct a search of a location (consent, probation, and/or parole searches, etc.) the use of a search warrant will result in the least likelihood of judicial scrutiny and the possible suppression of evidence later on. Therefore, obtaining a search warrant prior to conducting a search is more desirable than any of the other lawful search options.

NOTE: *Whenever possible, police personnel at the scene should obtain the signature of the person having authority to give consent to a search of the premises via in house [Consent to Search form 11](#). A signed consent can be beneficial at a later time if the person alleges their consent was not given. Additionally, body worn video or a recording device should be used to record the consent if feasible. Refer to [Administrative Order No. 22, dated November 20, 2020, “Field Officer’s Notebook, Form 15.03.00-Revised; and, Consent to Search Verbal Advisement, 15.05.00”](#) for additional information.*

If the victim of a homicide was the resident of the premises in which he/she was found, it does not mean that the premises can automatically be searched. The rights of other possible residents may be violated in doing so. The possibility that

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an absent spouse or roommate may be involved in the crime or some other illegal activity is a possibility. It is necessary to preserve the admissibility of evidence that might link the co-resident to the crime.

If the identity of the victim is unknown and it cannot be established that he/she is the resident of the premises where he/she is found, officers shall not conduct an in-depth search of the premises simply to establish identity. The fact that the victim cannot be linked to the location of the crime would be an indication that someone else may reside there. The rights of the unknown third party may be violated if his/her residence were searched without a search warrant, absent exigent circumstances. The identity of the victim, by itself, does not constitute an exigent circumstance.

NOTE: Refer to [*LAPD Legal Bulletin, Volume 10, Issue 2*](#), dated June 28, 1985, No “Murder Scene” Exception to Fourth Amendment as it relates to the *Thompson vs. Louisiana* decision and *Mincey vs. Arizona* decision. See Chapter III/12.1 for other crime scene search limitations. For legal assistance, telephone the Los Angeles District Attorney’s (LADA) Command Post (24-hour) at (213) 974-3607.

2.2 Visual Exam of the Scene

Normally following the initial brief, a patrol supervisor at scene or another officer will escort the homicide investigator through the scene, pointing out items of evidentiary value. If not already done, the homicide investigator should establish a single pathway into the crime scene area to be used as the entrance and exit until the examination is completed.

The examination should begin with the area immediately surrounding the body. This is considered the “primary crime scene.” Investigators should exercise extreme care and make a note of the location(s) of possible evidence. This will assist in developing the best search pattern to be used. The area immediately surrounding the dead body should be examined first to prevent accidental contamination. Obvious items of interest would include particles, stains, marks, tire tracks, shoeprints, blood, objects, or conditions indicative of a struggle or other activity, and weapons. There may be expended cartridge cases or projectiles found lying on the floor, rug, or carpet. It is recommended that these cartridges or projectiles be covered with a folded piece of paper to prevent them from

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accidentally being moved, altered, or otherwise contaminated. These methods are extremely valuable in protecting the evidence, particularly if the projectiles or cartridges are on a rug that has a design which makes the evidence difficult to see. Additionally, the homicide investigator should determine if there are any shoeprints, bloodstains, drag-marks, or other items on the floor or ground that may be stepped on and contaminated, altered, or destroyed. A recommended method is to darken the room and shine the flashlight obliquely on the ground or floor to cause shoeprints and other evidence to stand out. However, many shoeprints cannot be seen with the naked eye. Therefore, it is advisable to protect any smooth surface that a suspect might have walked upon and have it processed.

NOTE: *No attempt should be made to return moved items to their original positions prior to photographing the crime scene.*

The investigator should attempt to determine the inside temperature of the location and record any noticeable temperature difference between the area around the victim, the thermostat, and other rooms since some rooms trap heat.

NOTE: [California Government Code § 27491.3 \(c\)](#) provides for the following: *Officers may not search for or remove any papers, money, valuable property, or weapons constituting the estate of the deceased from the body of the deceased or from the scene of death prior to the arrival of the Coroner or without the permission of the Coroner. When an officer believes the circumstances surrounding the scene requires moving the body prior to the Coroner's arrival, the Coroner shall be contacted immediately by phone and appraised of the circumstances necessitating the movement of the body. The Coroner may authorize the body to be moved to a nearby location when appropriate. In some rare cases, exigent circumstances may require the body be moved to a secure location prior to the law enforcement agency contacting the Coroner. This must only be considered when the circumstances are such that the scene cannot reasonably be rendered safe and the delay caused by contacting the Coroner for permission to move the body may result in loss of the body or crucial evidence on the body. When the body is floating in the ocean, a river or pool it may be removed from the water and moved to the shore immediately adjacent to the location of the discovery prior to contacting the Coroner. Bodies beneath the surface of the water should only be removed from the water when Coroner personnel are present due to accelerated decomposition of such bodies once out of*

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water. When the body is in immediate danger of being damaged by approaching fire or other hazard it may be moved to a safe location immediately adjacent to the location of death prior to contacting the Coroner.

When the body must be rescued from a violent environment where officer safety is in jeopardy, such as civil unrest or barricaded suspect situations and SWAT operations, it may be moved to a safe location immediately adjacent to the location of death prior to contacting the Coroner. Law enforcement agencies should exercise extreme caution before moving a body when the death was not witnessed. Refer to [Chief of Detectives Notice dated March 2, 2018- "Protocols for the movement / transport of a decedent due to exigent circumstances."](#)

2.3 Visual Exam of the Body

After completion of the examination of the area immediately surrounding the body, the investigator should concentrate on the body itself. Conduct a close visual examination of the body, but do not touch, move, or alter the position of the body in any way. Make detailed notes.

- Body position (supine, prone, on its side);
- External appearance (signs of violence; decomposition; eyes and mouth open; color of skin; nails and hands; presence of blood, saliva, vomit, lung purge; and the direction of flow of any liquids);
- Evidence on the body (stains, marks, foreign hairs, defense wounds, and bottom and heel of shoes);
- Indications of motive and/or intent (multiple wounds, different types of wounds, mutilation, decapitation, castration);
- Describe the clothing or lack thereof (colors and articles, discrepancies such as clothing inside out or pushed up or down, pockets turned out, folds and creases). The direction of the folds and creases provides information leading to the method used in moving or placing the body at the location where it was found. The clothing could be helpful in determining peculiarities or distinctive features of the weapon, as well as the position of the victim at the time of injury.

Keep in mind that much of the investigating officer's examination cannot be effectively completed until the Coroner Investigator is present.

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NOTE: *The investigator shall not attempt to learn the identity of the deceased by searching his/her person for identification. The Coroner Investigator at the scene will conduct the search of the body for identification. The homicide investigator should carefully examine items of clothing worn by the victim after the coroner's representative and/or criminalist examines the body. If parts of the weapon are left in the wound, they should not be removed. The Coroner during the post mortem examination will recover these objects as evidence. At scene, only Coroner personnel are authorized to remove or collect items from the body (i.e., ligatures, etc.), per [CA Government Code § 27491.2](#).*

When describing the location and/or types of wounds, make careful observations. Describe only what you see, not what you think you see. For example, if a dead body begins to decompose and reddish green fluid begins to discharge from cracks in the skin, this fluid should be described objectively as “reddish green fluid,” rather than assigning some technical term to the substance. The problem sometimes encountered when assigning technical names to certain characteristics on the dead body arises during the trial when the defense attorney decides to test the expertise of the investigator in areas of knowledge common to a pathologist or other medical person (Refer to Chapter VII/Section 1, [Investigative Aids–Types of Wounds](#), discusses the various types of wounds that can be inflicted on a body, generally depicting the characteristics of each).

3. Technical Investigation Division (TID) Resources

Upon completing a visual examination of the scene, the homicide investigator should assess the need for technicians and/or other forensic experts. The investigator may want a photographer, forensic print specialist or police surveillance specialist to respond to the scene immediately or at a later time. Conferring directly with these will allow them to plan their deployment, avoid unnecessary delays and gather any equipment that may be needed.

Located in the C. Erwin Piper Technical Center, Space 212 at 555 Ramirez Street, Technical Investigation Division (TID) consists of the following units:

- [Electronics Unit](#)
- [Latent Print Unit \(LPU\)](#)
- [Photographic Unit](#)
- [Polygraph Unit](#)

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3.1 Electronics Unit

The Electronics Unit provides technical investigative support utilizing electronic surveillance devices. The unit is comprised of Police Surveillance Specialists who design, construct, and modify electronic equipment to match the nature of the investigations they support. Upon request, specialists can respond to locations to retrieve copies of video stored on video recorders and various other devices. The unit also reproduces audio and video evidence for court, repairs and maintains recording equipment, performs audio and video enhancement and redaction, and can retrieve electronic data stored in mobile phones.

3.2 Latent Print Unit (LPU)

Comprised of Forensic Print Specialists who are assigned to either the field detail or the analytical detail, the LPU's responsibilities include recovering, preserving, and comparing latent prints in connection with the investigation of crimes; preparing and presenting evidence for judicial proceedings and serving as the technical expert in court on all latent print matters. Latent print investigators at crime scenes use fingerprint powders to develop latent prints, which are then removed from the surface with the use of latent print tape and the tape is subsequently adhered to a latent print lift card.

Types of Prints

- **Visible prints** are those that have been made by transferring a foreign substance, such as ink, blood, grease, or dust from the crests of papillary ridges to an object. The most common type is a dust print. When a finger comes in contact with a thin layer of dust, some of the dust sticks on the friction ridges. When the finger subsequently comes in contact with or against a clean surface, a fingerprint results. The print, in some cases, may be so clear that it can be successfully searched in a single fingerprint file. Fingerprints in blood are common in homicide investigations. Generally, these prints are somewhat indistinct and less reliable for identification. Under certain conditions, however, these prints can reflect good detail and, with proper processing, may provide beneficial results.

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- **Molded or plastic fingerprints** generally occur when the finger touches or presses against a soft pliable surface such as putty, wax, envelope or stamp adhesive, grease, blood, or soap. A negative impression of the friction ridge pattern becomes a molded or plastic print. Such a print may be found on a newly painted object or any soft pliable surface.
- **Latent prints** are those made by the natural skin secretions, such as perspiration or sebaceous oil, or by dirt being deposited on the object touched from the details in the friction ridge pattern. Latent prints may be found on objects with smooth or polished surfaces, such as metal, glass or painted wood. Under favorable conditions, they may also appear on rough surfaces, starched fabric, paper, etc. The development of these type prints may be enhanced by the ninhydrin process.

Body Printing (Latent prints) is a procedure whereby a skilled technician processes specific areas of a dead body to find latent fingerprints. The procedure involves the development of prints by the application of powders and/or chemicals, and a visual examination with a forensic light source. Preserving fingerprints is accomplished through photography. Technicians assigned to Technical Investigation Division perform the procedure. The procedure is extremely limited in its application. Numerous factors must come into play before a particular dead body can qualify as a candidate for the procedure. As an example, the body printing process should occur at the actual crime scene location. If the body were to be transported somewhere else and covered in plastic, condensation or other disturbances would very likely affect skin surfaces. Placing a blanket or other covering over the body could create a condition whereby the skin surfaces could become contaminated in some form such as wiping off, streaking, or smearing of the natural secretion of the latent print, eliminating or reducing the chance for a successful body printing effort. An ideal situation would be one where the victim is a younger person—i.e., early teens or younger, has bathed, then died soon thereafter, but prior to having put on a robe or other clothing. Under these conditions, the body would be relatively free of sweat and other natural secretions making the skin surfaces more compatible with the procedure. Even under ideal conditions, the printing effort would most likely focus on the victim's arms, legs, and trunk areas. Other surfaces, such as the neck or face, might not be considered because of the quick build-up of natural secretions. If the investigator is confronted with a situation where the dead body might be a good candidate for the

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body printing procedure, he/she must ensure that the dead body is kept free of contamination, and he/she should quickly confer with Technical Investigation Division. Technicians may also conduct a visual examination of the victim to search for fingerprints in contaminants, such as blood, paint, ink or grease. Photography is the method used to preserve these types of prints.

Body printing example: The Body Printing completed by TID Latent Print Unit is depicted in the photographs below. The technician applied Amido Black which is used to darken the proteins in blood. In this case the process produced only a hand outline.



Before Body Printing



After Body Printing Amido Black is applied

Photographing Prints. Prints found at the scene of a homicide should be photographed. The procedure is recommended because it is much easier to introduce print evidence into court if the print has been photographed, and parts of the object that carried the print may show in the picture. If a good lift is obtained and the investigation reveals it to be that of the suspect, a photographic enlargement of the print should be made. Copies of the photograph should be in the investigation folder or package. Enlargements will assist in the immediate elimination or identification of a potential suspect.

Palm Prints and Other Areas of the Body. While it is true that more fingerprints are obtained in investigations than prints from other papillary skin areas, it should be mentioned that any palmar (palm, wrist), or plantar (foot, toe) skin designs may serve to positively identify a person.

Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). Latent print evidence is analyzed for value in order to process it through the AFIS database for

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identification. AFIS is a system that stores criminal arrest records along with finger and palm print exemplars that can be matched and or retrieved to conduct analysis. The LPU uses three separate and distinct AFIS databases:

- Los Angeles Automated Fingerprint Identification System (LAFIS) searches the local Los Angeles County database of more than 10 million subjects.
- California Department of Justice (CAL-ID) searches the State of California database of more than 27 million subjects.
- Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) is a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) database of more than 60 million subjects.

NOTE: *The use of CAL-ID and IAFIS is upon request only. The following is considered before granting this request: the seriousness of the crime, the circumstances surrounding the crime, if there has been no local hit, if it is a cold case and/or there is a belief that the suspect is out of the local area.*

Manual Comparison. Latent print evidence is manually compared to criminal arrest exemplar cards obtained from the AFIS database as well as exemplar cards retrieved from other sources. Latent print evidence that results in an identification is verified by two additional examiners and all processing and analysis results are communicated to the various Area investigating officers by written report.

NOTE: *The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) maintains a database of right thumb prints that have been obtained from applicants for State-issued driver's licenses and identification cards. To request that a right thumb print from the DMV database be compared to a known suspect and/or searched against the criminal database, contact the Records & Identification (R&I) Division, Criminal Identification Section. As of the date that this manual was published, the California DMV does not have the ability to receive a print and compare it against their database.*

3.3 Photographic Unit

The Photographic Unit operates 24-hours a day. Department Photographers are experienced and specially trained individuals who are equipped to photograph and video record people, places, and things in various conditions and settings. The investigator should be prepared to direct the Photographer to prevent the possible

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contamination of evidence, to ensure that all desired items are photographed, and to confirm that there is a clear understanding of what should be photographed. The investigator should ensure that the following photographs are taken to show proper perspective and relationships:

- The approach to the crime scene depicting the type of structure and the address, street signs, parked vehicles, and other identifying objects.
- The approach and point of entry to the immediate area where the dead body is located.
- The entire room or area surrounding the dead body, in a clockwise pattern.
- A picture taken from each corner of the room to show perspective.
- The perspective of any known eyewitnesses from the location they witnessed the crime.
- The entire body, including close-ups of wounds, folds in the victim's clothing and bedding, and the presence of other physical evidence; e.g., weapons, blood, fingerprints, foreign hairs, and stained/torn clothing.
- If applicable, photos without the assistance of a flash can be requested to capture the ambient lighting present at a scene.

NOTE: *Photographs that will be later used for comparison (tire or shoe impressions, fingerprints) should be photographed from the stable platform of a tripod for better results.*

A good investigative technique at a homicide crime scene is to have candid photographs taken of the spectators. The photographs may reveal the presence of a reluctant or evasive witness, or the suspect observing the investigation. This method is not necessary in all cases; however, several homicide cases have been solved or assisted by having these photographs taken.

When applicable, the investigator's crime scene notes should contain a brief comment explaining what the photograph depicts and why it was taken. A long period of time may lapse while resolving the case through the courts or, as in the case of an unsolved homicide, through an extended investigation. On occasion, it may be forgotten precisely why a certain photograph was taken. A brief written comment of each photograph may act as a reminder to the investigator or anyone reviewing the case.

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At some scenes (outdoor and remote scenes, confined spaces, interior scenes), you may need or desire some additional perspective to provide clarity or context to your photos. These methods should be not considered a substitute for, but more of a supplement to photographs. Some suggestions include:

- Video. This can be very helpful when an investigator narrates the video as the photographer proceeds through a scene. Providing geographical direction to orient the viewer is recommended. Be mindful, however, that the audio recording capability on most video cameras cannot be muted or disabled.
- Aerial Photos. You may request this service by contacting the TID Photographic Unit. In some cases, it may be accomplished while the scene is still active.
- Utility Truck with a Boom. You may contact the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and request a utility truck with a basket and telescopic boom respond. These trucks can place a photographer at an elevated vantage point over portions of a scene.

NOTE: After taking the initial photographs, advise the photographer to stand by to photograph the removal of the body and/or other relevant areas that may develop.

On occasion, some murders reflect a certain gore which, when photographed, could shock those who view the photographs. This could be particularly true if the photographs are in color. In consultation with the trial deputy, the investigator may have TID print a duplicate set of photographs in black and white. This would ensure fewer difficulties during the trial when attempting to have photographs entered into evidence and viewed by the jury.

Investigators should brief, collaborate with, direct, and monitor all Technical Investigation Division (TID) resources to ensure that all relevant items have been documented, photographed, and collected. While TID resources have the necessary expertise and functional responsibility for documenting and collecting certain types of evidence, it remains the responsibility of the homicide investigator to maintain direct control of the crime scene and discuss with the technician the areas that should be examined.

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3.4 Polygraph Unit

In 2010, the LAPD Polygraph Unit was the first state or local law enforcement agency in the United States to successfully complete the accreditation process through the Polygraph Law Enforcement Accreditation (PLEA) program and has since successfully completed the reaccreditation process every three years. The Polygraph Unit is comprised of numerous full-time civilian Polygraph Examiners. Many of the examiners are retired federal and local law enforcement officers with extensive law enforcement experience and are considered expert interviewers and interrogators.

The Polygraph Unit administers approximately 3,000 polygraph examinations per year to police candidates, suspects, victims, and/or witnesses involved in Department criminal investigations. In addition, the unit also provides polygraph examinations for Department personnel seeking voluntary assignment to specialized units such as Narcotics, Major Crimes, and courtesy polygraph examinations for other agencies with the approval of the TID Commanding Officer.

The polygraph exam is administered utilizing a computerized polygraph instrument to record physiological data from three systems of the human body. A typical polygraph examination will include a pre-test interview, a chart collection phase, a test data analysis phase and a post-test interview/interrogation. The entire process may take anywhere from two to six hours depending on the type of exam.

Investigators often seek the assistance of the Polygraph Unit when they do not have enough evidence or probable cause. When suspects fail polygraph examinations, the interrogations may become confrontational. In these instances, examiners must overcome vigorous denials by suspects and are often able to obtain detailed confessions. The Polygraph Unit has successfully identified suspects involved in all kinds of high impact criminal activities such as sex crimes, homicides, robberies, narcotics trafficking, and espionage. Additionally, examiners may uncover new information providing investigators with new leads to pursue. Polygraph examiners also assist investigators in eliminating suspects from criminal investigation, and may provide expert testimony regarding the

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science of psychophysiological indicators of deception as well as confessions obtained as a result of the polygraph examination.

The Polygraph Unit's objectives:

- Assist the Department in achieving its goals and support the Department's mission.
- Provide professional services in the field of forensic psychophysiology using accredited, state of the art techniques.
- Perform our duty with the highest degree of professionalism, ethical standards, and integrity.
- Determine the truth while maintaining the dignity of everyone we serve.

To schedule a polygraph examination, Department personnel may call the Unit's general line (213) 473-0650 or via email at: LAPDPOLY@lapd.online.

4. Forensic Sciences Division (FSD) Resources

Opened in 2007, the Hertzberg-Davis Forensic Science Center (FSC) is located on the campus of California State University – Los Angeles (CSULA) at 1800 Paseo Rancho Castillo. Accessible by exiting the 10 Freeway at Eastern Avenue, it is a short drive from downtown Los Angeles and operates primarily Monday through Friday. It is the home of the forensic crime laboratories for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) and Los Angeles Police Department making it the largest, local, full-service crime lab on a university campus in the United States.

The LAPD Forensic Science Division (FSD) has a satellite laboratory facility located at the C. Erwin Piper Technical Center, Space 270. In addition to administrative and quality control entities, the Forensic Sciences Division (FSD) consists of the following units and sections:

- [Chemical Processing Detail](#) (CPD) (Under TID Latent Prints)
- [Field Investigations Unit](#) (FIU)
(323) 415-8140, FSD-FIELDINV@lapd.online
- [Firearms Analysis Unit](#) (FAU)
(323) 415-8160, FSD-FIREARMS@lapd.online
- [Narcotics Analysis Unit](#) (NAU)

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(323) 415-8890, Forensic Science Center

FSD-NARCO@lapd.online

(213) 473-7680, Additional narcotics analysis:

Harbor Narcotics, FSD-NARCO-HARBOR@lapd.online

Metro Narcotics, FSD-NARCO-METRO@lapd.online

Misdemeanor Narcotics, FSD-NARCO-MISDEMEANOR@lapd.online

Southeast Narcotics, FSD-NARCO-SOUTHEAST@lapd.online

- [Questioned Documents](#) (QD) Unit (323) 415-8860,

FSD-DOCS@lapd.lacity.org

- [Serology/DNA](#) (S/DNA) Unit

(323) 415-8800 Forensic Science Center

(213) 473-7680 Piper Tech

FSD-DNA@lapd.online

- [Toxicology Unit](#) (TOX)

(323) 415-8870, FSD-TOXIC@lapd.online

- [Trace Analysis Unit](#) (TAU)

(323) 415-8850, FSD-TRACE@lapd.online

Many of these entities will respond to and provide in-field services upon request and investigators should consider contacting a criminalist whenever specialized equipment or handling of evidence by laboratory personnel is necessary.

However, investigators and officers should also be prepared to collect biological evidence from vehicles and/or scenes that do not require a criminalist response (i.e., swabs for potential DNA collection).

Per the California Association of Criminalists, a criminalist is “a person with a background in science, typically having at least a baccalaureate degree in an area such as chemistry, biology, forensic science, or criminalistics. Some criminalists have degrees in other, similarly related areas. Many criminalists have advanced degrees.” Criminalists use techniques learned in chemistry, molecular biology, geology, and other scientific disciplines to investigate and solve crimes. For the criminalist, crime scene investigation involves the recognition, documentation, collection, preservation, and interpretation of physical evidence.

The criminalist collects, preserves, and makes interpretations about the evidence and their relation to the series of events resulting at the crime scene. The end of the journey is the court room where the testimony of the crime scene work,

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laboratory analysis, the conclusions on the report and interpretation of the evidence will be presented and questioned. The criminalist tells the truth in an unbiased manner, educating the jurors about the techniques that were used, the results obtained and interpretations derived from those conclusions. Some examples of the specialized equipment that a criminalist can bring to a scene are:

- Alternate Light Source (ALS) for detection of biological fluid stains;
- Phenolphthalein (“Pheno Test”) for detection of blood stains;
- Amino Black for blood enhancement;
- Luminol for blood enhancement;
- Acid Phosphatase (AP) for detection of semen stains;
- Sodium Rhodizonate for the detection of lead, and Dithiooxamide (DTO) for the detection of copper;
- Electrostatic Dust Lifts for detection of latent impressions on smooth surfaces;
- Casting for impression evidence;
- Total Station device for precise, computerized surveys, which include elevation, accurate device to point distances from multiple angles, and global positioning satellite (GPS) technology;
- Video of a large or complex scene;

Some examples of scenes where the response of a criminalist should be considered include:

- Scenes where an interpretation of blood spatter is possible;
- Scenes where a bullet or projectile has entered an object that cannot be collected, and retrieval and/or a determination of trajectory is possible;
- Scenes where a bullet or projectile has entered and exited an object and a determination of trajectory is possible;
- Scenes where a bullet or projectile may have struck or impacted an object and the impact area can be tested or sampled for the presence of lead;
- Scenes where hazardous chemicals may be present;
- Scenes where an extensive or detailed, grid search or excavation must be conducted;
- Scenes where an accurate measurement of an item’s location is difficult to obtain;

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- Scenes where evidence collection requires the retrieval of samples or exemplars and/or large or unusual items (tire or shoe impressions, liquids, glass, paint chips, soil, vegetation, gases, railings, doors, or other permanent fixtures)

NOTE: During weekday, business hours, the investigator may contact a criminalist by calling the FSD Field Investigations Unit at (323) 415-8140. During off watch hours, contact the Department Operations Center Division Regional Crime Center at (213) 484-6700 and ask to be put in touch with the on-call criminalist.

NOTE: The role of the Los Angeles County Coroner criminalist and criminalists employed by the Los Angeles Police Department, assigned to the Forensic Science Division fulfill different roles at crime scenes. The Coroner Criminalist is the only person who is authorized to remove or collect evidence from the body ([CA Gov Code § 27491.2](#)). However, since the Medical Examiner-Coroner is tasked with determining the mode, manner, mechanism, and cause of death, other evidence at the scene may also be collected by the Coroner Criminalist such as: suicide notes ([CA Gov Code § 27464](#)), drugs (prescription and/or illicit), paraphernalia, ligatures, etc. These items can be released to the LAPD with permission from the Coroner Investigator.

Additionally, the coroner is responsible for making identification and notification of the legal next of kin ([CA Gov Code § 27471](#)). Therefore, items such as mail, phones, and address books, wills, and DPOA's (Durable Power of Attorney) may also be collected by the coroner.

4.1 Chemical Processing Detail (CPD)

The CPD is responsible for processing semi-porous to porous items using chemicals and alternate light sources to enhance or develop latent prints. On porous surfaces, paper, etc., a ninhydrin or silver nitrate solution is applied by spray or dip to develop latent prints. Some objects (guns, knives, etc.), are examined in the laboratory to facilitate the use of fluorescent powders, ultra violet light, and special photographic techniques. Examples of items processed include: paper, natural wood, tool handles, weapons, live ammo, casings, gun magazines,

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knives, duct tape, leather, vinyl, gloves (latex, nitrile and rubber), vehicles (special requests) and bloody prints.

4.2 Field Investigations Unit (FIU)

The FIU performs scientific field investigations at crime scenes. This includes booking evidence and assessment and written reports on field tests and processes performed. Follow-up activity includes the itemization of evidence into its probative components (e.g., DNA, trace evidence, prints), generating the relevant analytical requests, producing detailed scale crime scene diagrams by an Architectural Drafting Technician, consulting with investigators to update the case information and providing expert testimony about the results of their field and follow-up examinations.

4.3 Firearms Analysis Unit (FAU)

The FAU performs various functions including: bullet path analysis, evidence collection, type and caliber determinations, examinations, comparisons of microscopic markings on fired bullets and cartridge cases, serial number restorations/re-stamping, renders firearms safe, performs sound suppressor analysis, firearms analysis and identification (including California assault weapons), scientific field investigations of shooting scenes and provides expert testimony in court. The FAU also enters evidence submitted for image capture and search in the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) database to compare with other firearms in the NIBIN database. NIBIN is a forensic firearms computer data base network maintained by the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF). This federal network integrates evidence from the following law enforcement agencies:

- [Huntington Beach Police Department](#)
- [Kern County Sheriff's Department](#)
- [Long Beach Police Department](#)
- [Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department](#)
- [Los Angeles Police Department](#)

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- [Orange County Sheriff's Department](#)
- [Riverside Department of Justice](#)
- [San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department](#)
- [San Diego City Police Department](#)
- [San Diego County Sheriff's Department](#)
- [Santa Ana Police Department](#)
- [Santa Barbara Department of Justice](#)
- [Ventura County Sheriff's Department](#)

The system enables the member agencies to input narrative data (date of crime/recovery, caliber, etc.) in conjunction with photo-micrographic data (computer image of breech face and firing pin tool marks on base of cartridge case). This data can be searched based upon a wide array of search parameters and the stored images can be compared to one another on the computer screen. Data images from different and geographically distinct police agencies can be compared quickly and with reasonable certainty on the NIBIN network.

The NIBIN system enables cartridge case specimens to be input and screened by computer and enables operators to search for possible connections or “matching” images. Those that merit a bon-a-fide comparison can be quickly separated from the rest. This process of elimination allows time directed towards more critical tasks demanding the expertise of a firearms criminalist/examiner.

Several semi-automatic pistols are booked each day into the custody of the Los Angeles Police Department. These guns are routed to the Firearms Analysis Unit, NIBIN Detail where they are examined, test fired, and the cartridge case (evidence specimen or test-fire) is input into NIBIN. The existing database is searched against the new cartridge case. The search program is predicated upon a variety of “filters” that are input by the operator in order to direct the search. For example, if an operator has input an evidence cartridge case into NIBIN, that operator determines the “search” criteria. If the evidence image is a 9mm luger cartridge case with a hemispherical firing pin shape and a circular breech face pattern, these are used as deliberate filters to establish search criteria.

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Discharged cartridge cases recovered from crime scenes must also be input into NIBIN. Evidence specimens from center fire and rimfire pistols brought into the LAPD laboratory for routine analysis are automatically incorporated in the NIBIN database. NIBIN has greatly assisted investigative personnel in solving or connecting cases involving firearms.

4.4 Narcotics Analysis Unit (NAU)

The NAU is responsible for the analysis of narcotics evidence. Analysis must occur within the time constraints of filing charges, oftentimes within 48 hours of arrest. Analytical reports are prepared and transmitted directly to both the Office of the District Attorney and Office of the City Attorney.

4.5 Questioned Documents (QD) Unit

The QD Unit examines documents to determine the facts surrounding them, their preparation, and their subsequent treatment. The examination can include handwriting comparison, alteration detection, restoration or decipherment of erased and obliterated writing, latent impression visualization, printing process identification, shredded document reassembly, document dating, and ink differentiation.

4.6 Serology/DNA Unit (SDU)

The SDU analyzes evidence for the presence of biological material to develop DNA profiles. The analytical process is divided into two primary activities: screening and profiling. Screening involves examination of evidence items collected from crime scenes to locate biological evidence that is probative to the resolution of the crime. Once probative biological evidence is located, a DNA profile is developed to compare to a known source, such as a suspect or victim, or uploaded into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) for searching against State and Federal databases of known offenders.

4.7 Toxicology (TOX) Unit

The TOX Unit is divided into two details: Alcohol and Drugs. The Alcohol Detail is responsible for analysis of evidence samples collected from DUI arrestees for

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the presence of alcohol. The desktop breath alcohol analysis instruments located at the jails and Area stations are maintained by the Alcohol Detail. The handheld Preliminary Alcohol Screening (PAS) devices once administered by TID are now deployed and serviced by Traffic Group-Traffic Coordination Section. The Toxicology staff frequently testifies in court as experts on the effects of alcohol on driving ability. The Drugs Detail is responsible for the analysis of blood and urine evidence samples collected from arrestees for the presence of drugs. Urine samples collected from sworn Department personnel for the Random Drug Testing Program are also analyzed by the Drugs Detail.

4.8 Trace Analysis Unit (TAU)

The TAU examines and compares many types of physical evidence samples. Common types of evidence samples include hairs, fibers, paint, footwear or tire tread imprints or impressions, fire debris, ignitable liquids, explosives, gunshot residue (GSR), suspected poisons, soil, glass, nitrous oxide, and other unknown chemicals.

5. Crime Scene Search Procedures

Every item at the homicide crime scene has potential evidentiary value and should be regarded as such. The search should begin in the immediate area surrounding the body and proceed outward. There are various ways to divide the area of concern to provide for a thorough and systematic search. The most common of these are the zone and the grid methods. The search method selected should take into consideration the following:

- Size of the area to be searched;
- Topography of the area or the layout of the rooms;
- Possibility of the destruction of evidence;
- Specific item(s) which may be the object of the search

Whichever method is ultimately selected, the investigator must ensure that the search is thorough, efficient, and avoids unintentional duplication of effort. The ability to conduct a crime scene search depends upon the situation and the physical conditions present. It would be unwise, for example, to proceed with a detailed examination without adequate lighting. The absence of adequate lighting may

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result in the destruction of latent prints or other vitally important evidence. Finally, it depends on the judgment of the investigator and upon those whom he/she may call for advice and assistance. Depending on the size and type of area (remote, rugged terrain) and the nature of the search, investigators should rely on the use of police department employees (officers, detectives, academy cadets). In some cases (search for missing person, search of a large area where aircraft parts or explosion debris may have fallen), the use of police cadets, and to a limited extent, citizen volunteers may be considered. In all cases, documentation and control of all search activity is required.

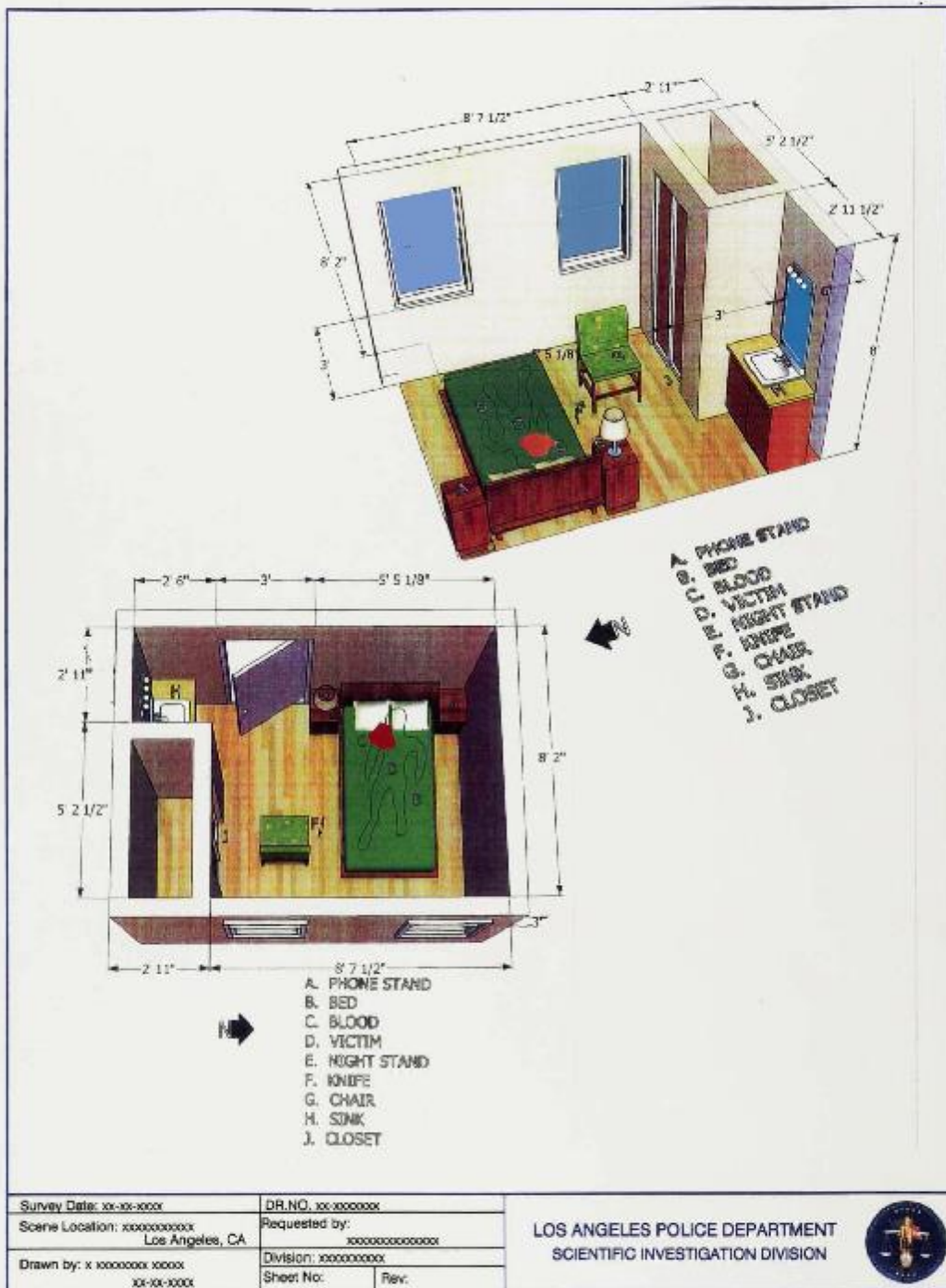
6. Crime Scene Sketches and Diagrams

There is a possibility that items that contain evidentiary value may be accidentally moved or disturbed by photographers, fingerprint technicians, and other forensic experts who enter to photo, examine and/or process the scene. To document the original position or location of item(s), the investigator should consider preparing a rough crime scene sketch and record of the location of evidence *prior* to allowing forensic experts to enter. The Crime Scene Sketch, Form [03.13.00](#), shall be used to document an investigator's observations. The sketch should include all evidence (dead body, weapon(s), bloodstains, expended cartridge casings) and each item's relationship to fixed objects. Indicate whether the sketch is or is not "to scale" and include a compass direction to ensure that the viewer examining the sketch does not lose the necessary orientation. For example, a cartridge case lying on the roadway surface may be "10 feet, 2 inches west of the west curb of Main Street and 8 feet 7 inches south of the north curb of First Street."

Because photographs and video are two dimensional, they do not always depict depth accurately and may be affected by camera angle, lighting, shading or other factors. The homicide investigator should consider having a detailed diagram of the scene created in all homicide cases and in certain death investigations. A sketch differs from a crime scene diagram (CSD) in that a diagram is completed by an FSD Architectural Drafting Technician and is scaled with precise measurements. A CSD will normally incorporate the locations of evidence collected and is usually requested in advance of jury trial proceedings.

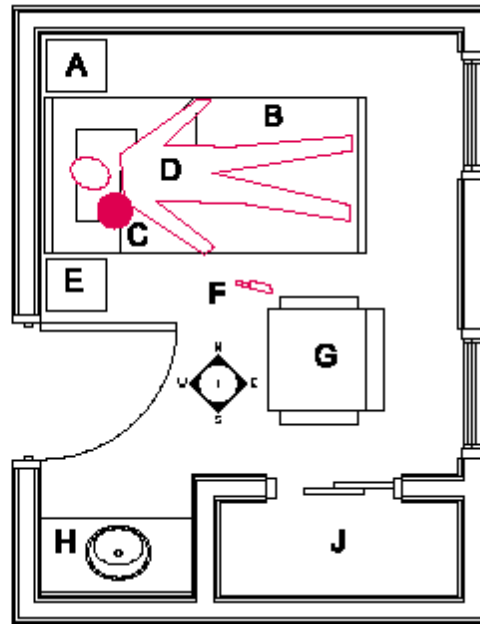
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- A. PHONE STAND
- B. BED
- C. BLOOD
- D. VICTIM
- E. NIGHT STAND
- F. KNIFE
- G. CHAIR
- H. SINK
- J. CLOSET



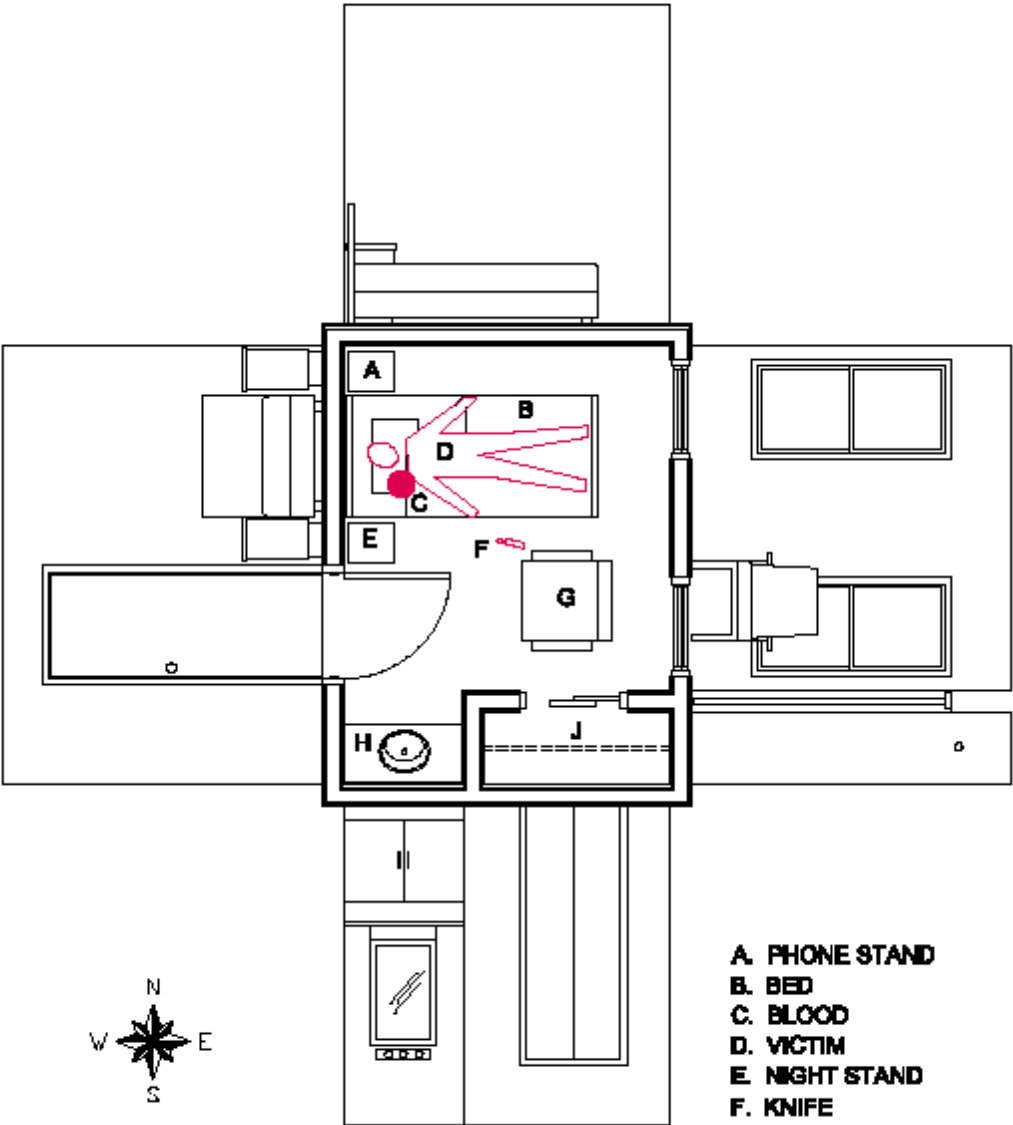
FLOOR PLAN

Survey Date: 10E30E2000E	DRUNC 10E200000E
Scene Location: 1000000000E Los Angeles, CA	Requested by: 1000000000E
Drawn by: 1E2000000E 10000E 10E30E2000E	DRUNC 100000000E
	DRUNC No: File:

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT
SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION DIVISION




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**CROSS PROJECTION
(FOLD OUT)**

Survey Date: xx-xx-xxxx	DRNG: xx-xxxxxx
Scene Location: xxxxxxxx Los Angeles, CA	Requested by: xxxxxxxxxx
Drawn by: x xxxxxxxx xxxxx xx-xx-xxxx	Division: xxxxxxxxxx
	Sheet No: Rev:

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT
SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION DIVISION



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7. Role of the Medical Examiner-Coroner

Approximately 60,000 people die each year in the County of Los Angeles, but not all of these deaths are investigated. The Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner, which consists of approximately 210 employees, investigates less than half of those deaths and performs an estimated 25 to 30 autopsies each day or close to 10,000 per year.

Pursuant to [Government Code Section 27491](#), it is the responsibility of the Medical Examiner-Coroner to inquire into and determine the circumstances, manner and cause of deaths which fall within its jurisdiction. These deaths include any suspected homicide, suicide, accidental deaths, and any natural death where there is either no physician to sign a death certificate or the physician is unwilling or legally prohibited from doing so.

Additionally, certain other causes of death are also mandated to be investigated by the Medical Examiner-Coroner. The manner and cause of death inquiries may require reviews of medical records, interviews with family members or witnesses, and post mortem examinations. Deputy Medical Examiners (DME) are doctors specifically trained in forensic pathology. The Deputy Medical Examiners conduct autopsies and collect evidence, which consists of bodily fluids and tissues for toxicology testing and microscopic study. Upon completion of these tests the Deputy Medical Examiners analyze the results to determine the cause of death. The cause of death is used to complete the decedent's death certificate. Evidence collected during autopsies and at the scene of the death can be used for criminal prosecution as well as determining the cause of death. Deputy Medical Examiners are frequently called to court to testify as to the results of these examinations.

The responsibilities of the Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office also include the identification of decedents. Identification may be as simple as matching the decedent to a driver's license or other identification documents. The identification process may need to utilize fingerprints, dental records, body X-rays or DNA testing. Identifying the decedent's next of kin, notifying them of the death, and securing the decedent's personal property are additional responsibilities. In deaths where the decedent died at scene, the office is responsible for removal and transportation of the decedent.

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The Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner's Forensic Science Center is located at 1104 N. Mission Road in Los Angeles, on the grounds of LAC+USC Medical Center. This complex contains offices, autopsy rooms, property room, an in-house toxicology laboratory, and an electron microscopy laboratory. More information about the Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner can be obtained by visiting their website at <http://mec.lacounty.gov/>.

7.1 Notifying the Medical Examiner-Coroner

It shall be the responsibility of the investigating officer to notify the Medical Examiner-Coroner of all deaths occurring:

- When the cause of death is undetermined; or
- When the deceased died while in custody, while being temporarily detained, or while under the care or control of an officer of the Department; **or**
- When the attending physician is unable to state the cause of death or refuses to sign the death certificate; **or**
- When a physician has not attended the deceased within 20 days preceding death; **or**
- When the deceased committed suicide; **or**
- When the deceased died as the result of an accident; **or**
- When there is any suspicion that the death resulted from the use of narcotics or prescription drugs; **or**
- Under such circumstances as to afford reasonable grounds to suspect that death was caused by the criminal act of another.

When circumstances of a death warrant the response of the Medical Examiner-Coroner, the investigating officer is required to notify the Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office **within one hour** of his/her arrival. The preliminary notification to the Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office ("First Call") shall include an estimated time when the Coroner Investigator will be needed at the scene (Refer to LAPD's [Special Order No. 9](#), dated March 30, 1999, *Liaison To The County Coroner's Office And Notification To Coroner-Revised*).

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During the initial notification, the investigator should be prepared to provide the coroner's office with the following information:

- Name of victim (if available).
- Sex of victim.
- Type of homicide; i.e., amputation, gunshot, bound/gagged, suffocated, sexual assault, etc.
- Address/location—directions should be provided if the location is difficult to find.
- Whether special equipment is needed; i.e., plastic wraps, plastic bags, protective clothing, approximate weight of decedent, etc.
- Whether the homicide is one involving the dumping of a victim at a location apparently other than where the homicide occurred.

NOTE: All telephonic notifications of reportable deaths should be made to the Coroner's 24-hour Decedent Reporting Desk at (323) 343-0711. Investigators should note that all calls to this line are recorded.

7.2 Duties of the Coroner Investigator

In Los Angeles County, the Deputy Medical Examiner (DME) does not routinely respond to the scene. The at-scene examination, preparation, and removal of a body is performed by a Coroner Investigator who is highly trained and adept at interpreting and applying departmentally approved procedures for conducting investigations at the scene of a wide variety of deaths to determine the jurisdiction, circumstances, manner, and cause of death. They have a working knowledge of anatomy, legal terminology, departmental operational policies and procedures, and investigative techniques, including the collection of gunshot residue and other evidence and the recognition and differentiation of various modes of death.

Homicide investigators should discuss the case with the Coroner Investigator, so he/she is aware of all the facts that would aid in the investigation and also preclude the possible destruction of evidence. The Coroner Investigator should also be cautioned if the homicide investigator does not wish to have certain information released. The homicide investigator shall ensure the Coroner Investigator has access to the decedent and can conduct a preliminary exam of the body as soon as possible. Particular consideration shall be given to those situations in which

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determining the time of death is a critical issue or in which the recovery of biological evidence is crucial to the investigation.

Coroner access shall only be delayed to prevent destruction of crime scene evidence.

Photographs and Documentation. After recording the circumstances as reported by the police and providing the homicide investigator with the Coroner case number assigned to that specific decedent, the Coroner Investigator will take photographs of the decedent. Even though the Coroner Investigator takes his/her own photographs, the homicide investigator should have a TID photographer standing by when the Coroner Investigator arrives. The TID photographer should be directed to photo-document the body, the immediate and underlying surfaces, and the actions of and discoveries made by the Coroner Investigator as they occur.

Identifying the Decedent. In an effort to identify the decedent, the Coroner Investigator will remove and collect all property found on the body in addition to any items that will assist in this endeavor. All items of personal property will be documented on a County of Los Angeles, Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner "Personal Effects Inventory" form No. 2. The Coroner Investigator will ask the homicide investigator to sign the form then issue him/her a duplicate copy. This copy should be hole-punched and placed in Section 19- Coroner's Records/Photos of the Murder Book.

If the identity of a dead body cannot be determined at the scene, the Coroner Investigator will provide a "Jane Doe" or "John Doe" case number to be used as a substitute for the decedent's name. Pending identification, the number shall be used in lieu of the decedent's name on all reports.

Evidence Collection. The search for and collection of physical evidence from a dead body is the responsibility of Medical Examiner-Coroner personnel. Evidence collected may consist of blood, gunshot residue, hair, nails, fingernail and toenail scrapings or clippings, sexual assault specimen, and bite marks or tool marks in tissue. The collection of such evidence is made only when circumstances surrounding the death indicate their presence or if the concerned homicide investigator requests their collection.

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Evidence Storage. Analysis of physical evidence obtained in connection with a death investigation is conducted by the Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office. Evidence related to a homicide will be collected by and secured at the Department of Coroner until it is retrieved by and booked into LAPD property to be analyzed by FSD resources at the direction of the responsible homicide investigator. Due to limited storage space, a homicide victim's clothing (and all other evidence) which is held by the Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office, shall be retrieved from the Coroner's evidence facility within ten (10) working days following the autopsy. ([Refer to LAPD Office of Operations Order No. 9 dated April 17, 2006, "Homicide Investigation Evidence Disposition - Revised"](#))

Generally, the Coroner Investigator will not release any evidence to Department personnel at the scene. Deviations from this policy to accommodate circumstances that may arise can be made at the discretion of the Coroner Investigator. Articles, instruments, or weapons that a decedent may be grasping or that may be touching the body will be collected by the Coroner Investigator but may be released to Department personnel at the scene. In instances where effective development of the murder case requires a need to maintain control of all or part of the contents included in the deceased person's purse or wallet (address books, utility bills, cell phone, etc.), the homicide investigator may request these items from the Coroner Investigator. It remains, however, the prerogative of the Coroner Investigator to authorize the release of any property. If the Coroner Investigator agrees to the request, he/she shall prepare an itemized receipt of those items taken by him/her and those items provided to the investigating officer.

NOTE: *Evidence at the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner is generally available for release to LAPD personnel the day following its collection. The Personal Property and Evidence Control Sections are open from 0800 to 1500 hours, Monday through Friday. When the investigating officer desires a copy of the original suicide note, a photocopy may be obtained from the Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office. When the original note is needed for crime laboratory study, a member of TID shall obtain it from the Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office.*

Examining the Body. After documenting the decedent's appearance and property, the investigator will perform a thorough, external examination of the body and manipulate it to assess the number, types, and locations of wounds and other

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anomalies. In most cases, this will be the homicide investigator's first opportunity to view the entire body and the surface upon which it is laying. Homicide investigators should take care to accurately document and describe the wounds that they see and/or that are described by the Coroner Investigator. They should be mindful that the Coroner Investigator's observations and examination, which is primarily an external one, may also be obscured by the lighting at scene, the victim's clothing or blood. The DME who performs the post mortem exam will conduct an external and internal exam of a clean and naked body in a well-lit, surgical theater.

Types of Wounds and Stages of Death. The Coroner Investigator will attempt to locate and identify any wounds that may have been inflicted on a body. This will include punctures, cuts, scratches, bruises, and even broken bones. The type of wounds present may provide the homicide investigator with insight into the type of weapon used and what may have occurred in the period leading up to death. In addition to this, the Coroner Investigator will visually examine and physically manipulate the body to ascertain the stage of death that the body is in. The stage of death helps investigators estimate how long ago death may have occurred since certain conditions (rigidity, color, temperature) manifest over time.

Types of wounds:

- **Abrasion-** superficial wounds in which the topmost layer of the skin (the epidermis) is scraped or worn off. Abrasions are often caused by a sliding fall onto a rough surface.
- **Amputation-** The removal of a limb.
- **Avulsion-** a tearing away of a body part.
- **Burn (Chemical)-** occurs when the skin or eyes are contacted by an irritant, such as an acid or a base. Bases are described as alkaline. Chemical burns are also known as caustic burns.
- **Burn (Thermal)-** to be hurt, damaged, or destroyed by fire or extreme heat.
- **Contusion-** a region of injured tissue or skin in which blood capillaries have been ruptured; a bruise.
- **Dislocation-** an injury to a joint in which the end of a bones is forced from its normal position.
- **Decapitation-** the complete separation of the head from the body.
- **Gunshot-** an injury caused by gases, heat, particles, and a bullet or similar

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projectile driving into or through the body. There may be two wounds: one at the site of entry and one at the site of exit. The resulting damage is affected by the distance of the muzzle to the skin at the time of the shot and the type and caliber of firearm used.

- **Hematoma**- a solid, swelling of clotted blood within the tissues or beneath the skin resulting from damage to a blood vessel.
- **Incision or incised wound**- caused by a clean, sharp-edged object.
- **Laceration**- irregular, tear-like wound caused by blunt trauma.
- **Puncture**- a piercing or perforation of the tissue caused by a sharp tipped object; a hole.

Stages of Death:

After death, a sequence of changes occurs naturally in the human body, and although these changes proceed in a relatively orderly fashion, a variety of external factors may accelerate or retard their progress. In general, once the heart stops beating, the body will begin to cool and stiffen as blood collects in the lower-most parts. As time passes, dramatic chemical and physical changes will continue to occur. While these changes can be very informative, there are still many factors the Coroner Investigator must consider when examining a body in order to come to any conclusions or findings about a person's death.

- ***Pallor mortis*** is a paleness that sets in within the first 15 to 25 minutes because of lack of blood circulation. Additionally, the pupils begin to dilate, unresponsive to direct light, and “cloud” over. The eyeballs will also begin to flatten due to loss of blood pressure. The muscles relax, which results in the bowels and bladder beginning to empty.
- ***Algor mortis*** (algor meaning “coldness” and mortis “of death”) is the rate at which a body cools (or warms) to match the ambient temperature. A body cools very little during the first 60-minutes, but from one to six hours, it will generally cool at the rate of 1.5° F for each hour after death until it matches the ambient temperature. However, body temperature is easily affected by age, weight, and conditions of the environment (temperature, clothing, surface, activity prior to death).
- ***Rigor mortis*** (rigor meaning "stiffness") is one of the recognizable signs of death and is caused by chemical changes in the muscles post mortem, which cause the limbs of the corpse to stiffen. It can occur as soon as 4 hours post

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mortem, but here is a general timeline that rigor mortis will follow under controlled conditions (i.e., 75 degrees Fahrenheit):

0-8 Hours: Body starts to stiffen, but is still movable

8-24 Hours: Muscles become and remain stiff

24-36 Hours: Stiffness dissipates and muscles become flexible

- **Livor mortis** (livor meaning “discoloration”) is the process by which blood starts pooling in the lowest parts of the body causing a reddish-blue color discoloration. It is also referred to as *postmortem lividity*.
- **Putrefaction** is the breakdown of tissue, the liquefaction of organs and the release of gases caused by the bacterial or fungal digestion. The first signs of putrefaction, which appear in 12–24 hours, are signified by a greenish discoloration on the outside of the skin on the abdominal wall corresponding to where the large intestine begins. The rate of putrefaction is dependent upon factors such as weather, exposure, and location.
- **Decomposition** is the process by which organic substances are broken down into much simpler forms of matter. The stages of decomposition include:
 - Fresh- As pallor mortis, algor mortis, rigor mortis, livor mortis and putrefaction progress, a foul odor will develop and blowflies and flesh flies will be the first carrion insects to arrive.
 - Bloat- As gases accumulate within the body cavity, the abdomen will distend and give the cadaver a bloated appearance.
 - Active Decay- As the pressure of the gases within the body increases, fluids are forced to escape from natural orifices, such as the nose, mouth, and anus, and enter the surrounding environment. The buildup of pressure combined with the loss of integrity of the skin may also cause the body to rupture.
 - Advanced Decay- As decay continues, body mass will be lost as a result of the voracious feeding of maggots and the purging of decomposition fluids into the surrounding environment. As the amount of available cadaveric material decreases, the amount of insect activity also reduces. If the body is located on soil, the surrounding area will show evidence of vegetation death.
 - Dry decay- In the end, all that may remain of a body is dry skin, cartilage, and bones, which will become dry and bleached if exposed to the elements. If all soft tissue is removed from the body, it is referred to as completely skeletonized, but if only portions of the bones are exposed, it is referred to as partially skeletonized.

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Determining the Time of Death. An important fact in all death investigations is the time of death. An accurate estimation of the time of death can lead to discovering the identity of the assailant. In criminal cases, it can eliminate some suspects while focusing attention on others, but the time of death is not confined to criminal investigations. It can also come into play in civil situations. Insurance payments may depend upon whether the insured individual was alive at the time the policy went into effect or if he died before the policy expired. Even a single day can be important. Likewise, property inheritance can hinge on when the deceased actually died. Suppose two business partners die near the same time. Their contract may read that the company assets go the survivor if one of them dies. In this case, the heirs of the one that died last would own the company assets. Similarly, the dispersal of property under a will might be affected by which partner died first.

Unlike the “legal” time of death, which appears on a death certificate, and the “physiologic” time of death, which is when the victim’s vital organs actually stopped functioning, the “estimated” time of death is just that, an estimate as to when death is likely to have occurred. However, it must be pointed out that forming a conclusion as to how long a body has been dead usually stems from an assessment of a combination of factors as opposed to relying on one factor. The ambient temperature as well as the extent and time of exposure to the elements are among the many factors considered by the Coroner Investigator. The most important and most commonly used of these are body temperature, rigor mortis, and livor mortis or “lividity.” Normal body temperature is 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. After death, the body loses or gains heat progressively until it is equal to the surrounding temperature. A general formula, which calculates for heat loss of 1.5 degree per hour is:

$$\text{Hours since death} = 98.6^{\circ}\text{F} - \text{corpse core temperature} / 1.5^{\circ}\text{F}$$

Unfortunately, it’s not quite that straightforward. The 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit per-hour factor varies, depending upon the environment surrounding the body, the size of the corpse, clothing, and other factors. For example, a body in a temperate room will lose heat much more slowly than one in an icy, flowing stream. Conversely, a body in a hot environment, such as an enclosed garage in Phoenix, Arizona in August, where the ambient temperature could be 125 degrees Fahrenheit or more, will gain heat. The key is that the corpse will lose or gain heat until it reaches

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equilibrium with its environment.

In order to obtain a decedent's liver temperature, the Coroner Investigator will often make a small incision in the skin and underlying tissue on the upper right side of the abdomen and forcibly insert a thermometer into the liver. The sooner this is accomplished after death, the more accurate the findings. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the Department's investigation to allow the Coroner Investigator to obtain the liver temperature as soon as possible. Once the body has reached the surrounding, ambient temperature, the Coroner Investigator will no longer be able to estimate the time of death.

Removing the Body. Once the time of death is estimated and the cursory exam is complete, the Coroner Investigator, with the help of a transportation unit technician, will wrap and place the body into a large, zippered body bag. The body bag will then be loaded into a Coroner van and transported to the Coroner's FSC. In rare instances, the Coroner Investigator may opt to remove a body from a scene to conduct the examination at the Coroner's FSC. This occurs most often when a body is discovered inside an object, container or vehicle that can be removed from the scene and removal of the body from the object and/or the collection of evidence is best conducted in a controlled environment with additional Coroner resources.

7.3 Additional Services

The Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner can provide a variety of services in furtherance of their organizational mission. These include:

Cadaver Dogs. The Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner has a full-time, human remains detection (HRD) canine that is specially trained to detect human remains such as bone fragments, tissue, or grave dirt. This service is available on request.

Coroner Criminalist. Similar to Department criminalists, the Coroner criminalist is trained in the collection, processing and scientific analysis of evidence and will provide in-field assistance upon request. Because the law prohibits non-Department of Coroner personnel from handling remains, the collection of biological evidence and samples from body cavities, such as the anus or vagina in

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cases where sexual assault is suspected, falls to the Coroner's criminalist. The Coroner's criminalist is equipped with many of the same tools and equipment used by police criminalists to detect and test for fluids and other biological evidence that may be found on the body.

Facial Reconstruction. Forensic facial reconstruction (or forensic facial approximation) is the process of recreating the face of an individual (whose identity is often not known) from their skeletal remains through the combining of artistry, forensic science, anthropology, osteology, and anatomy. It is easily the most subjective—as well as one of the most controversial—techniques in the field of forensic anthropology.

- Two-dimensional facial reconstructions are based on ante mortem photographs and the skull.
- Three-dimensional reconstructions are either: 1) sculptures made from casts of cranial remains created with modeling clay and other materials or 2) high-resolution, three-dimensional computer images. Like two-dimensional reconstructions, three-dimensional reconstructions usually require both an artist and a forensic anthropologist. Computer programs create three-dimensional reconstructions by manipulating scanned photographs of the unidentified cranial remains, stock photographs of facial features, and other available reconstructions. These computer approximations are usually most effective in victim identification because they do not appear too artificial

Forensic Archeologist. Forensic Archeologists, also referred to as anthropologists, are experts in analyzing human remains and for this reason are integral to many different types of forensic investigations. Often, they are called on after mass disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis to assist in identifying human remains. They are also used at crime scenes to help recover evidence and assist in the excavation of human remains. Forensic Archeologists are educated in osteology, or the study of bones. Using this knowledge, they can look at human remains and determine how the person died (whether it was suicide, homicide, accidental, or from natural causes). Using human bones, the forensic archeologist can determine the age of the individuals, the sex, the height, the type of occupation they worked in and the overall health status at the time of death. This information can lead crime scene investigators to the decedent's identity as well as how they died.

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Forensic Odontologist. Forensic Odontologists, also called forensic dentists, are highly experienced specially trained dentists who help identify unknown remains and to trace bite marks to a specific individual. Forensic Odontologists are typically called in to identify human remains that cannot be identified using face recognition, fingerprints, or other means; identify bodies in mass fatalities, such as plane crashes and natural disasters; determine the source of bite mark injuries in cases of assault or suspected abuse; estimate the age of skeletal remains; and testify in cases of dental malpractice. The Forensic Odontologist may be called in by police officers, the Medical Examiner, or the Coroner. In death cases, the Forensic Odontologist may attend the autopsy and takes photographs, cranial measurements, dental impressions, and X-rays from the remains. These samples are then compared to those of known missing individuals. If a match can be made, the remains can be identified. In cases where bite marks are found on the body of a victim, a suspect, on food, chewing gum or another item, the forensic odontologist uses the same procedure to try to determine or exclude potential sources of the bite marks. The Forensic Odontologist then writes a detailed report explaining what was done, what conclusions can be made and must be prepared to explain the process and justify their findings in court.

Grave Excavation. Bones appearing human should be reported to the Medical Examiner-Coroner immediately. If the apparent human bones are still at the place of discovery, the Medical Examiner-Coroner will determine the extent and timing of the response. The Medical Examiner-Coroner will dispatch an experienced Special Operations Response Team (SORT) member to assess the scene and the resources necessary for a successful recovery. In some cases, the Medical Examiner-Coroner may determine there is no reason to hold the original place of discovery, therefore, the bones may be brought to the Coroner Forensic Science Center if prior arrangements have been made with the Coroner Watch Commander. Skeletal or disarticulated remains will not be recovered by the Coroner in open/outside areas during hours of darkness using artificial light. The location should be marked and arrangements made to organize and conduct a thorough response the following morning.

Gunshot Residue (GSR) Analysis. GSR originates from the discharge of a cartridge, typically from a firearm. The residue can contain particulate from the bullet, jacket if present, cartridge case, gun powder, primer, and the firearm itself. The portion of the residue that is discoverable with a scanning electron microscope

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fitted with an X-ray spectrometer is the primer material. The Scanning Electron Microscopy Laboratory (SEM Lab) performs GSR Analysis on samples collected from Medical Examiner-Coroner cases.

Photographs. Photographs are taken at the time of the autopsy and are normally available within three working days. Coroner photographs are in color and taken in series which include an identification photo and photographs appropriate to the concerned postmortem examination. Investigating officers who require Medical Examiner-Coroner's photographs of a deceased person shall:

- Contact the Subpoena Desk of the Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office telephonically,
- Provide the Coroner's case number, and
- Request copies of the Medical Examiner-Coroner's photographs.

NOTE: Photographers from TID shall not photograph dead bodies at the Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office without being requested to do so by a concerned investigator. Such requests shall be limited to specific situations and must have the prior approval of the Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner. Photographers from TID shall be requested to photograph dead bodies at the Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office only in the following cases and with prior Medical Examiner-Coroner approval:

- *Unusual cases where routine Medical Examiner-Coroner's photographs have missed some item that is vital to a successful homicide investigation.*
- *In-custody deaths.*

Special Operations Response Team (SORT). The Medical Examiner-Coroner Special Operations Response Team (SORT) provides response in the event of any Mass Fatality Incident (MFI) or a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, or High Explosive (CBRNE) incident. SORT also responds to death investigations that require specialized search or recovery such as a clandestine grave or scattered skeletonized remains. SORT provides a prompt and sustained response which means staff have to be trained, equipped and ready "24/7." The SORT team is comprised of Medical Examiner-Coroner staff members that work throughout the Department daily. The team is made up of Investigators, Forensic

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Attendants, Forensic Technicians, Criminalists, Deputy Medical Examiners, and a Forensic Anthropologist along with support/clerical staff. The SORT team is trained at the highest level of Hazardous Materials response, Level-A.

Toxicology Testing. Toxicology is the study of the adverse effects that occur in living organisms due to chemicals. It deals with poisons, their effect, and the problems involved (as clinical, industrial, or legal). In addition to homicides, the Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner will routinely perform toxicology testing on traffic, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), undetermined, officer-involved-shooting, and in-custody deaths. A “Homicide Screen” includes all of the following:

- Alcohol Screen
- Cocaine Screen
- PCP Screen
- Narcotics Screen (Codeine, Heroin, Methadone)

7.4 Special Liaison to the Coroner

Robbery-Homicide Division (RHD) is responsible as the special liaison with the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner. Commanding Officers shall notify the Commanding Officer, RHD with any issues, concerns, differences, and/or problems encountered by Department employees with employees of the Medical Examiner-Coroner’s Office.

8. Evidence Collection Considerations

The investigator who is directly in charge of the criminal investigation should be consulted prior to anyone initiating any crime scene processing, including the gathering of evidence. If a criminalist has been summoned to the crime scene, he/she shall have functional supervision over the physical gathering and the proper marking of evidence for identification. The homicide investigator should routinely follow the criminalist’s advice and direction relating to the gathering of evidence. Generally, in the absence of a criminalist, the documentation, marking, collection, and booking of evidence should be restricted to the investigating officer in charge or his/her designee. When persons other than the investigating officer discover evidence, the item(s) should, whenever possible, be left in place and protected.

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The finder should immediately report its location to the supervisor and/or investigator in charge of the scene. Restricting the number of individuals who collect evidence centralizes control of evidence with the investigators responsible for the investigation, establishes and maintains the “chain of custody,” reduces the number of people required to package and book evidence, and minimizes the number of individuals required to testify to these actions.

NOTE: *When officers, other than the investigator(s) in charge, handle or discover evidence, they shall document their actions on an Investigative Action / Statement Form [03.11.20](#).*

When collecting and booking evidence, these general procedures should be considered:

- **Protective Clothing and Gloves.** The individual(s) collecting evidence should be cognizant of cross contamination and exercise extreme caution to prevent it. Disposable gloves, Tyvek suits and coveralls, shoe covers and other protective clothing should be readily available and donned whenever entering and doffed upon exiting a scene or area where the likelihood of cross contamination is present. These items should be discarded and replaced as often as needed whenever they become contaminated or soiled during the collection process.
- **Collection.** Placing items into their own, separate envelopes or bags is highly recommended. The use of plastic bags or containers (unless required or dictated by Department policy) should be avoided as plastic tends to retain moisture that could degrade or contaminate an item or any possible evidence on its surface.
- **Documenting and Describing.** The individual(s) collecting evidence should document the date, time, and location (by measurement) where an item was found; the name of the finder and how it was marked for identification.

NOTE: *Evidence that does not bear a serial number should be marked for proper identification before being booked into evidence. (Refer to LAPD Manual Sections [4/530.10](#), [4/530.20](#) and [4/530.30](#) regarding the proper procedure for the marking of evidence)*

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- **Chain of Custody.** Accurately documenting the discovery, collection, and booking of an item is critical. Any discrepancy in the “chain of custody” can have a detrimental impact on the success of an investigation and any subsequent prosecution.
- **Timeliness.** Although there may be circumstances where this process is delayed, the booking of evidence should occur as soon as possible. Generally, investigators should refrain from retaining evidence to facilitate the investigation and consider having items photographed or photocopied for retention in the Murder Book before the actual items are booked.

NOTE: Evidence requiring freezer storage shall be placed into the FSD courier temporary storage freezer within six (6) hours after being obtained. ([Refer to LAPD Manual Section 4/510.12](#) pertaining to booking analyzed evidence)

- **Seizures Pursuant to Search Warrants.** [Penal Code section 1536](#) provides that: “All property or things taken on a warrant must be retained by the officer in his custody, subject to the order of the court to which he is required to return the proceedings before him, or of any other court in which the offense in respect to which the property or things taken is triable.” Therefore, an officer should not release property seized pursuant to a search warrant unless a valid court order, either oral or written, authorizes them to do so.
- **Firearms.** All firearms connected with a death shall, if not retained by FSD personnel, be booked. This provides the opportunity to test the firearm(s).
- **Property Disposition/Update Request,** [Form 10.06.00](#). Investigators should ensure that a form 10.06.00 is completed placing a hold on all items booked. This form should be forwarded to the Property Disposition Coordinator (PDC).

NOTE: The investigating officer shall be responsible for determining the final disposition of a firearm bearing in mind that the prosecution and appeals process in murder cases could take years to complete. Prior to the release or destruction of any firearm, investigators are reminded to consider whether the firearm will be needed to prosecute any outstanding suspects in the future. In cases where authorization is granted, investigators should consider having the firearm test fired and the exemplars booked into property (under the murder or death report DR

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Number) and/or having images of the cartridge cases entered into the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN).

- **Stolen Property**. List all stolen property and other property suspected of being stolen which was recovered ([Refer to LAPD Manual Sections 4/501 through 4/510.20](#) for information regarding the booking, custody, and disposition of property).
- **Packaging and Booking**. Special care should be given to evidence that requires special booking (fragile, hazardous, biological) and/or processing by the [TID](#) or [FSD unit](#) (Latent Prints, Chemical Processing, Firearms Analysis, Serology/DNA, Toxicology). (For information on booking procedures, [contact Evidence and Property Management Division \(EPMD\)](#) or refer to their page under “Divisions and Sections” on the Infoweb Menu).
- **Suicide Notes**. Suicide notes are NOT considered evidence. They are personal property of the decedent's estate. In situations where the decedent details body handling or personal property disposition issues, the suicide note becomes a legally binding document that may need to be filed with the Superior Court. Original suicide notes should be turned over to the Coroner Investigator. Photocopies are not acceptable. If the law enforcement agency requires a copy of the suicide note, the Coroner Investigator will provide a copy.

9. Expanding the Search

During the search of the crime scene, the homicide investigator should check the following, carefully noting and recording evidence or conditions that may shed additional light on the investigation:

- **Doors**. Note the type and condition (partially open, locked or bolted from inside or outside) and if there is evidence of forced entry (window smashed, pry marks, torn screen). Determine if there is a doorknocker or door bell, if it works and can be heard.
- **Windows**. Note the type and condition (locked or unlocked; positions of window catch); type and position of curtains, drapes or blinds, possibility of seeing through them.
- **Lighting**. Determine from original responding officers which lights were on when the crime was discovered, whether other lights were checked for

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warmth, and if lights can be and were seen from the outside. Check lights to determine how they are controlled (switches, timer) and if they are in working condition.

- **Odors**. Describe what you smell (gas, tobacco, alcohol, perfume, gunpowder, narcotics).
- **Kitchen**. Describe what you see (food being prepared, what kind as it may or may not correspond with the victim's stomach contents revealed later at the autopsy); partially eaten food, used utensils, glasses, plates, stove on or warm, water running, coffee pot empty (contents evaporated, etc.).
- **Heating Temperature**. Check the following for their setting, temperature, or type: stove, thermostat, furnace, heater, air conditioner, and fireplace.
- **Signs of a Party**. Bottles (labels, brands, type of liquor, etc.), cups, glasses, their contents and number, lipstick, number of places set.
- **Contents of Ash Trays**. Cigarette packs, butts, matches/matchbooks cigarette lighter—determine brands, manner in which extinguished, and the presence of lipstick/teeth marks on filters.
- **Contents of Wastebaskets and Trash Cans**. Determine if anyone has gone through waste containers looking for anything, and if trash contains items of evidentiary value. Check the dates on newspapers, magazines, letters, etc.
- **TV/Radio**. Determine channel/dial number—on or off.
- **Video Recorder** (VCR, DVD, DVR). Was it programmed, if so for what/when?
- **Clocks and Watches**. Windup or electric? Are they running? Do they show the right time? When did they stop? Time for which the alarm was set?
- **Bath and Toilet Areas**. Check towels, rags, etc., to determine if they are damp or bloodstained. Check attempts by suspect to destroy evidence or wash him/herself. Check medicine cabinet for drugs, etc. Do not flush toilet.
- **Sinks and other Appliances**. Do not run water in any sink(s) or appliances such as dishwashers or washing machines.
- **Weapons**. Determine if the weapon was left at the crime scene. Could it have come from the location or was it brought to the location by the suspect (will have some bearing on proving intent).
- **Personal Effects**. The investigating officer shall attempt to obtain the victim's/suspect's personal telephone directory and the names of

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beneficiaries on the victim's insurance policies. These may aid in the investigation and the search for an outstanding suspect. If there was a suicide note, obtain writing samples. If the possibility of a prosecution in Mexico exists, the investigating officer shall collect any letters, documents or photographs which might assist in establishing the Mexican citizenship of either the victim or the suspect (see Chapter VI/Section 2 regarding Criminal Prosecution of Murder Suspects in Mexico).

- **Computers.** Was a computer found turned on? What message was on the screen? What programs were running?

NOTE: *Contact the Computer Evidence Recovery Specialist/Computer Crime Investigator, Commercial Crimes Division, for their assistance on seizing computer(s) and existing information contained in the computer(s). Normally, a separate search warrant will be needed to seize a computer and specialized expertise will be required to examine the computer's hard drive(s). Do NOT turn off a computer unless instructed to do so by Commercial Crimes Division experts.*

10. Ballistic Evidence

“Ballistic” evidence is anything relating to projectiles or their flight. At a homicide scene, this could include: firearms, bullets, bullet holes, bullet paths, impacts, fragments, cartridges, cartridge cases and gunshot residue (GSR). While most of these items are durable, care should still be exercised to avoid causing new scratches or other marks on them. Improper handling may leave marks or other abnormalities that could adversely affect an examiner's ability to connect these items with any weapon subsequently taken into custody. When a bullet has penetrated and remains lodged in a solid object such as wood OR there are two identifiable points of contact made by a single projectile such as a bullet hole and an impact, Firearms Analysis Unit personnel have the ability to insert colored rods and/or position a laser to visualize a bullet's path. This may be performed at the shooting incident location or upon vehicles and/or other objects that have been moved from the scene to a secure location for follow up examination.

NOTE: *Live ammunition shall be placed in a coin envelope and the words “**LIVE AMMO**” shall be printed in red letters on the outside of a package containing live ammunition. Do NOT place live ammunition and a firearm in the same package.*

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11. Evidence of Asphyxia

Asphyxia is the condition that results when the body is deprived of oxygen, often causing unconsciousness or death. Although the manner by which this occurs varies (strangulation, smothering, inhalation, drowning, compression, respiratory disease, injury to the wind pipe, choking on an object), the homicide investigator should attempt to determine if an object was used, and if so, was it obtained from inside the premises and/or does any portion of it remain in the body of the victim.

In cases of hanging, do not cut the victim down until the Coroner Investigator is present and can evaluate the position of the victim's body and the rope that was used. The Coroner Investigator and the TID photographer will take photographs of a victim in the hanging position. The Coroner Investigator will cut the victim down from the hanging position to ensure the rope is cut several inches away from the knot. It is the Coroner's policy to leave the rope on the victim's neck until the pathologist during the postmortem examination removes it. This is necessary so that the pathologist can examine the ligature wound and determine if it is consistent with the position and design pattern of the rope. Upon request from FSD, the rope can be retrieved from the Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office and be booked as evidence.

Murder by hanging is considered extremely rare. Most murder by hanging victims are children or persons who are unconscious or unable to defend themselves. If an apparent suicide by hanging appears to be questionable, the investigating officer should direct his/her attention to: the rope or line that was used, the location of the body, the physical condition of the victim's clothing (evidence or absence of drag marks), and the condition of the hands (are they bound and, if so, where - in front vs. behind the back). Both the rope, line, and the supporting object may offer distinct markings and other clues that will indicate that the victim was hoisted upward. In addition to a close examination of the rope fibers, the death should be viewed in total context. It would not be inconceivable for a murder suspect to compel a victim, by threat or other manner, to place a rope around his/her own neck, after which the suspect could kick the chair out from under the victim. This would convey the impression of suicide. In all cases, an extensive investigation into the victim's health, plans, motives, and attitude toward future events should be conducted.

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In the case of manual strangulation (by hand), fingernail marks will generally be located on both sides of the victim's throat. Strangulation is very often preceded by a struggle so that other injuries may be found on the body, generally in the area of the face. In these cases, consideration should be given to swabbing the victim's neck for any biological evidence that may have been left by the suspect(s). If it appears the body may have been dragged or moved, swabs of the wrists and/or ankles should be considered. If a ligature was used, a linear mark or marks may be evident on or around the neck.

12. Victim Information

The focal point of and, arguably, the most significant item of evidence at every death investigation is the decedent. In addition to the method of death (multiple gunshot or stab wounds, excessive blunt force trauma, absence of struggle or ransack), a thorough understanding of the person can often aid the homicide investigator in determining the motive and provide insight into why or how an event occurred OR did not occur. There are many sources that can assist the homicide investigator (family, friends, neighbors, doctors, co-workers, clergy, reports, records, and social media). Some key factors to explore include:

- **Economic Status**. What is the victim's financial status? Class (upper, middle, lower); Stable earner vs. Unemployed (recently terminated, laid off); Obligations (perceived loss of status, failing business, debts, dependents, wills, inheritance).
- **Marital Status**. Single, divorced, separated, married, spouse(s): former/current; sex life, extramarital relations; history of domestic violence or quarrels; state of current and former relationships.
- **Physical/Medical Condition**. General health (healthy vs. declining health, terminal illness, catastrophic injury); mental health (ever attempted or threatened suicide, despondent recently); make note of any medications present.
- **Property**. Was anything taken? Any recent losses or gains? What is the general condition of the home, car or workplace?
- **Social Factors**. Associates, friends; activities (computer use, social media, compulsive gambler, drinker, drug use, sexual activities); general demeanor (violent temper); social media and Internet use.

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- **Miscellaneous**. Generally liked or disliked, any recent disputes, confrontations, or threats; mobile phone contacts and use.
- **Criminal Activity**. Prior criminal history or gang association.

13. Canvassing for Witnesses and Video

NOTE: *In addition to in-car camera systems and body worn video cameras, many officers today carry an audio recorder. Officers should be encouraged to activate these recorders prior to their arrival at a crime scene. Often, people will make statements in the “heat of the moment” that they will later recant or deny. An actual recording will bear greater weight than an officer’s testimony or note on a field interview card.*

Countless investigations have been solved with the information supplied by witnesses or captured on video. However, before the information becomes available, witnesses and cameras must first be located. Although this sounds basic, the homicide investigator must be thorough and methodical when checking the neighborhood or area to ensure that he/she contacts and interviews all possible witnesses. Do not accept the results from the first responding officers’ efforts as a comprehensive canvass. Often, residents do not open their doors for police or they may say they did not see or hear anything. It may be due to the hour of the occurrence, fear, or some other reason. Additionally, officers may not locate security cameras due to poor lighting, because they did not go far enough in a certain direction or because they did not have an opportunity to do so.

An effective way to locate potential witnesses is to return to the scene the next day at approximately the same time that the crime occurred. By doing this, investigators not only get a first-hand look at the environment and conditions, they will potentially encounter delivery people, mail carriers, gardeners, dog-walkers, transients, or vendors who normally frequent the area and/or who may have been present when the crime occurred. Some of these people may have seen the suspect(s) or some activity prior to the crime and may be unaware that a crime even occurred. Keeping in mind that many people are reluctant to speak with the police for various reasons, investigators should consider printing Community Alert flyers with a general summary of the crime, the investigators’ names, and their telephone number. These flyers can be distributed at scene or left at all surrounding residences and businesses, so people have a direct contact for the

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investigators. This also provides them an opportunity to call in a place of privacy, away from public scrutiny. Although it may not be practical in all investigations, consideration should be given to posting flyers (that are approved for public dissemination) in strategic locations or local businesses when the victim and/or any witnesses sought may be transients.

The investigating officer, when checking locations for witnesses, should record the name of every person who resides in a residence, even though they may not be present at the time of the investigation. In a previous murder investigation, the investigators interviewed the parents of a man who later turned out to be the killer. It wasn't until later that they discovered that the man lived at the house, but he was not present when the interview with his parents occurred. Statements of all witnesses should be recorded, including those who say they did not observe anything. There have been cases where witnesses who were reluctant to talk to the police have appeared during the trial on behalf of the defense. Their initial statements about not observing or knowing anything regarding the incident are vital to the prosecution in impeaching their testimony as defense witnesses.

The victim's friends, relatives, and neighbors may be hesitant to point the finger of suspicion at a person who has been displaying unusual behavior or has, in some manner, aroused their suspicion. They may think anyone they mention will become the object of a full-scale police investigation which would embarrass all concerned even if the investigation reveals the named party to be innocent. One way to overcome this is for the investigating officer to ask the people if they have any information, however slight, which may shed some light on the investigation. Assurance that what they say will be investigated in a discreet and professional manner will calm their fears and may result in a valuable lead.

The investigating officer may find it advantageous to re-interview a witness a few days after the initial contact. Frequently a witness may have decided that some particular item bears further inquiry, and he/she may be ready to volunteer some information.

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14. Notifications to Department Entities

14.1 Mandated Reporting to The Department Operations Center Regional Crime Center

If not already done by the Area Watch Commander, the homicide coordinator or handling investigator shall make a telephonic notification reporting the occurrence of a homicide as soon as practicable, after the preliminary investigation, to the concerned Operations Bureau Office and Department Operations Center.

The following information shall be included:

- Name of victim(s)
- Date and time of occurrence
- Location of occurrence
- Suspect in custody/outstanding
- Cause of death
- Motive for homicide (if known)
- Area of occurrence
- Potential for additional problems
- Name of reporting officer

If the original notification to DOC did not provide all the information necessary, follow-up with DOC with the necessary information as soon as practicable

14.2 Responsibilities of Robbery-Homicide Division

Occasionally, a homicide occurs which would be classified as an extraordinary case. Such a case may involve or require:

- Extensive or long-term investigation, and/or
- Excessive manpower commitment that exceed the Area's capabilities, and/or;
- Serial offender or outside agency involvement, and/or
- Potential for major press coverage, and/or;
- A VIP or celebrity victim, and/or;

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- Multiple victims with fatal or serious injuries, and/or;
- Sexual Homicide, and/or;
- Homicides attributed to arson.

Whenever a preliminary investigation determines that such a crime has occurred, the investigating officer shall notify his/her commanding officer and consider requesting assistance from Robbery-Homicide Division

15. Notification of Funeral in Gang-Related Homicide

Upon determining that a homicide is gang-related/motivated, the involved homicide investigator shall, as soon as practical, telephonically notify the Bureau and gang unit assigned to the involved Area where both the crime occurred and funeral will be held.

The Area commanding officer will ensure that the appropriate gang unit takes reasonable action to suppress violence and other problems that may result from the funeral. Additionally, special attention shall be paid to “after party” locations.

16. Notification to Relatives of the Deceased or Next of Kin (NOK)

The Coroner Investigator will routinely make notification of death to next of kin when the death is being handled as a coroner’s case. Occasionally, in some cases, in which the deceased person is elderly, there is no indication of foul play, and the death appears to be from natural causes, the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner may open a case, but not respond to the location. There may even be a time when an outside agency requests that notification be made to a family living in the City of Los Angeles. In these situations, the officer may be asked to make notification.

The opportunity for an officer or investigator to make notification does not occur often and should be considered a solemn duty. Some thought and consideration should be given to the manner in which it is done. In most cases, this contact will be one of the most impactful events in a family’s or individual’s life. For some families, this is their first lengthy contact with police other than a traffic stop or radio call. Whether the decedent died from natural causes or as the result of a criminal act, the officer’s/investigator’s conduct and delivery will leave a lasting

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impression upon the recipient(s). Partners should discuss who will be the primary speaker so as not to confuse or overwhelm the recipient(s). Police should be prepared to address and/or provide, when applicable, an explanation of the process (autopsy, release of the body, financial assistance, any subsequent police investigation) and contact information for the Department of Medical-Examiner Coroner and any involved law enforcement investigator.

The Coroner Investigator may request assistance from homicide investigators when the deceased has been transported to a hospital and the Coroner Investigator's response may be delayed. In situations where the deceased person will be handled as a coroner's case, but the homicide investigators would prefer to make the next of kin notification themselves, they should consult with and advise the Coroner Investigator of their desire to make the notification. Once notification has been made in the absence of the Coroner Investigator, the homicide investigator must telephonically notify the Coroner Investigator that notification has been made.

17. Disposal of Waste

Not only is it a "best practice," the proper collection and disposal of trash and waste at a crime scene is an investigative necessity. Once a scene is cleared, there should be little or no indication that the police were ever there. This means that all trash, waste, and equipment should be collected and removed. Items contaminated with blood and/or any other bodily fluids are considered infectious waste. Not only do they pose a health risk to all present, the biological material, if not properly handled can lead to cross contamination. The presence of trash left behind after a scene has been cleared, while not necessarily posing a health risk, can lead to questions about the investigator's attention to detail and crime scene processing procedures. This includes the crime scene tape used to delineate the perimeters. It is ultimately the responsibility of the investigating officer in control of a scene or his/her designee to ensure a scene has been adequately policed and sanitized prior to relinquishing control or clearing it.

Any item that is contaminated with biological material, has no evidentiary value AND is not otherwise classified as personal property (disposable rubber gloves, Tyvek suits, or shoe covers) should be handled as infectious waste, placed in red, plastic bags or containers provided by the Department and discarded according to established disposal procedures ([Refer to LAPD Manual Section 3/712.13 for](#)

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[disposal procedures](#)). Excess blood and other biological waste must be collected and disposed of in accordance with established laws and Department procedures ([Refer to Chief of Detectives Notice dated April 20, 2017, “Emergency Response Crime Scene Crime Scene Cleaning”](#)). Individual equipment and/or affected contents of the area homicide crime scene kit (photo identification (PID) placards, Roll-A-Meter measuring device, direction indicators) should be decontaminated at scene and the wipes disposed of with the other infectious waste.

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Even the most thorough and comprehensive investigation will only be partially successful if the results are not carefully documented and coordinated. Complete and accurate reporting forms the basis for a thorough investigation and a solid court presentation. Many investigators use a “To Do List” or “Task List” to identify and track the progress of investigative tasks they assign to others or wish to complete. Such a list can serve as a central location for ideas and leads and help investigators to document activities in the Chronological Record. It can also assist others in creating and completing tasks in the lead investigator’s absence without duplicating effort and/or streamline the transition of a case to a new investigator.

This section will address some of topics and tasks that a homicide investigator should be aware of and what he/she must consider after leaving the crime scene.

1. Further Interviews of Witnesses

If witnesses have been taken from the scene to a police station, an investigator should formally interview/re-interview each witness as soon as practicable. The investigator should be aware of any prior statements made for any of the following reasons:

- The witness may be the murderer.
- Witnesses who are gang members or criminals may be subjected to peer pressure and refuse to talk as time passes.
- The investigating officer may not be able to locate a witness once they leave a scene.
- The witness may change his/her account of what occurred or remember additional facts later. The investigating officer may then use the original statement as a basis from which to evaluate the new statement or as basis to contradict it.

NOTE: *The first 24-hours after a murder has occurred is usually the opportune time for homicide investigators to solve a murder in which there are leads. In a “fresh case,” witnesses are usually more cooperative, and the suspect has not yet had an opportunity to flee the state, etc.*

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All interviews in a homicide investigation should be recorded and witnesses photographed whenever possible. The Investigative Action / Statement Form, [Form 03.11.20](#), shall be used by investigative personnel for all murder investigations and may be used in other types of investigations to record statements of witnesses, victims, suspects, or other persons. A separate form shall be used for each interview, regardless of the number of interviews.

EXCEPTION: The [Form CHP 556](#) shall be used by traffic investigators when investigating traffic-related homicides.

Investigators should, as soon as possible, book all original recordings into TID – Electronics Unit and make or request copies for the completion of statements, transcription, and/or disclosure purposes. A log of all audio / video tapes should be maintained in the appropriate Murder Book section. Requests for transcriptions shall be made to Detective Bureau, Investigative Analysis Section, in accordance with established procedures ([Refer to Chief of Police Special Order No. 26, dated September 16, 2010, “Transcriptions of recorded interviews”](#) and [Department Manual Section 3/569.50](#)).

NOTE: *If a criminal prosecution in Mexico may occur, witness interviews must be recorded in a special format and need to contain specific information not normally found in witness statements. ([Refer to Chapter VI/Section 2 pertaining to the Criminal Prosecution of Murder Suspects in Mexico.](#))*

The investigator should determine the location from where the witness observed the event. Whenever possible, the investigator should attempt to visit the witness's vantage point and note the line of sight, obstructions, and lighting conditions.

If a witness or informant appears to be a transient, the appropriate sections of an Investigator's Final Report, [Form 05.10.00](#), should be completed as an aid to subpoena service and follow-up investigation. An example would be Part D of the Form 05.10.00 which notes an individual's personal background information (relatives, previous employers, previous address, etc.). Attempt to obtain a photograph in situations where a witness has no state operator's license on file or may be difficult to locate. Consider taking facial and full-body photographs of witnesses to crimes committed at parties or large venues. This is done because, in many cases, people will not know other attendees at the event, but may be able to

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identify or will describe them by their dress and/or physical appearance. When opting to do this, it is recommended that the person be asked to hold a paper (with their name, date/time, and location of the photo on it) below their chin. This will facilitate identifying who is who. (See Subject Photo, [Appendix G](#))

The investigating officer should use a Witness List, [Form 03.11.07](#), to record witnesses interviewed, residence and business addresses, telephone numbers, identifying information and recording numbers (if applicable). After completing witness interviews, the investigating officer should use the witness list to compile the names, residence and business addresses, and telephone numbers of witnesses not yet interviewed.

NOTE: *When investigating officers visit a location for the purpose of interviewing a witness or victim, they shall leave an official police department business card, complete with their name and division or detail to which they are assigned. ([Refer to LAPD Department Manual Section 4/296.](#))*

Included should be any other person (e.g., relatives, friends, doctor) who might have pertinent information regarding the involved subject(s). Also included should be those persons needed for possible fingerprint elimination.

NOTE: *When an investigator plans to request for fingerprint elimination, the witness's fingerprints should be taken at the time of the interview. The witness's fingerprints will then be readily available to TID, preventing investigative delays if the investigator has difficulty locating the witness at a later time.*

2. Witness Protection

The danger to some witnesses in certain circumstances is very real and there have been cases where witnesses have been murdered to prevent their testimony. Whenever witnesses have been threatened and/or there is a distinct possibility of them falling victim to violence due to their status as a witness, investigators have a legal and moral responsibility to act.

NOTE: *Police officers have a duty to warn witnesses of potential dangers. ([Refer to LAPD Legal Bulletin, Volume 17, Issue 1, dated July 9, 1993 "Officers Duty to Warn Witnesses of Potential Dangers"](#) and [Detective Operations Manual \(DOM\) Section II/600.30](#))*

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One way to minimize the unintended exposure of a witness's identity is to exercise strict control over their personal information. This includes:

- Omitting addresses, telephone, and identification numbers (whenever possible) from reports (Investigative Reports (IR), Follow-Up Reports, Chronological Records);
- Assigning a number to identify a person or referring to them as “witness” or “he/she” in narratives in lieu of using their name;
- NOT asking for a witness's personal information at the beginning of a recorded interview. Personal information can be obtained or verified before or after the recording by showing a field interview card to them and asking if the information is correct or by asking them to write down their information for you;
- Redacting information. “Redaction” is the process of intentionally removing or obscuring portions of written work product and/or media that is being provided to the prosecuting attorney for turnover to the defense during the disclosure process;
- Sealing warrants. Some media outlets routinely monitor and make inquiries with the Los Angeles County Court Clerk to review the list of search and/or arrest warrants that are filed. Since unsealed warrants are public documents available for purchase, investigators are encouraged to seek court orders to seal all documents. When an order is denied, investigators should provide the original documents AND a redacted copy (for public release) to the Court Clerk at the time of filing;
- Placing a “Security Hold” with the Coroner ([Refer to Chief of Detectives Notice, dated August 11, 2017, “Coroner Security Hold Request Responsibilities, and: Establishment of Coroner Security Hold Coordinator”](#)).

In extreme cases, a witness may wish or need to move from the area where they live. The California Witness Relocation and Assistance Program ([CalWRAP](#)) provides protection of witnesses, their families, friends and/or associates who are endangered due to ongoing or anticipated testimony in gang, organized crime, human trafficking, or narcotic trafficking cases or in other cases that have a high degree of risk to the witness. The CalWRAP reimburses California's prosecutorial agencies for expenses incurred by agencies during the protection of witnesses.

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However, unlike the federal witness relocation program and the misconceptions fostered by television and movies, the CalWRAP does not empower the police to physically move witnesses or provide them with new identities. CalWRAP merely provides limited financial assistance to eligible participants to relocate themselves.

The Department has established an “Emergency Witness Relocation Fund” due to the emerging trend in which witnesses are being threatened to discourage them from providing court testimony. ([Refer to DOM Section II/600.21](#))

The State-funded Witness Relocation and Assistance Program is codified in [14020-14033](#) of the California Penal Code (Hertzberg-Leslie Witness Protections Act).

The authorities to assist with protecting witness identities is outlined in the following:

Penal Code [841.5](#) and [1054.2\(b\)](#) – Non-disclosure of victim/witness information
Penal Code [11142](#) and [13302](#) – Witnesses criminal history disclosure is limited
Government Code [6254\(f\)](#) – Disclosure of information unless it endangers safety

3. Disseminating Suspect Information

There will be times when the suspect’s identity is known early on in an investigation. Timely queries and dissemination of a suspect’s identity the community and/or law enforcement entities at local, state and federal levels can prove vital. At the investigator’s request and with a supervisor’s approval, Area Crime and Community Intelligence Centers (ACCIC) can create and disseminate Crime Alert bulletins *within the Department* and Community Alert bulletins for distribution to the public. Additionally, many ACCIC personnel are part of ACCIC groups that share information with local police agencies.

NOTE: To create a “Wanted” flyer for dissemination to outside agencies or to post suspect information on the Department website (www.lapdonline.org), complete a Los Angeles Police Bulletin Request/Cancellation [Form 15.32.00](#) and refer to LAPD Department Manual [Section 4/760](#) for further instruction.

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Information can be broadcast or sent to other law enforcement agencies alerting them that the suspect lives in their jurisdiction, has friends or relatives in the vicinity, or might pass through their area. The following, 24-hour entities can assist investigators in the dissemination of information, agency queries and/or with placing alerts/holds:

- LAPD Communications Division watch commander at either the Metropolitan Communications Dispatch Center (MCDC) or the Valley Communications Dispatch Center (VDCD) for city-wide, hourly broadcasts and/or messages;
- LAPD Records & Identification (R&I) Division, Automation Services at (213) 486-8220 or the R&I Watch Commander at (213) 486-8310 to request a hold be placed on a specific booking photo(s) to prevent release of the photo to the public (***NOTE: This can only be done for booking photos taken by the LAPD. To request a hold on outside agency booking photos, contact that agency directly***);
- LAPD Records & Identification (R&I) Division, Vehicle/Property Unit (VPU) at (213) 486-1100 to have a “Felony Vehicle Stop” placed on vehicles that were involved in a crime, registered to and/or used by a known felony suspect, or that are subject to seizure based upon a court order;
- LAPD Records & Identification (R&I) Division, Warrant Teletype Unit (WTU) at (213) 486-8260 to have a temporary felony want entered into the County-wide Warrant System (CWS) and the state-wide Wanted Persons System (WPS);
- Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department ([LASD](#)) Sheriff’s Communications Center (SCC) for county-wide dissemination;
- [Los Angeles County, Department of Health Services, Medical Alert Center](#) (MAC) at (866) 940-4401 to request that specific information be sent to all regional medical centers and hospitals along with a request that they notify law enforcement in the event of certain circumstances (i.e., victim of a gunshot wound treated, named suspect appears etc.);
- California Highway Patrol ([CHP](#)) Los Angeles, Southern Communications Center for regional and/or state-wide dissemination;
- [Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\) Los Angeles](#) at (310) 477-6565 for air travel queries and/or regional and/or nationwide dissemination;
- United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement ([ICE](#)) duty agent at LAX;

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- [United States Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\) Communications Center](#) (COMCEN) for border alerts flagging an individual by name and/or a vehicle by license plate.

NOTE: For telephone numbers to any of the entities listed above, contact the 24-hour, DOC, Regional Crime Center at (213) 484-6700.

The suspect's residence should immediately be placed under surveillance because it is not uncommon for the suspect to return home to gather belongings prior to flight. The suspect's known hangouts should be checked for additional information on his/her whereabouts. Inquiries may be made at his/her place of employment in the event he/she attempts to obtain money or tools to assist with their escape. The assigned investigator should specifically coordinate these courses of action. The investigator must evaluate the potential for a spouse/significant other, relative, friend, employer, or business associate of the suspect to attempt to aid or conceal the suspect. In those cases, information and the circumstances can and should be withheld.

When the suspect has moved and his/her current address is unknown, a check of prior Investigator's Final Reports, [Form 05.10.00](#), should be made. If a wanted murder suspect has children, investigators may contact the Los Angeles School Police Department (LASPD) 24-hour Communications Center at (213) 625-6631 or the LA Unified School District (LAUSD) Student Locator, Monday through Friday during school hours, at (213) 241-2460 to inquire if the children are enrolled in the district, at what schools(s) and/or if their records have been transferred to the new school. Investigators can also request that present school records be flagged to notify them of any future transfers to new school(s). Student records list emergency contacts by name and telephone number. Additional assistance can be sought from the LASPD Investigations Division.

4. Sources of Information

Investigators have access to the following sources of information to identify, locate and apprehend an outstanding suspect:

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AUTOMATED INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS)
- [Automated Name Index](#) (ANI)
- [Automated Property Information Management System](#) (APIMS)
- [Cal/Gangs](#)
- [California Department of Motor Vehicles](#) (DMV)
- California Identification System (Cal-ID)
- [California Justice Information System](#) (CJIS)
- [California Sex and Arson Registry](#) (CSAR)
- [City Attorney Case Management System](#) (CCMS)
- [Communications Division](#)
- [Consolidated Crime Analysis Database](#) (CCAD)
- [Consolidated Criminal History Reporting System](#) (CCHRS)
- [Coplink](#)
- [County Warrant System](#) (CWS)
- [COMPSTAT](#)
- [Department of Justice](#) (DOJ)
- [Detective Case Tracking System](#) (DCTS)
- [Field Interview](#) (AFDR / Incident Tracking)
- [Integrated Crime and Arrest Records System](#) (ICARS)
- [Juvenile Automated Index Inquiry, combined](#) (JINQ & JNAM)
- [LexisNexis-Accurint](#)
- [Los Angeles County Photo Manager](#)
- [Los Angeles Superior Court Data and Document Exchange Service](#) (DDES)
- [Military Liaison](#)
- [National Crime Information Center](#) (NCIC)
- [Parole LEADS](#) (Law Enforcement Automated Data System)
- [Probation Information](#)
- [Prosecutor's Information Management System](#) (PIMS)
- [SIO1](#) (inquire by booking number)
- [State of California State Agency Listings](#)
- [TANGO](#) (Worthless Document investigations)
- [Traffic Information Citation System](#) (TICS)
- [Violent Criminal Apprehension Program](#) (ViCAP)
- [Voter Registration](#)

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OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES

- [Airline Reporting Corporation](#) (ARC)
- [California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation](#) (CDC-R)
- [Car Fax](#)
- Credit Reporting Bureaus ([Equifax](#), [Experian](#), [TransUnion](#))
- [Financial Crimes Enforcement Network](#) (FinCEN) from the US Department of Treasury
- [eGuardian](#) (FBI database)
- [Intelmate](#)
- Internet ([Google](#), Internet Explorer, Firefox)
- [Intellius.com](#)
- [Los Angeles Regional Criminal Information Clearinghouse](#) (LA CLEAR)
- [LA City Animal Services Department](#)
- [LA County Department of Children and Family Services](#) (DCFS)
- [LA County Department of Public Social Services](#) (DPSS)
- [LA County Probation Department](#)
- [LA Department of Water and Power](#) (LADWP)
- [LA Joint Regional Intelligence Center](#) (JRIC)
- [Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal](#) (LEEP)
- [National Insurance Crime Bureau](#) (NICB)
- National Vehicle License Reader (NVLR)
- [NCIC](#) Off-line Search
- [Pictometry](#) (through LAPD home page / “[InsideLA](#)” link / [Citywide GIS](#))
- [Social Media](#) ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Snapchat](#), [Twitter](#), [WhatsApp](#), [Yahoo](#))
- [State of California, Employment Development Department](#) (EDD)
- [Treasury Enforcement & Communications System](#) (TECS) from the US DHS/ CBP

FEDERAL AGENCIES

- [Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\), Los Angeles](#) (202) 324-3000

NOTE: *Intended for investigations of mass casualty and “active shooter” events, the Investigative Assistance for Violent Crimes Act (VCA) of 2012*

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authorizes the Attorney General (AG), at the request of an appropriate law enforcement official of a state or political subdivision, to assist (1) in the investigation of violent acts and shootings occurring in a place of public use, and (2) in the investigation of mass killings and attempted mass killings. This act defines "mass killings" as three or more killings in a single incident.

- [US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives](#) (ATF)
- [US Bureau of Prisons](#) (BOP)
- [US Department of Homeland Security](#) (DHS), [Customs and Border Protection](#) (CBP)
- [US Department of Treasury](#)
- [US Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#) (ICE) (213) 894-0400 or (213) 894-5501
- [US Internal Revenue Service](#) (IRS)
- [US Marshals Service](#) (USMS) (213) 894-3796
- [US Postal Service](#) (USPS)
- [US Secret Service](#) (USSS) (213) 894-0307
- [US Social Security Administration](#) (800) 772-1213
- [US Transportation Security Administration](#) (TSA)

5. Physical Line-ups

A physical lineup is the procedure in which a victim or witness to a crime observes a number of individuals within a custodial environment in an attempt to identify the suspect. An investigating officer who desires to have an adult arrestee shown in a physical line-up shall notify Robbery Special Section, Robbery-Homicide Division, by telephone, 24-hours prior to the desired time of the show-up.

EXCEPTION: In unusual circumstances, the investigating officer may request an immediate show-up by contacting Robbery Special Section, Robbery-Homicide Division.

Each victim or witness who might identify an arrestee as the perpetrator of a crime shall be informed of the date, time, and location of the show-up at which the arrestee is to be shown. The investigating officer shall send a teletype notification ([Department Manual Section 4/170.04](#)) to all Area Detective Commanding Officers and concerned outside investigating agencies when an arrestee appearing

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in a physical line-up is believed to be involved in crimes committed in the concerned jurisdiction. (Refer to LAPD [Department Manual Section 4/735](#) for further procedures pertaining to formal show-ups and [Section 4/738.05](#) pertaining to photographic identifications; Refer to ([Refer to Chief of Detectives Notice, dated November 22, 2019, “Photographic Identification of a Suspect”](#))

NOTE: *Force shall not be used to compel an arrestee to participate in a line-up. If an arrestee refuses to participate, the investigating officer shall follow the procedure for identifying the arrestee through the use of photographs. ([Refer to Chief of Detectives Notice, dated November 22, 2019, “Photographic Identification of a Suspect”](#))*

An investigating officer desiring to schedule a juvenile for a physical line-up shall contact the liaison officer at the concerned juvenile facility. Liaison officers are available on court days between 0730 and 1600 hours.

6. Requesting Analysis of Evidence

Determining which items of evidence to process and in what order can be a daunting and sometimes confusing task for investigators. To alleviate this and streamline requests, Forensic Science Division offers homicide investigators an opportunity to schedule an Evidence Consultation with representatives from various FSD units, at one time, to discuss their case and establish an order of processing.

7. Release of Crime and Arrest Information to the News Media or Public

Homicide investigations will generate inquiries from members of the news media. The more sensational cases or those involving well-known persons may result in numerous and insistent requests for information. Law enforcement has an obligation to provide the public, via the news media, with information the public has a right to know. The two most challenging issues are: who should make the press release and what type of information should be released. Whether to release information or to grant interviews will be determined according to the facts of each case.

Generally, investigators should be open in their dealings with the public and, unless there is reason to the contrary, they should readily supply requested

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information. They should, however, be cautious to avoid representing as fact that which is their opinion. (Refer to LAPD Department Manual [Sections 1/440.10](#) and [1/440.40](#) pertaining to the release of public information.) Investigators should exercise discretion, and when necessary, refer the person to the proper individual or agency for such answers. When a request is made for information about a police matter, investigators should decide if they are in possession of sufficient facts and are qualified to respond, and whether the person making the request is a proper person to receive the information.

7.1 Responsibility for the Release of Information

The Area Commanding Officer (CO), Assistant Commanding Officer (ACO), Detective Commanding Officer (DCO) or, in their absence, the senior detective at the scene is normally responsible for making a press release. Only one person should make the press release. This avoids confusion and will eliminate the possibility of two different investigators independently releasing conflicting details and facts which, when compared, may reveal an important clue or lead. Be especially mindful of this during investigations where multiple agencies are involved such as: Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD), LASPD, University of Southern California (USC) Department of Public Safety, University of California – Los Angeles (UCLA) Police and the Department of Coroner.

[The LAPD Press Release, Form 03.11.05](#), should include the following information:

- DR number
- Date and time completed
- Date of crime
- Victim's name (only when the next of kin have been notified), sex, descent, age (if known)
- Brief synopsis of what occurred
- Suspect and method of death, if known (i.e., shot, stabbed, etc.)
- Investigators assigned to the case (include their division of assignment and telephone number)

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The public information officer (PIO) may, after consulting with the investigator(s), assume responsibility for the release of information involving events of a spectacular or unusual nature.

7.2 Guidelines for the Release of Crime and Arrest Information

Information regarding the commission of a crime and the resulting investigation may be made available to the public prior to the making of an arrest, the issuance of an arrest warrant, or the filing of formal charges ([Refer to LAPD Department Manual Section 3/406.10](#))

The following guidelines shall apply to all releases of information to the public:

- Department personnel should not release information if it is believed that it would jeopardize the investigation; jeopardize the successful prosecution of a criminal case; affect the outcome of a civil case involving the City of Los Angeles; or infringe upon the person's right to privacy.

NOTE: *Facts concerning the crime which could only be known by the perpetrator, or which could be utilized as polygraph keys should not be released.*

- The home address of the victim of a crime shall not be released to the public unless the home address is also the location of the crime.
- The name and address of a witness to a crime shall not be released to the public.

EXCEPTION: The above information may be released if given permission to do so by the respective victim or witness, or if the investigating officer believes that its release would assist in the investigation of the crime.

- The name and address of a confidential informant shall not be released.

7.3 Requests for Investigative Information

All questions for investigative information shall be directed to personnel in the following order: the concerned investigating officer, the concerned investigating

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officer's Commanding Officer, or the concerned Area's Watch Commander. The employee handling the request shall:

- Determine the identity and agency affiliation of the caller;
- Determine what information the caller requires and the reason the information is being requested;
- Verify the caller's identity whenever the caller is not personally known to the employee; and
- Determine the caller's right to know the requested information.

7.4 Information Requiring Approval Prior to its Release to the Public

The following information shall not be released unless authorized by the investigating officer and approved by an officer of the rank of Deputy Chief or higher:

- The character or reputation of the accused person.
- The existence or content of any confession or admission; the nature and content of statements made by the accused person; or the refusal or failure of the accused person to make any statement.
- The results of any examination or test, or the accused person's refusal or failure to submit to an examination or test.
- The credibility, identity, or testimony of a prospective witness.
- The possibility of a plea of guilty to the offense charged or to a lesser offense.
- Any opinion as to the accused person's guilt or innocence, the merits of the case or the evidence of the case.
- The analysis and conclusions of an investigating officer regarding the officer's investigation.

NOTE: No employee of this Department shall release the names of juveniles who are arrested, taken into temporary custody or who are being sought for arrest, to the news media or public at large without the prior approval of the Commanding Officer, Juvenile Division.

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7.5 News Media Interviews and Photographs of Inmates

([Refer to LAPD Department Manual Section 4/659.15](#)) When an accredited news media representative requests to interview or photograph an inmate, the officer having custody of an inmate shall comply with the following applicable procedures:

Inmates Not Arraigned

- Inmates not arraigned shall not be interviewed by members of the news media except in exceptional cases and only with the approval of the Chief of Police.

NOTE: News media representatives shall be informed that interviews are not permitted until an inmate has been arraigned.

- Approval to photograph inmates not arraigned by news media representatives shall be granted only if it does not interfere with the investigation. Granting of approval to photograph inmates not arraigned shall be the responsibility of:
 - Detective Support and Vice Division, if the inmate is confined in Custody Services Division–Metropolitan Jail Section.
 - Concerned investigating officers if the inmate is confined in a geographic jail.
- The Visitor’s Pass, [Form 06.21.00](#), shall be used to provide approval for news media representatives to photograph inmates not arraigned. The words “**PHOTOS ONLY**” shall be printed in large letters across the face of the form.

Arraigned Inmates

- Interviews or photographs of arraigned inmates by news media representatives may be granted without prior approval.
- Inmates shall not be compelled to be photographed or interviewed by news media representatives. An officer shall remain present when an inmate is being interviewed or photographed.

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Inmate's Consent to Be Interviewed

- The inmate shall be asked if he/she desires to be interviewed by the representatives of the news media.
- If the inmate refuses to consent to the interview, the requesting representatives shall be informed of such refusal.
- If the inmate consents to the interview, the officer having custody shall:
 - Complete the back of the Custody Record of the Los Angeles Consolidated Booking Form, Form 05.01.00, **and**
 - Complete the following statement on the back of the Custody Record of the Los Angeles Consolidated Booking Form, Form 05.01.00: "I understand that (name of reporter; if two or more, the word "reporters" shall suffice) representing (name of news media) desires to talk to me and I hereby certify that I voluntarily consent to the interview(s)." The inmate shall be requested to sign the form, **and**
 - Remain in the presence of the inmate and the interviewers during the entire course of the interview.

8. News Information File

The investigating officer should maintain a file of internet and newspaper stories relating to the crime, in Section 20 of the murder book. They should also consider obtaining copies of relevant Facebook blogs, Twitter postings, Instagram photographs, or other relevant social media accounts. When apprehended, many suspects explain their intimate knowledge of the crime by saying they read it in the newspaper. A clipping file will assist to disprove such alibis. It is important for the investigator to know what the press has published regarding the case. It may allow the investigator to direct the investigation along certain lines. Request that Media Relations Division secure copies of all existing news footage.

9. Information and Informants

When a murder investigation is underway, police stations may receive telephone calls from people offering information about possible suspects. Although well meaning, the vast majority of the information has no actual connection or relevance to the crime. Occasionally, the information results in valuable leads. Because the investigator cannot always immediately ascertain the value of

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incoming information, it must be compiled in a manner that allows him/her to readily reference and review it. The investigator should use the Department designated forms for the chronological recording of investigative information ([Form 03.11.06](#)) and the recording of witness information ([Form 03.11.07](#)). Care must be exercised to ensure the investigators receive all information provided because some people will only call once. Investigators should occasionally remind officers in the field and those working the front desk to document any information provided to them regarding murders and not refer or transfer the source to Communications Division. Investigators should also consider contacting DOC's Regional Crime Center, providing their contact information and requesting DOC personnel forward any tips or leads to them.

Many officers and investigators, especially those assigned to narcotics details, have reliable informants who routinely provide information. The lifestyle and background of many informants enables them to frequent certain areas and obtain information (some fact, some rumor). In some cases, information provided by an informant may verify or corroborate a specific aspect of a murder investigation. The reliability of this information, however, should always be evaluated in accordance with the established Department policies and procedures for handling informants (Refer to LAPD Department Manual [Sections 1/544, 4/733](#) and [Informant Manual](#), January, 2020).

10. Confidential Cases

In addition to the routine safeguards that should be implemented in every criminal investigation, there may be times when homicide investigators will be required to restrict who has access to and knowledge of the course and scope of their investigation. This is especially relevant in cases with continuous media interest. In order to prevent inadvertent release of information, investigators should consider some of the following measures:

- Do not leave work product on desks or printers;
- Coordinate with the Media Relations Division (MRD) to discuss what the investigators would/would not like released and the method of release (press release, news conference). This is especially important during multi-agency investigations where other entities have access to the investigation facts;

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- Remind investigative and uniformed personnel that all inquiries should be directed to the assigned investigators or the MRD;
- Retrieve copies of all filed arrest warrants that have been issued by a court and submitted to the court clerk's office from the area records printer. Copies of filed arrest warrants automatically print out at the designated, area records printer once they have been entered into the CWS, WPS and NCIC systems by the clerk;
- Restrict the routine dissemination of reports by delivering original reports to the R&I watch commander and asking that they be secured and made "confidential;"
- Request the table coordinator make the case "confidential" in DCTS;
- Restrict the copying and release of photos by contacting the TID Photographic Unit and requesting they flag specific (or all) "D" numbers related to a murder investigation with a note that no copies be made or released without the authorization of the investigating officer;
- Restrict the copying and release of recordings by contacting the TID Electronics Unit and requesting they flag specific (or all) recordings related to a murder investigation with a note that no copies be made or released without the authorization of the investigating officer;
- Restrict the copying and release of booking photos by contacting the R&I Automation Services / Live Scan Coordinator or the R&I Watch Commander and requesting specific photos (by booking number) not be released without the authorization of the investigating officer;

NOTE: *This could be especially helpful in cases where a suspect's identity is known, but investigators do not wish the media to publish or release his photograph because there are still witnesses who need to view a photographic line-up and any publication of an image could taint this process.*

- Attempt to restrict the release of an individual's California driver's license (CDL) photo for the same reason by contacting the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Requests may have to be submitted in writing, but may only delay release for up to 48-hours.

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11. Deconfliction

“Deconfliction” commonly refers to the process of avoiding mutual interference, or outright hazards that can develop when two entities converge on the same objective. In law enforcement operations, this can refer to the manner in which tactical units register locations with a clearinghouse to avoid, unintentional “blue on blue” encounters by two or more separate entities planning to contact the same location without knowledge of the other. During murder investigations, it can have similar applications. For example, Detective Smith identified a murder suspect and is planning to arrest him and search his home in the next few days. Meanwhile, Detective Jones, who is assigned to a different table at another division, is investigating an unrelated, lesser crime to which the same murder suspect is a party. Prior to Detective Smith serving the search and arrest warrants, Detective Jones goes to the suspect’s home, speaks with him about the lesser crime and departs. Startled by the detective’s appearance at his door, the suspect discards murder evidence that he had in his home and flees. When Detective Smith serves the warrant a few days later, the suspect is gone and no evidence to the murder is recovered.

While this is an overly simplistic and somewhat exaggerated example, it is quite possible for something like this to occur. Currently, there is no single database to query to see if other investigators are looking at your murder suspect for other crimes. Additionally, there is no way for an investigator to “flag” an individual’s name if it is entered into CCAD, DCTS, FI or TICS. While this can be frustrating, it does not mean investigators are without options. In addition to disseminating your suspect’s information on an internal crime alert bulletin, there are several “alerts” that an investigator can place that will notify him/her if an individual is arrested. For instance, an “Under Investigation” alert can be placed on an individual’s record in CCHRS, but notification relies on the diligence of the law enforcement officer who queries the record. *If* the flagged individual is NOT booked and the officer does NOT contact the investigator who placed the alert, the investigator may never know his suspect was contacted. If the flagged individual IS booked, the investigator may receive an email notifying him of the booking, but the reliability and timeliness of this automatic, email notification varies.

Investigators may place a “temporary felony want” in the CWS and WPS systems, but these only last 30 days. The “temporary felony want” is recommended to be

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used in situations where the investigator wants to contact the suspect. On a national level, investigators may contact the [National Crime Information Center](#) (NCIC) in Virginia and request an offline search by name be conducted for a specified time period. If an individual (or vehicle) has been queried by any law enforcement personnel during the period requested, NCIC will provide the date, time and agency that queried the name or vehicle.

The Los Angeles Regional Criminal Information Clearinghouse ([LA CLEAR](#)) is part of the Western States Information Network ([WSIN](#)), a regional information sharing system. LA CLEAR is a tactical and strategic intelligence operation that does not conduct independent investigations, but supports the needs of investigators and their home agency or task force in criminal investigations. LA CLEAR is managed by law enforcement executives, and is staffed by a fully-integrated team of non-sworn law enforcement, military, and contract specialists organized into component units:

- The Intelligence & Deconfliction Watch Center (“War Room”);
- The Analytical Unit;
- The Los Angeles HIDTA Training Initiative, hosted by LA CLEAR;
- The Information Systems Support Unit; and
- The Administrative Support Services Unit.

LA CLEAR provides real-time officer safety related subject and case deconfliction services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the Los Angeles High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area ([HIDTA](#)) group and the 205 agencies & task forces within 4 counties that comprise the surrounding HIDTA regions.

LAPD investigators can submit case information (names, addresses, phone numbers) to be queried and/or with a request that it be entered into the network. The investigator will then, in turn, be put into contact with any other detective or officer who has connecting information.

NOTE: Access to LA CLEAR data and services requires LAPD investigators to complete and submit a Security Control Card- LAPD Only (Rev 05/2012) and fax it to LAPD ISD/NIN at (213) 627-5168 for clearance. Once approved, investigators can submit queries on an LA CLEAR War Room inquiry or Critical

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Event From and fax it to (323) 869-2566 or scan and email it to War-Room@LAClear.com. To contact the War Room, call (800) 522-5327.

12. Attending the Postmortem Examination

Pathologists are doctors who study the cause and development of disease. Forensic pathologists are doctors who focus on determining the cause of death. They are an important part of the investigative team and can greatly assist in the investigation by documenting all wounds, bruises, scratches, scars or other evidence on the body and interpreting findings based on medical facts. After a body is photographed, X-rayed, and disrobed at the Coroner's Forensic Science Center (FSC), it will be brought to a surgical theater where the forensic pathologist will diagram and note any wounds or abnormalities. The forensic pathologist, who is also a Deputy Medical Examiner ([DME](#)), will then perform the post-mortem examination, which is also referred to as an autopsy or necropsy. This is a highly specialized surgical procedure consisting of a thorough examination of a corpse by dissection to determine the cause and manner of death and to evaluate any disease or injury that may be present.

In addition to collecting tissue samples, blood, urine, and other biological fluids that may be required for microscopic examination and toxicology testing, the DME will remove and collect any ballistic evidence or foreign objects reasonably considered to have contributed to the cause of death. The DME may insert trajectory rods to visualize a bullet's path and direct that additional photos be taken during the autopsy. All collected evidence is logged and secured at the coroner's property room.

Ideally, the homicide investigator who witnessed the examination of the body at the crime scene and/or who has been assigned to investigate the case should attend the postmortem examination as he/she has the ultimate responsibility for solving the case. Attending the postmortem examination may lead to the recovery or description of the weapon used. The number, type and location of wounds may provide valuable clues. If unable to attend, an investigator should notify Robbery-Homicide Division (RHD) and request the presence of an RHD detective at the postmortem examination.

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NOTE: To protect against infectious diseases, Department personnel shall wear either a “High Efficiency Particulate Air” (HEPA) purifying filter, P95, or N95 respirator mask when attending autopsies. New “fit” test requirements are pending (Refer to Chief of Detectives Notice, “Respiratory Protocol at the Los Angeles County Medical Examiner-Coroner’s Office”).

Some of the obvious benefits of the homicide investigator attending the postmortem examination are:

- Be a witness (for limited purposes at the preliminary hearing).
- The pathologist can explain the findings as they progress.
- The investigating officer can ask any questions pertinent to the case.
- When the investigating officer has a suspected weapon in evidence, comparison of the weapon with the wound can be made and evidence (e.g., bullets) removed from the victim can be viewed and compared with the suspected weapon.

NOTE: So as to avoid confusion in court, investigators are reminded that they shall NOT use the numbered, anatomical drawing forms bearing the “County of Los Angeles Department of Coroner” headings that are available at the Coroner’s FSC. The Department provides anatomical drawing forms for this purpose and, when used, should include the DR number, victim’s name as well as the detective’s name and serial number in the spaces provided. (Refer to [Appendix C](#), Department Office of Operations Order No. 26, dated December 28, 1993, “Anatomical Drawing Forms”)

The following questions may be answered by the pathologist performing the autopsy:

- What type of wounds are present (laceration, incision, puncture, avulsion, gunshot)?
- What is the type of wound (fatal, likely fatal, non-fatal)?
- When were the injuries inflicted?
 - Antemortem = “Before” death
 - Perimortem = “At or near” the time of death
 - Postmortem = “After” death
- What position was the victim in at the time of the assault?

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- From what direction was force applied?
- How close (at what range) was the muzzle when the firearm was discharged? (**NOTE:** *These distances are approximations and will vary depending on the type of firearm and ammunition used*)
 - Contact = (0") Muzzle or a portion of it is in contact with the skin; Indicators include: muzzle stamp, searing around entrance wound, "soot" or burned powder that wipes off on the skin and in tissue
 - Close = (<6") Indicators include: "stippling" or unburned powder and debris that causes punctate abrasions on the skin and does not wipe off as well as soot
 - Intermediate = (6-30") Some stippling may be present
 - Indeterminate = (>30") Unable to determine
- Is there evidence of struggle or presence of defensive marks?
- Is there evidence of rape, sodomy, or other types of sexual abuse (spermatozoa present, injuries to the anal or vaginal openings, mutilated sex organs)?
- Is there any evidence of the body being dragged or dumped?
- What type of weapon was involved?
- Was the deceased under the influence of any type of narcotics, drugs, or alcohol?
- Were any foreign materials present in the body (pieces of glass, soot, broken knife blade)?
- What can be opined from the stomach contents (type of food last ingested and how long ago)?
- How long did the victim live after the injury?
- What distance could they have walked or run?
- What caused death (blunt force trauma, gunshot wound, exsanguination, asphyxia)?
- What is the estimated time of death?

The investigating officer should discuss all pertinent information with the pathologist. This discussion may include the following:

- Description of the circumstances of the death;
- Description of the scene of death;
- Condition of the body;
- Statements from the witnesses;

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- Photographs and diagrams;
- Any weapons or articles found at the scene;

NOTE: *To avoid confusion during court proceedings, the Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner Report Forms shall not be used by Department personnel for taking notes during autopsies. Investigating officers shall use the four Department approved “Anatomical Drawing Forms.”*

13. Placing a Security Hold

All information provided to the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner is public information. However, there may be facts or details of a homicide that, if made public, could hamper investigative efforts. To avoid this, the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner revised its Security Hold Policy #2044 in August of 2020. Unless the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner receives a request for a security hold, the documents in a file are considered public records and will be released upon request to the general public and media. The Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner only requires the LAPD to inform them each year on whether or not the security hold should remain in effect. When a security hold has been placed, no documents are released and access to the file by Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner employees is restricted. However, unless specifically requested, certain data (i.e., Case No, victim's name, race, DOB, DOD, and the cause or manner of death) may be released. A hold can be placed on a file for a specific period of time or indefinitely.

To place a security hold on a file, the investigating officer must prepare a letter on Department letterhead and have it signed by his/her Commanding Officer. The letter must include the following:

- The specific request;
- The Coroner’s case number(s)/name(s) of decedent(s);
- The point of contact (name and telephone number) within the Department to whom the Medical Examiner-Coroner’s Office can refer people when documents are requested and who they can call to determine the need to maintain the hold; and,
- An estimate of how long the hold will be requested or direct until further notice.

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Once the “Security Hold” is no longer required, the investigating officer shall forward a second 15.2 correspondence to the Medical Examiner-Coroner’s Office requesting that the hold be removed. (Refer to “[Appendix E](#)” for an exemplar Coroner’s Security Hold Letter and a copy of the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner, County of Los Angeles Security Hold Policy #2044, Rev 1 dated Aug. 24, 2020). (Refer to Chief of Detectives Notice, dated August 11, 2017, “[Coroner Security Hold Request Responsibilities, and; Establishment of Coroner Security Hold Coordinator](#)”)

14. Querying the Sex Offender Index (SOI)

On July 29, 1994, Jesse Timmendequas lured seven-year-old Megan Kanka into his home to see a puppy. He then raped, beat, and strangled her with a belt. A day later, he led police to her the body in a nearby park. Megan’s parents did not know that a twice-convicted, violent sex offender was living across the street from them until he was charged with her brutal rape and murder. They were outraged when they learned that Timmendequas, who had been convicted in a 1981 attack on a five-year old child and an attempted sexual assault on a seven-year old, had moved into their neighborhood and they were never notified.

Megan’s parents campaigned for laws to require that neighbors be notified when sex criminals move into an area after they have served their time in prison and, in 1996, the State of New Jersey adopted a new law commonly known as “Megan’s Law.” It required convicted sex offenders to register with local police. Megan’s Law created a registration and notification procedure to alert law enforcement, schools, community organizations and neighbors to the presence of a sex offender who authorities believe may pose a risk to the community. This information is designed to enhance public safety and awareness. The general public can access www.meganslaw.ca.gov to check their city for sex offender related information.

NOTE: Pursuant to Penal Code Section 290, convicted sex offenders are required by California law to register. Registration Enforcement And Compliance Teams (REACT) are responsible for registering, photographing, and maintaining special files on convicted sex offenders. Employees shall not provide information from the Sex Offender Index (SOI) via the telephone.

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The scene of any death shall be investigated with all of the concern and caution accorded a homicide scene. Full documentation of interviews, weapons, pills, notes, and other articles shall be made. The investigation shall inquire into all aspects of the situation until the point where the detective has sufficient facts to render a knowledgeable opinion as to how the death occurred.

1. Reporting the Manner of Death

In most coroner cases, the medical examiner depends on the pertinent and complete facts in the Death Investigation report to assist in establishing both the cause and manner of death. The “cause” of death is a term used to indicate the medical cause of death or what caused a person to die. The “manner” of death is the way to categorize death and describes the method which brought about death. These include:

- Traffic,
- Homicide,
- Accident,
- Natural,
- Undetermined, and
- Suicide.

1.1 Traffic

Generally speaking, a traffic-related death is defined as an unintentional death of a driver, passenger, or pedestrian involving a motor vehicle on public roadways. Department policy is that patrol officers routinely will be assigned the responsibility of investigating cases of obvious, natural death and traffic-related deaths. Traffic deaths are handled as outlined in the Traffic Manual. A patrol officer at the scene of a traffic-related death shall notify an accident follow-up investigator.

NOTE: *During off-hours and on weekends, officers may contact the concerned traffic division watch commander.*

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1.2 Homicide

As previously discussed, “homicide” is simply the killing of one human being by another human being and may be unlawful, justifiable, or excusable depending on the circumstances.

1.3 Accident

An accidental death is defined as an unnatural death resulting from an inadvertent chance happening. Deaths related to illicit drug or excessive medication overdose, in the absence of evidence specifically supporting the conclusion of the manner of death being homicide or suicide, are classified as accident.

1.4 Natural

A death by natural causes is one that is primarily attributed to an illness or an internal malfunction of the body not directly influenced by external forces. The term “natural death” does not apply to the death of an infant, deaths where foul play is possible or suspected, and/or deaths which may require a follow-up investigation. A patrol officer at the scene of an obvious natural death shall notify a homicide investigator.

NOTE: *During off-hours and on weekends, officers may contact the on-call homicide supervisor to make notification of a natural death.*

The investigation of obvious natural death cases usually will not present a problem for the investigating officer or the patrol officer. The investigating officer must determine if there is a history of illness and whether the deceased has been examined by a qualified doctor during the preceding 20 days. If the attending doctor has seen the patient within the past 20 days and is willing to sign the Death Certificate, the death does not become a Coroner’s case and no Death Report is required. Doctors who qualify to sign a Death Certificate are:

- Medical Doctors (M.D.)
- Doctors of Osteopathy (D.O.) and
- Doctors of Chiropractic (D.C.).

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EXCEPTION: In some cases of natural death, the 20-day limit may be extended up to a maximum of 60 days at the discretion of the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner. If the extension is granted, the death will not become a Coroner's case and no Death Report is required.

A preliminary investigation should be conducted to ensure that no foul play took place. The officer should perform a thorough visual examination of the deceased and the scene. Whenever possible, a witness, preferably a relative of the deceased or a member of the household, shall be requested to remain at the scene with the officer. The name and address of this person, and a statement verifying his/her presence, shall be included in the Death Report, [Form 03.11.00](#). Whenever the Coroner Investigator takes personal effects and possessions of the deceased, a receipt shall be obtained. This receipt shall be attached to the Death Report. ([Refer to LAPD Department Manual Section 4/238.48](#))

During the visual examination of the body, care should be taken to ensure that the procedure is not conducted in a manner offensive to any relative or friend who is present. If the need for the examination is questioned, it shall be explained that the procedure is being carried out in the best interest of the deceased and the relatives to ensure that no foul play has taken place. While it would be rare for anyone to protest an examination of the deceased, it is a circumstance that could arise. In this event, the Medical Examiner-Coroner's Office may decide to play a more active role in the investigation of the death.

The next of kin present may contact any mortuary to remove the body for funeral arrangements. If no next of kin is available to take responsibility for the body, the Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center (LAC-USCMC) Mortuary Office, phone (323) 409-7161, shall be summoned. The Mortuary Office will pick up and store the body for a designated period of time until the next of kin is located to claim the body. The mortuary representative will assume responsibility for sealing the premises of the deceased person.

NOTE: *A death that comes under the jurisdiction of the Medical-Examiner Coroner shall not be removed to a funeral establishment except on instructions of a Coroner Investigator. ([Refer to LAPD Department Manual Section 4/238.26](#))*

If a natural death does not fit into one of the above exceptions and for all traffic deaths, a Death Report shall be completed.

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1.5 Undetermined

“Undetermined” is an appropriate designation for investigations that have very little available information about the circumstances surrounding death (e.g. skeletal remains) or where known information equally supports, or conflicts with, more than one manner of death. An undetermined manner of death is assigned to cases of unnatural death when a clear preponderance of evidence supporting a specific manner (homicide, accident, or suicide) is not available.

1.6 Suicide

Suicide is a death from self-inflicted injury with evidence of intent to die. “Intent” includes an explicit expression, such as a suicide note, verbal threat, previous attempts, or an act constituting implicit intent. An example of implicit evidence of intent to die would be a self-inflicted gunshot wound (particularly of the head, chest, or abdomen) at close range (or contact) since this has a very high potential for lethality.

2. Death Investigation Report, [Form 03.11.00](#)

Although most of the Death Report is self-explanatory, the following points should be remembered:

- A Death Report does not report a crime; it reports a death.
- A Death Report alone, with no related Investigative Report (IR) or criminal Traffic Report, can *never* be cleared; only crimes can be cleared. Therefore, the status of a “stand alone” Death Report is always “Investigation Continued.”
- Every death shall be reported on a Death Report with the following exceptions:
 - Natural deaths.
 - Deaths resulting from an aircraft accident, which will be handled in their entirety by military or federal authorities.
- Each death requires a separate Death Report and a separate DR number.

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NOTE: *A vehicular manslaughter shall be listed as “traffic.” A murder wherein a vehicle was used as the weapon shall be listed as “homicide.” A death caused by the Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) shall be listed as “natural.”*

EXCEPTION: Multiple deaths resulting from a traffic accident shall all bear the same DR number, that of the Traffic Accident Report.

- When death results from an illness, injury, incident, or crime previously reported on another type of report, the Death Report shall bear the same DR number as the previous report.
- When a Follow-Up Report is a multiple report to both the Death Report and the IR, the case status shall be that of the IR.

EXCEPTION: The case status of the Death Report shall be “Investigation Continued” if a death occurred but the IR is to be unfounded.

- Do not unfound a Death Report unless the person reported dead is actually alive.
- If the death is other than murder *and* there will be no further investigation *and* the case is considered closed, “CASE CLOSED” shall be printed in bold letters at the top of the narrative of the Follow-Up Report.
- The narrative of the Follow-Up Report should clarify the type of death on the original Death Report and explain any subsequent changes; e.g., homicide to suicide, undetermined to natural.

EXCEPTION: When a reported crime or incident is reclassified to a murder *and* the death occurs in a subsequent calendar year, the required Investigative Report (IR), [Form 03.01.00](#); Follow-Up Investigation Report, [Form 03.14.00](#), and Death Investigation, [Form 03.11.00](#), shall be assigned a new DR number. Attach a copy of the face sheet of the original crime report to the copy of the Form 03.14.00 that is sent to Information Technology Division ([see Detective Operations Manual, Volume I, Section 151.11](#)).

- When the name of the deceased is unknown, obtain a “John/Jane Doe” number from the Coroner Investigator at the scene (i.e., Jane Doe #135).
- The likely manner of death listed on the Death Report shall be the investigating officer’s initial opinion. If unknown, enter “undetermined.”

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- “Narrative” – the Death Report should answer the questions who, what, when, where, why, and how. The investigating officer should remember that all crimes, deaths, and related reports are distributed through Department channels and are routinely available to the news media.

The following format is a guideline for the completion of a Death Report. Certain information may be deleted if inappropriate in a particular investigation. The narrative should be a flowing account in chronological order.

Source of Call

- How, when, where, and by whom was the officer notified?
- Officer’s date and time of arrival at the scene.

Location and Conditions

- Type of premises (e.g., single family residence, motel, multi-story apartment building, etc.).
- Weather conditions and lighting.

Observations

- Decedent’s location within the scene.
- Describe the decedent’s position (i.e., prone, supine, head pointing in a northerly direction, etc.).
- Thoroughly describe decedent’s appearance and any unusual physical characteristics.
 - Wounds
 - Rigor mortis (full, body parts affected)
 - Postmortem lividity (consistent with body position?)
 - Purging from mouth and/or nose
 - Decomposition
 - Environmental and liver temperatures (obtained from the Coroner Investigator) and the time obtained
- Describe the death scene:
 - Evidence of forced entry?
 - Doors/windows locked from the inside?
 - TV/Radio on? (channel or station)
 - Evidence of violent action?
 - Is the crime scene compatible with the apparent cause of death?

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Medical History

- History of pertinent diseases and/or injuries.
- Doctor's name, address and telephone number.
- Date decedent last visited the doctor.
- Type of medication taken by the decedent.

Persons at the scene

- Police and Fire Department unit numbers, names and serial numbers of personnel.
- Indicate who pronounced death and the time.
 - Attach Fire Department Emergency Aid Report, F-660 to the Death Report.

NOTE: *Except when a person is obviously dead, it shall be the responsibility of the emergency ambulance crew to determine if death has occurred. ([Refer to LAPD Manual Section 4/238.10](#))*

- Persons who discovered the body, notified police, and identified the decedent.
- Family, friends and witnesses present.
- Technical Investigation Division personnel.
- Forensic Science Division personnel.
- Coroner Investigator.

Evidence/Property

- All medication found near the decedent or at the scene.
- Suicide note (see Chapter III/Section 9–I).
- Firearms–Weapons (see Chapter III/Section 9–F).
- Property retained by the Coroner Investigator.
 - Attach Coroner's receipt to the Death Report.
- Outline the chain of custody and booking location/disposition of all evidence.

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Witness Statements

- Interview each witness independently.
- The inclusion of each independent statement or its summary in the narrative is dependent upon the type/cause of death and the complexity of the investigation.

Notifications

- Include any notification(s) not previously recorded in the report.
- Include the name, serial number, and division of the detective notified (uniform officers only).

Conclusions

- Tie up any loose ends not covered elsewhere in the narrative.
- Include opinion as to the cause of death and the factual basis for forming that opinion.

3. Follow-Up Investigation Report, [Form 03.14.00](#)

The Follow-Up Investigation Report, Form 03.14.00, is the Department's primary form used to record additional information and the results of investigations after completion of the original crime or incident report. For detailed instructions on the use of this form, refer to Volume I of the Detective Operations Manual.

In regard to homicide investigations, the Follow-Up Investigation Report shall be completed when:

- The crime report has been cleared, or
- An arrest warrant has been issued for at least one suspect, or
- All suspects have been positively identified.

The Follow-Up Report shall contain the following information:

- Synopsis of the Crime/Crime Summary (who, what, when, where, why and how);
- Summary of the Investigation, which may include:

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- Description of the Crime Scene;
- General Summary of Evidence Collected;
- Relevant Witness Statements;
- Investigative information that positively identifies the suspect(s) as the perpetrators(s);
- M.O. used by the suspect(s);
- Results of the Postmortem Examination;
- Suspect, Defendant and Victim Information;
- Filing/Results of any Presentation to the LADA (criminal charges filed, warrant information and/or reason for reject)
- Case Status

NOTE: *When the circumstances of the case or the existence of unidentified suspects requires a more exhaustive report, the detective supervisor may require that a Murder Investigation Progress Report be completed in lieu of a Follow-Up Report.*

4. Follow-Up Reporting Procedures

The Follow-Up Investigation Report, [Form 03.14.00](#) is used to document various changes that may (i.e., case status, cause and/or manner of death) occur during a death investigation.

4.1 Reporting Traffic Deaths

NOTE: *For all traffic deaths, refer to the Traffic Manual for follow-up reporting requirements.*

4.2 Reporting Homicides

The following section is intended to offer brief guidance relating to the completion of reports in circumstances involving murder, manslaughter, justifiable, and excusable homicide.

Reporting “Murder” and/or “Manslaughter”

- A criminal homicide shall be reported as “Murder” unless it is firmly established to be “Manslaughter.”

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- A homicide that is suspected of resulting from murder or manslaughter shall also be reported on an Investigative Report (IR).

EXCEPTION: Traffic related manslaughters and homicides prosecuted under [*People v. Watson, \(1981\) 30 Cal 3d 290*](#), shall be reported on a Traffic Report (CHP 555), not an IR. (In *Watson* the California Supreme Court held that a defendant can be charged with second degree murder in a death resulting from a traffic collision if the prosecution can prove implied malice.)

Investigators obtaining a DR number for a murder investigation shall submit an IR titled “Murder” to the concerned clerical personnel issuing the DR number. Investigators shall not request a DR number for a murder case by submitting any other report without an accompanying IR for Murder.

EXCEPTION: If immediate completion of an IR for Murder will delay the investigation, investigators may obtain a DR number for a murder case by submitting a face sheet of the murder IR. Under these circumstances, the narrative of the IR should be completed, reproduced and distributed as soon as possible.

When a reported crime or incident is later determined to be a murder, the assigned investigating officer shall:

- Submit an Investigative Report (IR) titled “Murder,” when the original report was a Death Report, an Injury Report or a Missing Person Investigation Report; **or**
- Submit a Follow-Up Report reclassifying the original IR to “Murder” (attach the face sheet of the original IR to the Follow-Up Report), **and**
- Submit a Death Investigation Report if not already completed (see Chapter V/Section 1.1). If already completed, the type of death shall be changed to “Homicide.”

All reports shall contain the DR number of the original crime or incident.

EXCEPTION: When a reported crime or incident is reclassified to a murder and the death occurs in a subsequent calendar year, the required Investigative Report, Form 03.01.00; Follow-Up Investigation Report, Form 03.14.00 and Death Investigation, Form 03.11.00 shall be assigned a new DR number. (Reference the

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old DR Number.) Attach a copy of the face sheet of the original crime report to the copy of the Form 03.14.00 that is sent to Information Technology Division (see Detective Operations Manual, Volume I, Section 151.11).

Reporting “*Justifiable Homicide*” and/or “*Excusable Homicide*”

In cases of obvious justifiable or excusable or homicide, complete the following:

- Death Investigation Report (reporting the death), and
- IR (reporting the crime committed by the dead suspect, not the killing of the suspect), and
- Other reports as required (evidence, vehicle, etc.).

If reasonable doubt exists as to whether a homicide was justifiable or excusable complete an IR for “Murder” in addition to the Death Report and other reports. The investigator shall not hold the IR during the investigation and shall ensure its distribution as soon as possible.

When a homicide investigator has determined that a homicide was excusable or justifiable, he/she will complete a Follow-Up Report containing the following information:

- Synopsis of the occurrence (who, what, when, where, why, and how).
- Person causing the death.
- Reason for the determination.
- Prosecutor’s name and opinion (if applicable).
- Postmortem examination results—cause of death.

If the Murder IR was completed, the Follow-Up Report shall be a multiple report to both the Murder IR and the Death Report. The case status on a Murder IR shall be “Unfounded” if the death is determined to be excusable and “Investigation Continued” if the death is reclassified to justifiable homicide.

An IR for Murder shall be reclassified to a justifiable homicide if it is determined that the death was a justifiable homicide. The Case Status shall be “Investigation Continued.” If there will be no further investigation and the case is considered

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closed, the narrative of the Follow-Up Report shall have “CASE CLOSED” printed, in bold letters on the first line of the narrative.

NOTE: *A prosecutor’s determination should not be the sole criteria for unfounding or reclassifying a crime. The final decision whether to unfound or reclassify a crime must be made within the Police Department.*

Reclassifying Homicide to Other Manner of Death

When a homicide investigator has determined that a death originally reported as a homicide was a natural, suicide, accidental, or traffic (see [Chapter V/ Section 1.1](#)), he/she shall complete a Follow-Up Report changing the type of death. In addition, the Follow-Up Report shall contain the following information:

- Synopsis of the occurrence (who, what, when, where, why, and how).
- Reason for the determination.
- Postmortem examination results—cause of death.

If a Murder IR was completed, the Follow-Up Report shall be multiple to both the IR and the Death Report. It shall “Unfound” the IR.

4.3 Reporting Accidental Death, Natural Death and Suicide

Death Reports reflecting a supported finding of an accidental, natural, or suicide death do not routinely require a Follow-Up Report and shall be assigned to an investigator for information only. However, the homicide coordinator shall require a Follow-Up Report as soon as practicable in any instance in which:

- He/she is not satisfied that the facts contained in the Death Report support the classification.
- Subsequent information significantly changes the findings originally reported.
- The Coroner’s Report does not support the circumstances and type and cause of death as they appear in the Death Report.

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4.4 Reporting Undetermined Deaths

The investigator responsible for the Follow-Up investigation of an undetermined type of death shall, as soon as possible but within 60 calendar days following the initial Death Report, complete a Follow-Up Report. The report shall indicate:

- The postmortem examination results, final type and cause of death, **or**
- That the postmortem examination is continuing and a statement as to why the examination and/or the investigation has not been concluded.

NOTE: *When the postmortem examination results cannot be obtained, the investigator shall complete an additional Follow-Up Report during each subsequent 90-day period or sooner when directed by a supervisor, until the final type and cause of death can be established and recorded. If neither the cause nor the manner of death can be determined, the investigator shall complete a Follow-Up Report outlining what results are available and why a final determination is not possible.*

5. Murder Investigation Progress Report - Unsolved

A Murder Investigation Progress Report on an unsolved murder shall be submitted by the investigator to his/her Commanding Officer within 120 calendar days after the case is assigned. The report is submitted in lieu of a Follow-Up Report. Under unusual circumstances when a material change in the investigation is anticipated, his/her Detective Commanding Officer may extend the due date for a maximum of seven calendar days.

A Follow-Up Report shall be completed:

- As soon as practicable, when additional information consisting of new evidence affecting the cause of death is learned or when the status of the death investigation is changed. (The Follow-Up Report should be a multiple report to the IR and the Death Report).
- When significant information is learned during the unsolved status of the murder, after the Murder Investigation Progress Report has been submitted.
- At the end of one year from the date of the crime.
- After the end of the first year as additional information becomes available.

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The Murder Investigation Progress Report is intended to be a comprehensive, confidential Follow-Up Report tying together all facets of the murder investigation to date. The Progress Report shall be prepared on plain, white paper. Distribution of the Progress Report shall be as follows:

- Original Progress Report and (1) copy to the assigned investigator.
- (1) copy to the concerned Operations Bureau.
- (1) copy to Robbery-Homicide Division.

NOTE: Upon approval of the Detective Commanding Officer, a Murder Investigation Progress Report may be completed in lieu of a Follow-Up Report when the nature of the information is such that it is highly sensitive and should remain confidential. Under these circumstances, only the first page of the Progress Report and applicable Progress Report headings need be completed.

6. The Murder Book

A Murder Book shall be assembled and maintained for each murder investigation. In cases where multiple victims are killed during one incident that is being investigated as one crime, only one Murder Book is required. A Murder Book shall contain the following (when applicable):

- A three-ring binder
- LAPD "Murder Book" Dividers 1-26, [Form 03.11.01](#)
- Chronological Record, [Form 03.11.06](#)
- Crime Scene Log, [Form 03.11.04](#)
- Investigative Report (IR), [Form 03.01.00](#)
- Death Report, [Form 03.11.00](#)
- Property Report(s), [Form 10.01.00](#)
- Vehicle Report, [CHP 180](#)
- Arrest Report, [Form 05.02.00](#)
- Follow-Up Investigation Report, [Form 03.14.00](#)
- Photographic Identification Report, [Form 15.50.04](#) ([Refer to OCOP Special Order No. 25 dated Sept. 10, 2020 "Photographic Identification of a Suspect-Revised"](#))
- Witness List, [Form 03.11.07](#)
- Investigative Action/Statement Form, [Form 03.11.20](#)

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- Crime Scene Sketch, [Form 03.13.00](#)
- Crime Scene Photos
- Department of Coroner Autopsy Report, related reports and photos
- Incident Recall
- All handwritten notes, printouts, photographs and other information created and/or developed during the investigation.

NOTE: *The contents of a Murder Book must be provided to the Deputy District Attorney (DDA) assigned to prosecute the case for review, redaction, Bates stamping, and turned over to the defense as disclosure. When a suspect is arrested and charges have been filed, a hard copy or electronic copy of the Murder Book shall be provided within a reasonable amount of time. If a civil claim is filed involving any aspect of the murder, the contents of the murder book may be deemed discoverable. Investigators should consult with the City Attorney and/or members of Risk Management Group for compliance with civil discovery motions.*

7. Aids to Case Preparation

One of the most critical aspects of a murder investigation is the trial preparation phase. After the prosecutor files a criminal complaint, it is essential that the investigator continues to meticulously pursue the investigation to ensure a successful prosecution.

7.1 Investigative Conference

The investigator should thoroughly discuss the case with a group of experienced detectives. This should be done early in the investigation, particularly in complex or unsolved murders. Homicide investigators and their supervisors should meet on a weekly basis to discuss and exchange information on cases. Continued interaction with experienced detectives and supervisors may provide a different perspective or a new approach to the investigation.

7.2 Supervisory Review

Supervisory review of the case during the various investigative junctures is a necessity. The investigator in charge of the investigation must ensure that his/her supervisor is made aware of the case's progress. Periodic conferences with his/her

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supervisor provide the supervisor with the opportunity to determine if the case is being developed in accordance with sound investigative principles and procedures. It can also be an opportunity for the supervisor to determine if the assigned investigator is sufficiently prepared to present testimony in court. The most important ingredient to be gained from frequent supervisory contact is having the opportunity to discuss the case. Very often, these supervisory conferences result in new ideas or suggestions that are useful to a case that is becoming difficult or complex. The development of the murder case is a matter of teamwork between the investigator and his/her supervisor. Ultimately, both the supervisor and the investigator share the responsibility for its effective development.

7.3 Coordinating with the District Attorney

The investigation and prosecution of the case is a joint effort and it is essential that the Deputy District Attorney assigned to the case be furnished with all available information pertaining to its investigation. The effective preparation of the murder case requires maximum teamwork between the investigator and the deputy. After the filing, the investigator should meet with the assigned Deputy District Attorney to discuss all aspects of the case. This would be the best point to furnish the Deputy District Attorney with a copy of the Murder Book, if he/she desires one. This meeting, and future meetings, should determine the need for additional follow-up investigations (e.g., witness testimony, presentation of evidence, etc.). The investigator should make every effort to conduct this additional investigation personally. Both the results of this investigation and any other information gained subsequent to the filing must be documented and added to the Murder Book. It shall be the investigator's responsibility to maintain both his/her Murder Book and that of the Deputy District Attorney.

It is important that the investigator maintain a proper perspective when investigating a murder case. The investigator must understand and remember that the ultimate goal for both prosecutor and investigator is with the conviction of the guilty party, not with the filing of the case.

NOTE: *Failure on the part of Department personnel to properly prepare for a court case is neglect of duty and can result in disciplinary action.*

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8. Criminal Prosecution of Murder Suspects in Mexico

Regardless of the victim's citizenship, when the suspect in a murder investigation flees to Mexico, and a possible location is established, the investigator shall consult with the Los Angeles County District Attorney at Extradition Services Unit. An appointment should be made to review the case with the Deputy District Attorney in charge of the Extradition Services Unit. If extradition is granted, the investigating officer should contact the [Foreign Prosecution/Interpol Liaison Unit \(FPLU\), Fugitive Warrant Section, Gangs and Narcotics Division \(GND\)](#) for advice, direction, and coordination of the extradition request. FPLU will assist in obtaining and verifying the suspect's location in Mexico.

Under Mexican law, a murder suspect can be arrested and prosecuted in Mexico if the crime was committed in the US. The suspect can be prosecuted for Domestic Prosecution under Article IV (Mexico Federal Penal Code) if the following guidelines are met:

- 1) The victim is a Mexican National or the suspect in a murder investigation is a Mexican National and flees to Mexico.
- 2) The crime must meet certain guideline and be within the statute of limitations.

8.1 Special Requirements for Mexican Prosecutions. ([Refer to Chief of Detectives Notice dated May 10, 2017, "Responsibilities and Required Notifications of the Foreign Prosecution Unit"](#))

Within the Department, the Foreign Prosecution/Interpol Liaison Unit (FPLU), Fugitive Warrant Section, Gangs and Narcotics Division (GND), provides both written and oral information to investigators seeking a prosecution in Mexico. To obtain a filing and prosecution in Mexico, the following special requirements must be met:

- Proof of Citizenship—The requesting agency must be able to provide proof of Mexican citizenship by means of a birth certificate, baptismal record, passport, military service card, and/or any other legal document. If this information is not available at the time of the investigation, investigators

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should obtain the full name of both parents, date and place of birth, date and place of baptism, and/or any other information which will provide proof of citizenship.

- Mexican prosecutors suggest that a minimum of two eyewitnesses provide statements detailing their observation of the crime (cases involving only circumstantial evidence will be reviewed and discussed with Mexican Federal Prosecutors prior to filing).
- The case package must contain at least two statements by either witnesses or the investigator identifying the deceased, circumstances of the death, and/or any past association with the deceased. The investigator will normally provide a formal declaration before the Mexican Federal Prosecutor at the time the case is filed.
- All statements must be written in a format acceptable to the Mexican Federal Prosecutors Office. The FPLU will format these declarations accordingly.
- A Murder Case package meeting these precise requirements must be filed with the Mexican Federal Prosecutor.

8.2 Investigator's Responsibility

If the investigating officer believes that his/her investigation may result in a prosecution in Mexico, he/she shall:

- Search for evidence/information that would clearly establish if either the suspect or the victim is a Mexican citizen, *and*
- Search for evidence/information that will determine the location of the suspect in Mexico, *and*
- Begin to compile the reports in a format acceptable to the Mexican Federal Prosecutor.

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Every year, the majority of murders that occur in the City are committed with firearms, by males against other males, take place outside or on the street, and are gang related. However, this should not preclude a homicide investigator from having an understanding of the different types of killers and the dynamics of other homicides that occur less frequently. For example, some murderers have killed more than one victim. Based on the patterns of these murders, these killers may be classified into three general categories:

- Mass Murderer- An individual who kills four or more people at one location during one continuous period of time, whether it is a few minutes or over a period of days. Examples of these include the shootings at Columbine High School, Sandy Hook Elementary School, the theater in Aurora, Colorado, and the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino. The key characteristic of a mass killer is the intent to murder a large amount of people in one place at one time.
- Spree Killer- An individual who kills two or more victims, at several different locations and over a longer period. Although the murders occur in separate locations, the spree is considered a single event because there is no "cooling off" period between the murders. It must be part of one rapid-moving act. The Beltway Snipers are an example.
- Serial Killer- Although difficult to define, a general description could be a person who commits a series of murders over a prolonged period — sometimes over the course of decades — often with the same sort of shape or procedure. Ted Bundy is a widely recognized example of the serial killer.

Although this section will address some less likely ways by which people are killed, it should not be considered a comprehensive, all-inclusive list or a substitute for individual study and training on these topics. Some examples of how people kill and unusual circumstances include:

- Abortion
- Arson
- Child Abuse
- Drowning

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- No-Body Homicides
- Poisoning
- Prescription Drug Use
- Serial Murder
- Sexual Homicide

1. **Abortion**

Murder, as a result of a criminal abortion, is practically non-existent under current law and practice. The following information is presented for its value in other death investigations because of the possibility of a change in the law, and for those unique occasions when an unlawful abortion may be performed.

The methods used in criminal abortions may be divided into two groups:

- The production of a toxic state in the woman causing the embryo to be rejected by the body.
- A mechanical action intended to directly harm the embryo.

The toxic state method was once the most popular because of the ease with which suitable poisons could be obtained. Phosphorus poisoning occurred most commonly during the years when phosphorus matches were in general use. Other poisons are quinine, ergot, saffron, red lead, acetum cevadillaie, some hormone preparations (oestrone pituitrin), and some powerful laxatives (aloes, rhamnus, colocynth). A uterine syringe is often used to produce a miscarriage. The syringe is used to inject large quantities of liquid, chemical solution, or hot liquid into the womb. Air from the syringe may enter the large blood vessels and cause immediate death from air embolism.

Production of a miscarriage by mechanical intervention is accomplished by the introduction of an intrauterine sound (similar to a catheter) into the womb, where it is left for a day or so. The effect is to produce an inflammation of the womb, whereby the embryo is destroyed and ejected from the body. The inflammation may cause very serious infection, resulting in death.

Most criminal abortion murders are difficult to successfully prosecute without a dying declaration. If there are witnesses, relatives, or friends who have some

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knowledge of the circumstances, they are generally reluctant to testify or unwilling to speak to the investigator because of the imagined stigma of the incident or the fear of publicity.

NOTE: *The Homicide Special Section, Robbery-Homicide Division, shall be responsible for all preliminary, and follow-up on, abortion investigations. When an employee receives information concerning the victim of an illegal abortion, or any known or suspected illegal abortion activity, he/she shall immediately telephone all available information to Robbery-Homicide Division. When Robbery-Homicide Division is closed, notification shall be made to Detective Support and Vice Division ([Refer to LAPD Manual Section 4/212.12](#)).*

2. Arson

Arson is the criminal act of deliberately setting fire to property, and while the majority of these crimes only target property, there are occasions where fire is used to kill or conceal an act of killing. Although rare, there may be an occasion where arson is a component of a homicide scene. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all homicide investigators to have a clear understanding of the arson investigator's role and how to proceed when arson is involved.

The Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) Arson Investigation Section (AIS) consists of approximately 20 sworn firefighters who are trained as criminal investigators and certified as peace officers pursuant to sections 830 and 832 of the Penal Code. They have investigative responsibility for all arson crimes committed in the City. They process scenes, collect and book evidence, interview witnesses, prepare a fire investigation report that includes the determined cause and origin of the fire, arrest suspects, and file cases with the District Attorney's Target Crimes Division.

NOTE: [LAPD Manual Section 4/242.53](#) states, "When an arson is immediately associated with the commission of another crime, which is the investigative responsibility of a unit of the Police Department, that unit shall be responsible for conducting the investigation. The Fire Department Arson Section will provide technical expertise regarding the origin of the fire." This means investigative responsibility should not be transferred to the Fire Department.

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When a dead body is discovered at a scene where arson has occurred or is suspected, homicide investigators should immediately notify Robbery-Homicide Division, Homicide Special Section. Because RHD has investigative responsibility for murders wherein a victim was killed as a direct result of arson (set on fire, asphyxia due to smoke inhalation), RHD will assist Bureau homicide investigators until the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner determines the cause of death. In cases where death preceded the fire, death was caused by factors other than the fire and/or fire was used as a means to conceal another crime, investigative responsibility will remain with the Area detectives.

3. Child Abuse

The death of a child elicits natural, emotional responses that may hinder a thorough investigation. The investigator must detach him/herself from the emotional aspects of the case and conduct a comprehensive, in-depth investigation of each questionable child death. The uncovering of a child abuse murder which originally appeared to be the result of an accident or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) will not only bring the murderer to justice, it may save the life of another child, perhaps of the same family.

Generally, the investigative techniques and processes implemented during most homicide investigations should be used in the investigation of child abuse murders. There are, however, several areas that must be more closely examined due to the specialized nature of these cases.

NOTE: *Officers assigned a call involving the preliminary investigation of the death of a juvenile under 11 years of age, shall contact Juvenile Division, Abused Child Section (ACS), for expertise and advice. ACS has the exclusive investigative and follow-up responsibility for:*

- Homicide of a child under 11 years of age where it appears the parent, stepparent, legal guardian, live-in boyfriend/girlfriend of the parent or guardian, or other person acting in the capacity of parent or legal guardian (parent(s)/guardian(s)) is responsible;
- Undetermined deaths of children under 11 years of age;
- Deaths of children under 11 years of age wherein neglect or action by the parent(s)/guardian(s) placed the child in an endangered situation that resulted in death.

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(Refer to Chief of Detectives Notice dated May 5, 2020, [“Abused Child Section, Juvenile Division Responsibilities-Revised”](#))

During non-business hours, contact ACS detectives through the DOC.

A careful inspection of the body should be conducted by the Coroner Investigator in the presence of Department personnel. Evidence of physical abuse such as burns, bruises, bite marks, welts, cuts, and abrasions must be carefully documented. Color photographs should be taken by TID Photos of the bruises or injuries, and a detailed description of their location, shape, size and color should be recorded. Special emphasis should also be placed on photographs, measurements, and descriptions. A common statement made by child abusers is that the victim sustained the injuries as a result of a fall. By providing detailed photographs, measurements and descriptions (for instance, a scene where a baby is alleged to have fallen from a crib onto a wooden floor), child abuse experts and doctors may be able to show that such a fall could not have caused the injuries in question.

Evidence of child abuse includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Multiple visible injuries on several areas of the body (indicates child has been hit from different directions).
- Imprint of an object on the skin (belt buckle, hand, spoon, etc.).
- Bite and/or fingernail marks.
- Wrap around injuries (from flexible objects, such as straps, belts, cords).
- Previous injuries (different stages of healing, scars, bruises, abrasions).
- Burns—glove or sock-like appearance (from immersion in hot liquid), donut shape on buttocks (held down in hot liquid), center of burned area appears more seriously burned (hot liquid poured on / splatter burn), shape of object burned into the skin.

Obtaining information from witnesses may be difficult in some situations, especially if the witness is a family member, close friend, or a child. Some areas to cover during interviews with the parents, family members and close friends include:

- Details regarding the death (When did it occur? How did it occur? Who caused it? How soon after the incident was it discovered? By whom? What action was taken? By whom?)

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- Evidence of past injury, abuse, neglect, or molestation.
- What medical facilities were used?
- What doctors have treated old injuries?
- How did the old injuries occur?
- When did the old injuries occur?
- Determine whether the victim has been left with other persons in the past.
- Under what circumstances was the victim left with other persons?
- What dates and time intervals were involved?
- If they have a sibling(s)
- Any prior contact with [Department of Children and Family Services](#) (DCFS)

If your witness is a neighbor, a teacher, a medical professional or social worker, inquiries regarding current or past incidents should include:

- How did they come in contact with the child?
- What have they seen or heard? (injuries, beatings, neglect, molestation, excessive screaming or crying),
- When did they make these observations?
- Were other agencies informed?
- Any documentation of the incident?
- What medical reports and records (including birth records) exist?
- Is there a history of repeated injuries?
- What X-rays exist?
- How do medical personnel believe the injuries occurred?
- Was the parent's explanation of how the injury occurred consistent with medical evidence?
- What statements, if any, were made by the suspect, other guardians, and witnesses, to medical personnel?
- Can doctors show a history of child abuse through interpretation of old X-rays, medical records, etc.? (i.e., numerous fractures of varying ages indicates a strong suspicion of child abuse.)

An effective interrogation strategy, which will be discussed in [Chapter VII](#), depends on many things, including the skill and experience of the interrogator and the demeanor of the suspect. While there is no formula on what to do or how to go about it, in general, investigators should consider using a "low-key" approach with

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individuals suspected of murdering a child. The repugnance of the crime should not be brought up. In many instances, the suspect is aware of how such crimes are perceived by others and may feel ashamed.

If the suspect claims that the death was an accident, obtain detailed facts concerning the incident, then confront the suspect with medical and/or other evidence which disproves his/her story. Refute denials with evidence. If there is a denial of knowledge as to the cause of death, the suspect should be asked who had access to or custody of the victim. Ascertain the feelings the suspect had for the victim. Many battering parents will admit that they don't like or feel close to their children. It is also helpful to determine if the suspect was subjected to abuse in his or her youth. Many battering parents were themselves victims of child abuse and may use the same weapons and methods of abuse.

4. Drowning

Drowning is defined as respiratory impairment from being in or under a liquid. It is further classified by outcome into: death, ongoing health problems and no ongoing health problems. Hypoxia, a continued lack of oxygen in the brain, will quickly render a person unconscious. A lack of oxygen or chemical changes in the lungs may cause the heart to stop beating. This cardiac arrest stops the flow of blood and thus stops the transport of oxygen to the brain. Cardiac arrest used to be the traditional point of death but at this point there is still a chance of recovery. The brain cannot survive long without oxygen and the continued lack of oxygen in the blood combined with the cardiac arrest will lead to the deterioration of brain cells causing first brain damage and eventually brain death from which recovery is generally considered impossible. The brain will die after approximately six minutes without oxygen but special conditions may prolong this.

Murder by drowning is rare, but possible in cases of young children and the elderly. Most drowning deaths are accidental, but there are many factors of the environment and the individual to consider when conducting an investigation to determine the manner of death. These include:

- Location (Populated, recreational, remote, ocean, lake, pool, puddle),
- Temperature, depth and type of water (fresh, brackish, salt),
- Victim's age and size,

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- Victim's abilities and activities preceding entry into the water,
- Victim's mental state and physical health (pre-existing medical conditions),
- Alcohol and drug use,
- Presence of injuries (bruising on the head from falling or being struck, grip marks on legs or arms suggesting forcible immersion).

These factors can have varying effects on the body and the length of time it takes for death to occur. Approximately 90% of drownings take place in freshwater (rivers, lakes and swimming pools) and 10% in seawater. Drownings in other fluids are rare, and often relate to industrial accidents. Drowning is often categorized as one of four types:

- Wet Drowning- Liquid is inhaled into the lungs
- Dry Drowning- Liquid does not enter the lungs, but death results from immediate, sustained laryngeal spasm due to inrush of water into the nasopharynx or larynx. Thick mucus, foam or froth may develop, creating a plug.
- Immersion Syndrome- Vagal (referring to the “vagus” nerve in the neck) reflex induced by contact with very cold water, causes cardiac arrest and death.
- Secondary Drowning- Also referred to as “post-immersion syndrome.” Death occurs anywhere from 30-minutes to several days after being resuscitated and can result from one of a number of medical conditions.

5. “No Body” Homicides

No-body homicide investigations pose a unique set of challenges for homicide investigators. Whereas most homicide investigations start at the body and work their way out, the first obstacle in a “no-body” case is determining whether or not a homicide actually occurred. More often than not, “no-body” cases begin as missing person investigations.

NOTE: *Adult missing person reports are transferred to and investigated by the Detective Support & Vice Division ([DSVD](#)) Missing Persons Unit ([MPU](#)) located on the fourth floor of PHF at 100 W. First Street. Juvenile missing person reports remain at the Area of occurrence and are investigated by the Area's Juvenile detectives.*

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Every one of us has, to some extent, a pattern of life or daily routine, and while some people's routines may be more regimented or complicated than others, the fact is we all do some things on a regular basis (take medication, get coffee, schedule and attend appointments, start and finish work at the same times, recycle or get meals at the same locations, drop off and pick up the children at school, pay bills, go to church, make plans for the future). When it comes to missing adults, investigators will often hear the phrase, "It's no crime to go missing," and while it is true, adults can go missing for a variety of legitimate reasons (physical and/or mental illness, suicidal, to avoid another person, escape abuse or debts, drug use, criminal activity, homelessness), it is also extremely unusual for an adult to go missing without a sign that they have resumed or continued their lifestyle elsewhere. Absent a reasonable explanation for a person's sudden absence and/or indicators that they planned to depart and/or sufficient evidence that they are somewhere else and can be contacted, additional scrutiny is warranted. Officers should be encouraged to refer missing person reports with suspicious circumstances to Bureau homicide investigators for review prior to sending the reports to the MPU.

In a "no-body" homicide investigation, time is of the essence. It is essential that investigators retrace the missing person's last hours and days with the focus being to recover time-sensitive evidence (work, store and ATM video, Internet and social media entries, credit and debit card usage, cell phone and cell tower activity, crime scene etc.) as quickly as possible. Each hour that passes decreases the investigator's chances of rescuing a critically injured person, discovering a crime scene, or recovering fragile evidence. Often times, the investigator will lack sufficient facts or information to articulate probable cause that a homicide or any crime has occurred. In these situations, investigators should consider obtaining consent from responsible parties or pursuing the exigency doctrine to obtain evidence and progress the investigation.

Cadaver dogs can be a great asset in locating missing persons if the case further presents any evidence to locate a potential dead body during a "no-body" homicide investigation. The Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner has a full-time, human remains detection (HRD) canine that is specially trained to detect human remains such as bone fragments, tissue, or grave dirt. This service is available on request. For cadaver dog assistance contact the Department Command Post at

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(213) 484-6700. Additional services to locate a missing person include the use of the Search and Rescue Mutual Aid of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services ([CALOES](#)).

6. Poisoning

All poisons, drugs or other substances, and their containers, suspected of being connected with a death, shall accompany the body to the Coroner's Office or mortuary. The confirmation of a suspected death by poisoning is very difficult and usually requires a great deal of experience on the part of the pathologist. The investigator has little immediate opportunity to evaluate a death as one by poisoning.

In most cases, certain details in the appearance of the body or special circumstances in connection with the death may give a clue for forming an opinion in the case. A young deceased person who is foaming from the mouth or nostrils may be the victim of a narcotic overdose. When the skin around the mouth is corroded, carbolic acid, nitric acid, hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, aerosol, ammonia, or other caustic substances may have produced poisoning.

Suicides by use of poisons are more common than homicides. Murder by the use of a poison is rare because it must be taken internally to be effective. In poisoning cases, the criminal (usually a person within the family or close group) generally uses a poison that will not arouse suspicion by the nature of its color, odor, or taste.

In a case of death from poisoning, only the investigation at the scene and examination of witnesses may decide whether a case is one of murder, suicide, or accident. Usually, the postmortem examination will only determine the type and quantity of poison used. The point to bear in mind is that the symptoms of poisoning come suddenly upon a person who previously had been in good health. Disease is usually preceded by a number of hours, days, or even weeks of local or general indisposition.

If a substance is found, the Coroner Investigator will transfer it to a clean bottle. When a container has sediment or residue in it, the container should be wrapped in clean paper, or preferably, placed in a plastic evidence bag. Care should be taken

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to preserve any latent prints that may be on the containers. Whenever possible, containers should be examined for latent prints prior to retention by the Coroner. The investigator can assist the pathologist by locating any evidence of poisoning found at the scene. Among the most important evidence in poisoning cases are cups, glasses, and other containers found in the immediate vicinity of the deceased in such places and under conditions that may be in direct relation to the death (See the chart of poisons and their symptoms on the following page).

NOTE: *During unusual circumstances, the need may arise to exhume a body for additional investigation. Body exhumations are conducted only with the assistance of the Coroner's office, and California Government Code [27491 \(c\)](#) codifies such an operation.*

Poisons and the physical manifestations associated with their use are:

<u>Type of Poison</u>	<u>Symptom or Evidence</u>
Ammonia, vinegar, Lysol, etc.	Characteristic odors.
Arsenic, mercury, lead salts	Pronounced diarrhea.
Carbon Monoxide	Red or pink patches in the area of lividity.
Caustic Poison (lye)	Characteristic burns around lips and mouth of victim.
Copper Sulfate	Blue-green vomit.
Cyanide	Burnt almond odor in air
Hydrochloric Acid	Greenish-brown vomit.
Methyl (wood) alcohol, Isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol	Nausea and vomiting, unconsciousness, possibly blindness.
Nitric Acid	Yellow vomit.
Phosphorous	Coffee-brown vomit, onion or garlic odor.
Silver Salts	White vomit, turning black in daylight.
Sulfuric Acid	Black vomit.

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7. Prescription Drugs

Officers and detectives are routinely summoned to investigate the deaths of individuals who have ingested drugs and expired. A thorough preliminary investigation often uncovers evidence and/or reveals details about the decedent's life, and activities that can reasonably support a finding to report the manner of death as an accident (overdose), suicide, or homicide (administered negligently or intentionally by another person).

In recent years, there have been an increasing number of highly publicized cases where individuals have died as a result of ingesting prescription drugs. One notable example involved a well-known entertainer who was having a powerful sedative administered in his home by a licensed physician. This death was ultimately ruled a homicide and the doctor was convicted of manslaughter. In another incident, a former Playboy model was receiving prescription medications from several doctors. Her prolonged use and mixing of them resulted in her accidental death. Police have even been called to "pharming parties" where young people trade prescription pills taken from their home medicine cabinets and ingest them with alcohol to get high.

Adding to the complexity of these investigations is the fact that there may be times when the police are unable to clearly articulate the prima facie elements of a crime that would enable them to lawfully seize evidence. Pursuant to Section [27491.3 \(a\)](#) of the Government Code, "any death into which the coroner is to inquire, the coroner may take charge of any and all personal effects, valuables, and property of the deceased at the scene of death or related to the inquiry and hold or safeguard them until lawful disposition thereof can be made. The coroner may lock the premises and apply a seal to the door or doors prohibiting entrance to the premises, pending arrival of a legally authorized representative of the deceased." Referred to as a Coroner's inquiry, this provides legal authority for the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner to investigate the circumstances of a death and seize items that will further their objective. This, however, should not be a substitute for a criminal investigation. Investigators need to consider what substance(s) are involved, to whom they belong, how they got there and how they were ingested or administered. While not always apparent early on, there may be criminal liability on one or more person's part relating to the following crimes:

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- Prescribing/Administering Drugs to an Addict ([H&S 11156\(a\)](#))
- Unlawfully Prescribing Drugs ([H&S 11153\(a\)](#))
- Prescribing/Administering Drugs to a Person Not a Patient ([H&S 11154\(a\)& \(b\)](#))
- Obtaining Drugs by Fraud/Misrepresentation ([H&S 11173\(a\) & \(b\)](#))
- Obtaining Drugs by False Name ([H&S 11174](#))
- Issuing False/Fictitious Prescription ([H&S 11157](#))
- Excessive Prescribing/Administering of Drugs ([B&P 725\(a\)](#))

The Los Angeles District Attorney (LADA), the Medical Board of California, the California Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement (BNE), the California Attorney General's (AG) Office, and the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) provide experts and have investigative and enforcement resources that can assist investigators with product research, licensing, California Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES) records retrieval, and interview strategy.

8. Serial Murder

Serial murder is a relatively rare event, estimated to comprise less than one percent of all murders committed in any given year. In the past thirty years, multiple definitions of serial murder have been used by law enforcement, clinicians, academia, and researchers. While these definitions do share several common themes, they differ on specific requirements, such as the number of murders involved, the types of motivation, and the temporal aspects of the murders.

According to the federal, "Protection of Children from Sexual Predator Act of 1998," the term "serial killer" is defined as "a series of three or more killings... having common characteristics such as to suggest the reasonable possibility that the crimes were committed by the same actor or actors." Although the federal law provides a definition of serial murder, it is limited in its application. The purpose of this definition was to set forth criteria establishing when the FBI could assist local law enforcement agencies with their investigation of serial murder cases. It was not intended to be a generic definition for serial murder.

In an effort to bridge the gap between the many views of issues related to serial murders, the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#) (FBI) hosted a multi-disciplinary

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Symposium in San Antonio, Texas. The goal of the Symposium was to bring together a group of respected experts on serial murder from a variety of fields and specialties, and to identify the commonalities of knowledge regarding serial murder. In combining the various ideas put forth at the Symposium, the following definition was crafted:

“Serial Murder: The unlawful killing of two or more victims by the same offender(s), in separate events.”

Following the arrest of a serial killer, the question is always asked: How did this person become a serial killer? The answer lies in the development of the individual from birth to adulthood. Causality, as it relates to the development of serial killers, was discussed at length by the Symposium attendees.

Causality can be defined as a complex process based on biological, social, and environmental factors. There were several additional observations made by the attendees regarding causality:

- Predisposition to serial killing, much like other violent offenses, is biological, social, and psychological in nature, and it is not limited to any specific characteristic or trait.
- The development of a serial killer involves a combination of these factors, which exist together in a rare confluence in certain individuals. They have the appropriate biological predisposition, molded by their psychological makeup, which is present at a critical time in their social development.
- There are no specific combinations of traits or characteristics shown to differentiate serial killers from other violent offenders.
- There is no generic template for a serial killer.
- Serial killers are driven by their own unique motives or reasons.
- Serial killers are not limited to any specific demographic group, such as their sex, age, race, or religion.
- The majority of serial killers who are sexually motivated eroticized violence during development. For them, violence and sexual gratification are inexplicably intertwined in their psyche.
- More research is needed to identify specific pathways of development that produce serial killers.

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Attendees at the Serial Murder Symposium agreed that there is no generic profile of a serial murderer. Serial killers differ in many ways, including their motivations for killing and their behavior at the crime scene. However, attendees did identify certain traits common to some serial murderers, including sensation seeking, a lack of remorse or guilt, impulsivity, the need for control, and predatory behavior. These traits and behaviors are consistent with psychopathic personality disorder. Psychopathy is a personality disorder manifested in people who use a mixture of charm, manipulation, intimidation, and occasionally violence to control others, in order to satisfy their own selfish needs.

The interpersonal traits include glibness, superficial charm, a grandiose sense of self-worth, pathological lying, and the manipulation of others. The affective traits include a lack of remorse and/or guilt, shallow affect, a lack of empathy, and failure to accept responsibility. The lifestyle behaviors include stimulation-seeking behavior, impulsivity, irresponsibility, parasitic orientation, and a lack of realistic life goals. The anti-social behaviors include poor behavioral controls, early childhood behavior problems, juvenile delinquency, revocation of conditional release, and criminal versatility. The combination of these individual personality traits, interpersonal styles, and socially deviant lifestyles are the framework of psychopathy and can manifest themselves differently in individual psychopaths.

Psychopaths are not sensitive to altruistic interview themes, such as sympathy for their victims or remorse/guilt over their crimes. They do possess certain personality traits that can be exploited, particularly their inherent narcissism, selfishness, and vanity. Specific themes in past successful interviews of psychopathic serial killers focused on praising their intelligence, cleverness, and skill in evading capture.

Serial murder crime scenes can have bizarre features that may cloud the identification of a motive. The behavior of a serial murderer at crime scenes may evolve throughout the series of crimes and manifest different interactions between an offender and a victim. It is also extremely difficult to identify a single motivation when there is more than one offender involved in the series. The attendees at the Symposium made the following observations:

- Motive generally may be difficult to determine in a serial murder investigation.

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- A serial killer may have multiple motives for committing his crimes.
- A serial killer's motives may evolve both within a single murder as well throughout the murder series.
- The classification of motivations should be limited to observable behaviors at the crime scene.
- Even if a motive can be identified, it may not be helpful in identifying a serial murderer.
- Utilizing investigative resources to discern the motive instead of identifying the offender may derail the investigation.
- Investigators should not necessarily equate a serial murderer's motivation with the level of injury.
- Regardless of the motive, serial murderers commit their crimes because they want to. The exception to this would be those few killers suffering from a severe mental illness.

The Symposium compiled their recommendations in 61-page publication titled, "Serial Murder: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives for Investigators." In it, they addressed investigative issues and best practices, forensic issues, media issues, and prosecution of serial murder cases.

10. Sexual Homicide

Sexual homicides attract a great deal of attention from the media and the scientific community. Yet, despite this interest, there is no universally accepted definition of the term. Most definitions appear to adopt a concrete approach, relying on evidence obtained at the crime scene. Not only have different studies used different definitions; they have also used different terms. Terms, such as 'sexual murder,' 'lust murder' and 'serial murder,' are often used interchangeably but do not necessarily mean the same thing. Many contemporary studies on sexual homicide still rely on guidelines provided by FBI researchers in the 1980s who consider a homicide to be "sexual" if one of the following is evident:

- Victim is found totally or partially naked,
- Genitals are exposed,
- Body is found in a sexually explicit position,
- An object has been inserted into a body cavity (anus, vagina, or mouth),

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- Evidence of sexual contact,
- Evidence of substitutive sexual activity (e.g., masturbation and ejaculation at the crime scene) or of sadistic sexual fantasies (e.g., genital mutilation).

These guidelines were designed to assist U.S. homicide law enforcement officers in the identification of a possible sexual motive. They neither define the offense, nor do they provide the investigator with any useful information about the offender. Despite the methods used to construct typologies, researchers have arrived at similar results, consistently identifying two main types of sexual murderers: Angry and Sadistic.

Inherent in anger is the tendency to hurt or cause harm, and when this is channeled into a sexually aggressive response, it becomes a very powerful weapon capable of inflicting maximum distress in the victim. For sexual murderers, anger appears to be a key feature in the pre-crime phase of the offense.

The second pathway an offender might take when committing a sexual homicide is via sadism or sadistic sexual interest. In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), sadism is classified as a paraphilia and is referred to as “sexual sadism.” According to DSM, it is thought to involve “recurrent intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges or behaviors involving acts (real, not simulated) in which the psychological or physical suffering (including the humiliation) of the victim is sexually exciting to the person.” Like anger, sadistic sexual interest is important to consider when formulating a suspected case of sexual homicide, but it might not explain the motive for the killing.

Several studies have found a third category of sexual murderer who is motivated primarily through sex. Violence used in such cases is instrumental rather than emotional or reactive. At the time of the offense, it appears that the offender in this category is determined to have sex regardless of what he has to do to obtain it. Victims are often selected on the basis of opportunity and level of vulnerability (e.g., the victim is observed walking alone in a poorly lit street at night). The offense is likely to involve some degree of planning and will include some level of fantasy, although not to the same degree as the sadistic offender. In many respects, the men who fall into this category of sexual murderer are typical of the non-homicidal sexual offenders who target adult women. Homicides may be committed either to silence the only witness to a sexual attack, or they are

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committed in an effort to keep the victim quiet. In the latter case, the offender may not intend to kill his victim, but victims may die in response to unnecessary force or restraint to manage resistance. Research thus far has found little evidence of any ritual elements in the murder itself and there is generally a low level of sexual mutilation or sexual interference after death. Offenders in this category evidence stereotypical views about the sexes, including those relating to a man's entitlement. However, they are less likely to be impulsive than offenders in the other categories and they are not driven by grievance, anger, or revenge.

In summary, no matter how one defines sexual homicide, it is apparent that each case is unique. There may be multiple motives behind any sexual killing and this can only be established through detailed formulation using multiple sources of evidence. Findings have been consistent and seem to indicate two main types of killers: those motivated by anger or revenge and those motivated by a sadistic sexual drive. There is accumulating evidence to support the contention that anger and sadism are important concepts in understanding the motivation behind extreme acts of sexual violence. The literature is consistent in suggesting that the majority of sexual murderers, even those detained in forensic psychiatric hospitals, do not suffer from a major mental illness. Personality disorders are far more common as are psychopathic traits, paraphilias, and paraphilia-related disorders.

11. Uniform Anatomical Gift Act (Organ procurement)

Organ procurement or “harvesting” is codified in [California Health and Safety Code Section 7150](#). More frequently than not, murder victims die soon after they sustain an injury. However, homicide investigators may encounter an investigation whereby a victim, who will soon die as a result of an injury, is also an organ donor. In order to successfully procure organs from the victim, he/she must remain on life support measures until procurement takes place.

Organ procurement can still take place even though a person is a victim of a crime. There are various sections of the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act that govern such a procedure ([California Health and Safety Code, Section 7151.15](#)). The most relevant portion of the section dictates that the organ procurement organization seeks approval from the Medical Examiner-Coroner office should the donor’s body fall under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner-Coroner.

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Such an example of this may be where a person is transported to a hospital suffering from injuries that firefighters believe is the result of a fall. That person is placed on life-saving measures, and local law enforcement is advised by a witness at scene that the person sustained injuries due to an assault.

To preserve material evidence, one of the more significant responsibilities of an investigating officer is to communicate to the medical staff that the patient is indeed a victim of a crime. This communication is intended to be relayed to the organ procurement organization and serves to ensure that organ procurement does not interfere with the criminal investigation.

The organ procurement is conducted by private businesses referred to as “Organ Procurement Organizations.” In Southern California, [*One Legacy*](#), is such company.

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Much of the material discussed in this chapter has been previously mentioned or referred to in the main body of the manual. The following material is provided in greater depth as investigative aids.

1. CORONER RESPONSIBILITIES AND APPLICABLE CODES

Coroner's Register–Entries to be Made

[Government Code Section 27463](#)

The Coroner shall keep an official case file in which the Coroner shall enter:

- The name and any aliases of the deceased, when known, including such description as may be sufficient for identification and which may, in the Coroner's discretion, include fingerprint records.
- A narrative summary of the circumstances leading to and surrounding the death, together with names and addresses of any witnesses to such events.
- The property taken from the person or premises of the deceased by the Coroner or by any other law enforcement agency or officer.
- The disposition of any property or moneys so taken.
- The cause of death, when known, with reference to the detailed medical reports upon which decision as to cause of death has been based.
- Information as to disposition of the remains.
- Persons notified of the death, together with a notation of any unsuccessful attempts at notification.

Suicide Notes

[Government Code Section 27464](#)

Whenever the death of any person shall have been referred to the Coroner for investigation, there shall be delivered to the Coroner any note, letter, or other document apparently written by the deceased which may tend to indicate an intention by the writer to take his/her life, including directions for disposition of his/her property or disposal of his/her remains. A facsimile copy thereof shall be placed in the Coroner's records and, if an inquest be held, a true copy shall be read

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into the record and transcribed into the notes of the official stenographer. Upon completion of legal proceedings arising from such death, the original instrument shall be delivered by the Coroner to the addressee or to the legal representative of the estate of the decedent; provided, however, that if the instrument purports to be testamentary in nature, it shall be filed with the County Clerk as provided by law.

Release of Deceased Person's Property

[Government Code Section 27465](#)

Within 90 days after an inquest upon a dead body, the Coroner shall deliver to the legal representatives of the deceased, any money or other property found upon the dead body.

Law Enforcement Notification

[Government Code Section 27491.1](#)

In all cases in which a person has died under circumstances that afford a reasonable ground to suspect that the person's death has been occasioned by the act of another by criminal means, the coroner, upon determining that those reasonable grounds exist, shall immediately notify the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the criminal investigation. Notification shall be made by the most direct communication available. The report shall state the name of the deceased person, if known, the location of the remains, and other information received by the coroner relating to the death, including any medical information of the decedent that is directly related to the death. The report shall not include any information contained in the decedent's medical records regarding any other person unless that information is relevant and directly related to the decedent's death.

Coroner Examination

[Government Code 27491.2](#)

(a) The coroner or the coroner's appointed deputy, on being informed of a death and finding it to fall into the classification of deaths requiring his or her inquiry, may immediately proceed to where the body lies, examine the body, make identification, make inquiry into the circumstances, manner, and means of death,

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and, as circumstances warrant, either order its removal for further investigation or disposition or release the body to the next of kin.

(b) For purposes of inquiry, the body of one who is known to be dead from any of the causes or under any of the circumstances described in Section 27491 shall not be disturbed or moved from the position or place of death without permission of the coroner or the coroner's appointed deputy. Any violation of this subdivision is a misdemeanor.

Autopsy

Government Code Section 27491.43

(a) (1) Notwithstanding any other law, except as otherwise provided in this section, in any case in which the coroner, before the beginning of an autopsy, dissection, or removal of corneal tissue, pituitary glands, or any other organ, tissue, or fluid, has received a certificate of religious belief, executed by the decedent as provided in subdivision (b), that the procedure would be contrary to his or her religious belief, the coroner shall neither perform, nor order the performance of, that procedure on the body of the decedent.

(2) If, before beginning the procedure, the coroner is informed by a relative or a friend of the decedent that the decedent had executed a certificate of religious belief, the coroner shall not order an autopsy to be performed, except as otherwise provided in this section, for 48 hours. If the certificate is produced within 48 hours, the case shall be governed by this section. If the certificate is not produced within that time, the case shall be governed by the other provisions of this article.

(b) Any person, 18 years of age or older, may execute a certificate of religious belief which shall state in clear and unambiguous language that any postmortem anatomical dissection or that specified procedures would violate the religious convictions of the person. The certificate shall be signed and dated by the person in the presence of at least two witnesses. Each witness shall also sign the certificate and shall print on the certificate his or her name and residence address.

(c) Notwithstanding the existence of a certificate, the coroner may at any time cause an autopsy to be performed or any other procedure if he or she has a

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reasonable suspicion that the death was caused by the criminal act of another or by a contagious disease constituting a public health hazard.

(d) (1) If a certificate is produced, and if subdivision (c) does not apply, the coroner may petition the superior court, without fee, for an order authorizing an autopsy or other procedure or for an order setting aside the certificate as invalid. Notice of the proceeding shall be given to the person who produced the certificate. The proceeding shall have preference over all other cases.

(2) The court shall set aside the certificate if it finds that the certificate was not properly executed or that it does not clearly state the decedent's religious objection to the proposed procedure.

(3) The court may order an autopsy or other procedure despite a valid certificate if it finds that the cause of death is not evident, and that the interest of the public in determining the cause of death outweighs its interest in permitting the decedent and like persons fully to exercise their religious convictions.

(4) Any procedure performed pursuant to paragraph (3) shall be the least intrusive procedure consistent with the order of the court.

(5) If the petition is denied, and no stay is granted, the body of the deceased shall immediately be released to the person authorized to control its disposition.

(e) In any case in which the circumstances, manner, or cause of death is not determined because of the provisions of this section, the coroner may state on the certificate of death that an autopsy was not conducted because of the provisions of this section.

(f) A coroner shall not be liable for damages in a civil action for any act or omission taken in compliance with the provisions of this section.

Taking Custody of Deceased Person's Property

[Government Code Section 27491.3](#)

In any death into which the Coroner is to inquire, the Coroner may take charge of any and all personal effects, valuables, and property of the deceased at the scene of death or related to the inquiry and hold or safeguard them until lawful disposition

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can be made. The Coroner may lock the premises and apply a seal to the door or doors prohibiting entrance to the premises, pending arrival of a legally authorized representative of the deceased. However, this shall not be done in such a manner as to interfere with the investigation being conducted by other law enforcement agencies.

Any costs arising from the premises being locked or sealed while occupied by property of the deceased may be a proper and legal charge against the estate of the deceased.

Any property or evidence related to the investigation or prosecution of any known or suspected criminal death may, with knowledge of the Coroner, be delivered to a law enforcement agency or district attorney, receipt for which shall be acknowledged.

It shall be unlawful for any person to search for or remove any papers, monies, valuable property or weapons constituting the estate of the deceased from the person of the deceased or from the premises, prior to the arrival of the Coroner or without the permission of the Coroner. At the scene of any death, when it is immediately apparent or when it has not been previously recognized and the Coroner's examination reveals that police investigation or criminal prosecution may ensue, the Coroner shall not further disturb the body or any related evidence until the law enforcement agency has had reasonable opportunity to respond to the scene, if their purposes so require and they so request.

Custody and control of the body shall remain with the Coroner at all times. Reasonable time at the scene shall be allowed by the Coroner for criminal investigation by other law enforcement agencies, with the time and location of removal of the remains to a convenient place to be determined at the discretion of the Coroner.

NOTE: *A peace officer may search the person or property on or about the person of the deceased, whose death is due to a traffic accident, for a driver's license or identification card to determine if an anatomical donor card is attached. If a peace officer locates such an anatomical donor card which indicates that the deceased is an anatomical donor, the peace officer shall immediately furnish such*

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information to the Coroner having jurisdiction. ([Refer to Section 27491.3\(d\) of the Government Code](#))

Coroner Investigator's Responsibilities

Government Code 27491.2, 27491.55, 27498 and Health & Saf. Code 7102

The Coroner Investigator functions as the eyes and ears of the pathologist. They are there as a partner in the investigation and are a conduit to the Deputy Medical Examiner for investigative concerns and issues. Poor communication or assumptions may result in errors or serious case handling issues.

Coroner Investigators do not perform autopsies; this is a function of the Coroner's Office Medical Examiner. If an autopsy became necessary, the Coroner's Office would make necessary arrangements for conducting an autopsy. The Coroner Investigator has the authority and responsibility for:

- Removing a deceased person from the scene to the Coroner's Office.
- Removing property and evidence from the deceased or the premises after which it is itemized and recorded.
- Leaving the deceased person's premises in control of a next of kin relative who is present.
- Leaving the deceased person's premises in control of a non-relative who was residing with the deceased when he/she expired.
- Sealing a premise. (Coroner or Public Administrator Seal).
- Taking a blood sample from the deceased for use by the Coroner's Office.
- Taking fingerprints of the deceased person for use by the Coroner's Office.

To avoid improper disposition of property or improper safeguards for the premises of the deceased (making the deceased person's property vulnerable to theft), it is the Coroner Investigators' responsibility to secure the deceased person's property as outlined above. It is felt that these procedures will safeguard the officer and the Department against the unwarranted charge of theft that could result from a death investigation. Also refer to [LAPD Manual Section 4/238.30, "Searching Dead Bodies."](#)

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If the investigator will be remaining at the deceased person's premises after the Coroner Investigator leaves, and there is no next of kin or non-relative who was residing with the deceased when they expired, the investigator shall obtain a seal from the Coroner Investigator prior to the investigator's departure. When the investigator has finished the investigation at the deceased premises they shall seal the premises with the Coroner's seal upon their departure.

2. DEATH: STAGES AND DETERMINING THE TIME OF DEATH

2.1 Hospital Death (Brain Dead)

Time of death after transport to a hospital is determined when the person is considered brain dead. In instances where the person is transported after a significant incident, and death occurs after arrival to the hospital, CA law requires an examination and confirmation by two independent physicians to determine brain death ([Health & Saf. Code, § 7180](#) & [7181](#)). The second physician's declaration is considered the legal time of death, and the date and time of the second declaration of brain death must be recorded as such. In the event a person is transported to a hospital and brain death will occur after examination, State law requires the family or next of kin of the person be informed of the intentions for brain death testing and how much time they can expect for brain death declaration ([Health & Saf. Code, § 1254.4](#)). After the family or next of kin is notified, no other medical intervention is required, and two independent physicians declare the person brain dead, the second declaration is considered the legal time of death.

2.2 Algor Mortis (Loss of Body Heat)

After death, the temperature of the body begins to drop and the body may feel cold to the touch anywhere from a few minutes to 12 hours after death, depending on a variety of circumstances. Normally, the temperature of the body tends to reach the temperature of the surrounding air or water after a period of approximately 20 to 36 hours.

2.3 Livor Mortis (Postmortem Lividity)

An important factor in determining the time of death is the development of postmortem lividity. When a person dies, the blood pressure drops to zero. The

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blood stops circulating and begins to settle by the force of gravity to the lowest point of the body, causing a blotchy, purplish discoloration. This normally begins one or two hours after death.

If, when lividity first develops prior to blood clotting, the investigator places his/her finger firmly against the discolored skin, the pressure will cause blanching. When the pressure is released, the discoloration returns. After four to six hours, the settling blood causing the discoloration becomes clotted and pressure will not cause blanching. The location of the discoloration is one of the best methods of determining whether a body has been moved. Once lividity develops, it remains in the same area. If a body is discovered lying on its back and there is lividity on its stomach, it is a positive indication that it was moved several hours after death occurred. However, officers should note that when a body with well-developed lividity is moved, there will be blanching on the areas which have had immediate contact with the surface upon which it has been resting.

Thus, if a person dies lying on his/her back, the backs of the legs, buttocks, parts of the back and arms will normally have blanched areas surrounded by lividity. These are called “pressure points.”

In some instances, lividity will be present to a slight degree on one side of the body while the other side will reflect heavy darkened areas of lividity. This means that the body has been moved during the early stages of lividity, leaving faint traces on one side, then completing the process on the other side where the heavy traces of lividity are present.

When the cause of death involves inhalation of carbon monoxide, the lividity will be cherry-red in color. If a person has lost a great deal of blood, there may be little or no lividity.

2.4 Rigor Mortis

After death, *the body undergoes stiffening of the muscles as a result of chemical changes involving the proteins of the muscle fibers. The process will affect both the voluntary and involuntary muscles. When the process is complete, the body assumes a board-like rigidity.* Rigor mortis seems to develop first in the face and then the neck, followed by the upper limbs, the trunk and lower limbs. However, the stiffening process is occurring in all of the muscles simultaneously. The

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stiffening process does not fully complete itself in one section of the body and then begin to develop in another section. Rigor mortis first becomes apparent in the face and neck area because the stiffening process more quickly affects the shorter muscle masses located in these areas. The delay in the appearance of rigor mortis can vary considerably. Ordinarily, it commences in about two to four hours after death; sometimes rigor is seen within thirty-minutes, and on other occasions, its onset is delayed for six hours or more. The period of delay depends to a large extent on variables such as the temperature around the body, musculature, body weight, clothing and the glycogen reserves in the muscles.

The guide below does not present any type of formal charting of the time sequences reflecting the onset or departure of rigor mortis because too many variables are involved. Instead, it presents some general guidelines to be considered as indicators of the time when rigor mortis becomes apparent:

<u>Rigor Mortis—Can be Apparent:</u>	<u>HOURS AFTER DEATH</u>		
	<u>As Early as OR as Late as</u>		
Jaw/Face	1	—	6
Neck	3	—	7
Upper Limbs	4	—	9
Shoulders	6	—	10
Trunk	7	—	11
Lower Limbs	8	—	12

The above time frames represent the process, as it would be in a temperate climate. However, when the body temperature is raised as it might be in very hot weather or other conditions resulting in high temperatures, the onset, and departure of rigor mortis could be accelerated. Conversely, in a very cold environment, rigor mortis could develop and depart at a slower pace.

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After many hours in rigor mortis, the muscles soften again as putrefaction develops. This change, known as secondary flaccidity, appears to spread through the body in much the same progression as when rigor began. The muscles first to indicate rigor are the first to become flaccid again, and rigor usually stays longest in the lower limbs. *In a temperate climate, rigor may not start to disappear for 36 to 48 hours after death and some rigidity may persist in the lower limb for three to five days.*

The process of rigor mortis must be viewed in the proper context. It could be misleading for the investigator to use the stiffening process as the sole indicator for determining the time that the body has been dead. The investigator would be of more effective service, both to the pathologist and to the proper development of the case if he/she would document the precise conditions that exist at the location where the body was found. Under a particular set of circumstances, the temperature inside some locations could be fixed at a set point.

However, if the body was situated immediately adjacent to a functioning heater, the temperature affecting the dead body could be higher; therefore, this is the type of information that should be documented. There is a multitude of factors that should be considered. Dead bodies will be affected in many different ways. Ultimately, the investigator must be a critical observer taking every factor into consideration. To simply regard the degree of stiffness in a particular section of the body as a conclusive indicator of a time lapse after death could possibly mislead the investigator (also see “cadaveric spasm”—[Appendix I](#)—Glossary of Terms).

2.5 Putrefaction

Putrefaction results from the growth of bacteria within the body. This process is hindered by a lack of oxygen especially if the body is immersed in water or buried. Additionally, the following time factors and stages of body decomposition may vary depending on environmental conditions.

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SIGNS OF PUTREFACTION

24 hours	- (1st stage)	Greenish-red discoloration of skin on the abdomen and groin area. (Body begins to swell; odor present.)
2 to 3 days	- (2nd stage)	Green-purple staining of abdomen.
3 to 4 days	- (3rd stage)	Marbling of veins.
5 to 6 days	- (4th stage)	Gaseous swelling.
2 weeks	- (5th stage)	Abdomen distended tight/swelling of the body.
2 to 3 weeks	- (6th stage)	Blisters form and eyes and tongue bulge.

2.6 Liver Temperature

The liver temperatures and time frames below are only approximations and the figures are based on a temperate climate. Temperature loss or time factors may vary depending on other variables; i.e., environmental temperature, body weight, or type of surface on which the body is situated.

Normally, the body's core temperature decreases at the rate of 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit/hour. The liver temperature of a dead body, therefore, is of little value if taken in excess of 24 hours after the time of death because the body temperature cannot drop below the environmental temperature.

<u>Liver Temperature</u>	<u>HOURS SINCE DEATH</u>
65 degrees Fahrenheit	22 hours +
70 degrees Fahrenheit	19 hours +
75 degrees Fahrenheit	16 hours +
80 degrees Fahrenheit	12 hours +
85 degrees Fahrenheit	8 hours +
90 degrees Fahrenheit	5 hours +
95 degrees Fahrenheit	2 hours +

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The previous chart is based on the following formula: $(N-L)/1.5=T$. Where:

N = Normal body temperature

L = Liver temperature

1.5 = Temperature loss/hour

T = Approximate time (hours) since death

<u>Example:</u> Normal body temperature	98.6 degrees Fahrenheit
Liver temperature	- <u>80.0</u> degrees Fahrenheit
Total temperature loss	18.6 degrees Fahrenheit

$18.6 / 1.5 = 12.4$ or approximately 12 + hours

Environmental Factors. There are other valuable considerations in attempting to determine the time of death when it occurred between 12 and 24 hours prior to the investigation. Indicative facts (meals prepared, newspapers read, etc.) and indicative factors (dew above but not below a body, spoiled food, etc.) may be accurate and valuable.

3. GUNSHOT RESIDUE AND DISTANCE DETERMINATION

3.1 Gunshot Residue (GSR)

Through the examination, duplication, and evaluation of gunshot residues, bullet holes, projectile defects, and shot distribution patterns on submitted evidence, a conclusion concerning firearm related defects and approximate weapon muzzle to target distance involved in a shooting incident is accomplished. (See [Appendix A Homicide Preliminary Investigation Responsibilities \(Uniformed Personnel\)](#)- & Assistance to Investigators, page 198)

The discharge of a firearm requires the ignition of a primer by mechanical impact and the ignition of gunpowder by the flames of the primer material. Solid particles of gunpowder are turned into a large volume of gas that results in a very large increase in pressure in the gun chamber. The movement of the bullet down the barrel relieves this pressure. Following the bullet down the barrel are the combustion products of gunpowder. Very small amounts of primer products do go down the barrel, but most appear as a cloud of smoke around the cylinder, slide, or receiver of the firearm. Both combustion products and the primer residues are

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routinely called gunshot residues and this is a source of confusion when placing analysis requests with the laboratory.

3.2 Gunpowder Deposits

Smoke deposits on a victim, clothing, or other targets can be chemically analyzed to confirm the gunpowder combustion products and indicate the presence of a discharged firearm. Also, the pattern of the deposited material in terms of particle distribution and the diameter of the deposit is a rough indication of the firearm to target distance. This information should be consistent with a hole in the victim's clothing and a hospital or Coroner's report. If significant information is desired from a gunpowder deposit, the clothing or target should be carefully packaged and booked into evidence. A request for analysis should be made to the Firearms Analysis Unit, FSD to do the appropriate testing and also make the distance measurements. For gun-to-target distance the criminalist will want the firearm and the ammunition used in the suspected crime.

The investigator should call the Firearms Analysis Unit to confirm the necessity of the analysis request.

3.3 Primer Deposits

The smoke generated by the primer material travels in a small puff of a cloud a few feet in diameter, generally in the vicinity of the trigger finger and hand of the shooter, and quickly falls away to the ground. The particles that do fall on the hand of the shooter, or someone standing near the shooter, can be captured on a sticky/adhesive surface. Should the muzzle of the gun be very close (contact or near contact) to the victim, it is possible that the bullet, gunpowder residue, and primer residue will fall on the same spot. The velocity of the gunpowder gases greatly exceeds the primer smoke and can blow these small articles aside in a random manner. Samples from anywhere other than the hands of the shooter provide no useful information.

3.4 Primer Residue Analysis vs. Gunpowder Residue Analysis

Chemical analysis of primer residue is different from the analysis of gunpowder residue. In the case of primer residue, it has been determined that lead, barium,

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and antimony are characteristic and unique to modern day cartridges. Furthermore, the three-component particles should be round and a few microns in diameter. A Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) is used to detect the presence of primer residue. This instrument measures X-rays and utilizes electron optics to find the metallic particles unique to the primer compounds.

3.5 Collecting GSR Samples

Due to the nature of primer residue settling on someone's hand as a puff of smoke, one should be aware that it is equally easy to be dusted off and lost. About 90 percent falls away from a live suspect in the first hour, after 6 hours it is all gone. Paper bags on a suspect's hands might protect primer residue from being brushed off if the suspect is dead. On a live and active suspect the bag will wipe his hand nearly free of residue. The technique for primer residue collection is detailed on the kit (bag) of GSR stubs.

NOTE: *A GSR kit shall not be collected from any decedent by the investigating officer, either at the scene or at a hospital, without prior consent and knowledge of the Coroner. If consent is obtained and a GSR kit is completed, the investigator shall ensure the Coroner Investigator is notified when the kit is completed.*

Be aware that there are several commercial Scanning Electron Microscopes on the market, and the ones purchased by other police agencies can be different. The GSR stubs from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department do not fit the Los Angeles Police Department, FSD instrument. Department employees should only use GSR kits supplied by the Department.

3.6 Requesting GSR Analysis

A request for analysis should be called in to the Trace Analysis Unit, FSD, by the investigating officer or his/her partner.

NOTE: *Any GSR kits collected after six hours will not be analyzed by FSD.*

4. HOMICIDE KIT

The Homicide Kit contains items that are valuable aids at homicide crime scenes. The Homicide Kit assigned to Area detective divisions and specialized detective

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division homicide details should be periodically checked by homicide investigators to ensure that all necessary supplies are available. On occasion, certain articles are used during the course of an investigation and then are not replenished by the investigators who used them. This sometimes results in an inadequate supply of items for use in subsequent investigations. The result is the loss of efficiency or a waste of time expended in obtaining items that may be necessary for the effective development of the crime scene investigation.

ITEM	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	FORM 15.34	FORM 15.11	APPROVAL REQUIRED
1	50	Bag, Bio-Hazard Size 24 x 24	X		
2	12	Bag, Plastic		X	Yes
3	01	Bar, Pry 24 inch		X	Yes
4	01	Blood/Sample Collection Kit			Call TID Field Unit
5	04	Bottle, Specimen	X		
6	06	Chalk		X	
7	01	Clipboard	X		
8	01	Coveralls, Tyvek disposable		X	Yes
9	100	Envelope, Clasp	X		
10	500	Envelope, Coin	X		
11	01	Flashlight, Magnifying		X	Yes
12	1 Pair	Gloves, Cotton	X		
13	50 Pair	Gloves, Disposable, rubber		X	Yes
14	05	Goggles		X	Yes
15	2-4	GSR Kits			Call TID Field Unit
16	01	Hatchet		X	Yes
17	01	ID Marker book, adhesive			Call TID Field Unit
18	500	Labels, Sealed Evidence	X		
19	01	Magnet on 18 inch flex rod		X	Yes
20	10	Mask, Disposable Surgical		X	Yes
21	01	Measure-meter, Rolatape		X	Yes
22	01	Mirror with 12 inch Swivel Handle		X	Yes
23	12	Pen, Black Ballpoint	X		
24	01	Pen, Large Felt Tip Marking	X		
25	12	Pencil, Grease	X		
26	12	Pencil, Lead	X		
27	01	Pliers		X	
28	01	Placards, plastic lettered A-Z			Call TID Field Unit

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ITEM	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	FORM 15.34	FORM 15.11	APPROVAL REQUIRED
29	01	Placards, plastic numbered 1-40			Call TID Field Unit
30	01	Ruler—15 inch		X	
31	01	Scissors—9 inch	X		
32	01	Screwdriver, Multi-Head		X	Yes
33	01	Sheet, Rubberized Canvas		X	Yes
34	10 Pairs	Shoe Covers, Disposable		X	Yes
35	10	Soap, Germicidal (tube)		X	Yes
36	01	Swab, Cotton (box)		X	
37	01	Tape, Measuring—100 foot		X	Yes
38	01	Tape, Transparent (roll)	X		
39	01	Tweezers		X	
40	01	Twine, Ball	X		
41	02	Writing Tablets	X		
OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT					
A	Varies	Bag, Paper—various sizes	X		
B	01	Room Deodorizer	X		
C	01	Saw, Key Hole		X	Yes
D	01	Shovel, Collapsible		X	Yes
E	01	Spotlight. 12 Volt w/lighter socket plug		X	Yes
F	01	Tape, Police Banner Guard (roll)	X		
G	01	Thermometer		X	Yes
H	50	Tongue Depressors		X	

5. INTERVIEW AND INTERROGATION

There are several interview and interrogation methods and techniques that are employed by investigators throughout the United States. However, the best training, the most suitable environment, and effective props are no guarantees that a suspect will confess, admit or even speak with investigators. In addition to understanding a suspect's motivation, how to introduce evidence into the dialogue and various other things, an investigator must also be able to focus and communicate effectively.

Unless explicitly stated, there is no expectation of privacy in the presence of a peace officer, in a police vehicle, in a police facility, or in a custodial environment. Audio and video recordings can be very compelling pieces of evidence in that they

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provide additional insight and perspective and are difficult to refute. With this in mind, it is imperative that the homicide investigator understands, is familiar with, and adheres to the many laws and policies that address interviewing and interrogating suspects. This includes placing an undercover officer and/or agent posing as an inmate or arrestee in a monitored, custodial setting to converse with an adult suspect about a specific incident or event ([Illinois v. Perkins – 496 U.S. 292 \(1990\)](#)). In accordance with [Chief of Detectives Notice, dated March 14, 2019, “Use of Secret Service Funds for Undercover, In-custody Operations,”](#) Robbery-Homicide Division shall be responsible for reviewing all requests, providing subject matter expertise, and orchestrating all undercover in-custody operations involving an adult suspect. Major Crimes Division shall be utilized when the suspect is a juvenile.

Preparing for an interview or interrogation is as important as the encounter itself. The investigator must evaluate each situation and each suspect individually. In some cases, this may mean delegating another team or investigator to conduct the interview or interrogation. It could also mean having others remotely monitor the interaction to focus on the suspect’s body language and responses to certain topics, keep the interrogators on point, and/or conduct computer queries or immediate follow-ups to verify or disqualify a suspect’s alibi.

5.1 THE INTERROGATOR

The homicide investigator must be firm without being harsh, sympathetic without being soft. He/she must keep complete control of him/herself, both physically and mentally. Nervous habits such as tapping, lip chewing, and ear-pulling must always be noticed in a suspect but never practiced by the interrogator. A suspect’s demeanor during an interview or interrogation can give clues as to his/her truthfulness and the progress, or lack thereof, attained towards a confession.

The interrogator should, in some cases, avoid creating the impression that he/she is a police officer seeking a confession. An interrogator who portrays the role of one who is merely seeking the truth may be more successful in obtaining truthful statements from a suspect. This method depends upon the type of suspect you are interrogating.

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Some interrogation experts recommend that the interrogator wear suitable business attire to make the interrogation more businesslike. Frequently, because of the effects on a suspect, officers should conceal the most apparent symbol of authority—the weapon. For officer safety, it may be advisable for an investigator to secure his/her weapon in a locker prior to the interrogation.

The interrogator should use terms and language that are readily understood by the suspect. Do not use terms or language that the suspect is unable to comprehend. The interrogator should avoid the use of harsh words or expressions such as “kill,” “steal,” and “confess.” It is more conducive when obtaining an admission or confession to use milder words like “shoot,” “take,” and “tell the truth.” Usually, a suspect should not be told, “You’re lying.” A better expression would be, “You’re not telling me the truth.”

Interrogation Issues Specific to Juveniles. Remember that juveniles are sometimes a subject during murder investigations, and there are issues that often arise especially involving the interviewing or interrogation of those juveniles involved. Welfare and Institutions Code Section [625.6](#) states that “prior to a custodial interrogation, and before the waiver of any Miranda rights, a youth 17 years of age or younger ***shall*** consult with legal counsel in person, by telephone, or by video conference. The consultation may not be waived.” If these requirements are not met the admissibility of any statements may not be admissible. Keep in mind, that although those requirements exist, this section does not apply when statements are made that are necessary to protect life or property from an imminent threat. This means if officers or detectives are trying to obtain information involving an imminent threat to life or property, they have to limit their questions to those which are reasonably necessary to obtain information involving the protection of life or property from any threats. (Refer to OCOP Special Order No. 1, dated January 5, 2021, “[Interrogation of Suspects-Admonition of Miranda Rights; Advisement of Constitutional Rights Per Welfare and Institutions Code 625-Juveniles; and, Juvenile Arrest Supplemental Report, Form 05.02.06 revised](#)”)

An additional issue that may arise during the interrogation of a juvenile subject is the six-hour time limitation in a secure detention facility. Welfare and Institutions Code Sections [207](#) and [207.1](#) outline those provisions. Therefore, the interrogation should be completed within the six-hour time frame.

5.2 TYPES OF CRIMINALS

The following categories will illustrate some of the types of suspects with whom an interrogator may come in contact. For those instances in which the investigator has no prior experience, suggested techniques are included within each category.

Gang Member or Gang Motivated. Of all homicide suspects interrogated each year in the City of Los Angeles, the gang member or gang motivated killer is, by far, the one most frequently encountered. These individuals identify with a group and attain status by committing acts to further the gang's activities, impress, and/or intimidate others. Expect this suspect to be aggressive, hostile, and even outwardly defiant. They are likely accustomed to police contact and/or involvement in violent crime and are not dissuaded or intimidated at the prospect of incarceration. Your approach will likely vary depending upon the age, position, and type of gang member you are interrogating (Hispanic, Black, Asian, Armenian, Outlaw Motorcycle).

There may be an occasion where a group of individuals kill someone. Remember, seldom does the whole gang have the same motive when they kill an individual. Usually, one gang member hates the victim for a particular reason and initiates the assault. The others join in, following the lead of their fellow gang member. Be mindful and prepared to address a suspect's attempts to claim he/she was "forced" to do it. In cases of drive-by shootings with multiple occupants, be prepared to address a suspect's claim that he/she did not know what was going to happen or their attempts to direct blame on others.

Non-Professional Criminal. A first-time, relatively young or minor offender with a non-violent criminal background who has not been incarcerated may be considered a non-professional criminal. This individual may display a heightened level of anxiety due to non-familiarity with the process and/or the severity of the crime.

Professional Criminal. In this context, the term "professional" implies one who has a significant criminal history and who has likely been incarcerated. They have chosen crime as their primary source of activity. It does not refer to their success, ability or necessarily imply a level of sophistication. The key to an effective interrogation of this murder suspect is knowing the suspect's motive. Many

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murders are committed incidental to the commission of another crime (robbery, burglary, rape). The other crime involved may be the key to learning about the murder.

Professional Killer. This person kills for profit. The amount of money paid to this type of criminal, their depth of experience, and level of skill may vary significantly. Money is usually the closest thing to a personal motive and this person is often associated with organized crime. It is extremely difficult to interrogate this type of suspect since they have likely have gone to some lengths to separate themselves from their actions and their benefactor(s).

5.3 PREPARATION

Knowledge is power. Prior to interrogating a suspect, attempt to gather all information about the:

- Offense
- Suspect
- Victim

Before any interview or interrogation, the interviewer/interrogator should prepare a plan. Before beginning an interrogation of a homicide suspect, the investigator should be thoroughly familiar with all phases of the investigation; the crime scene, interviews, evidence, etc. The investigator, in addition to having detailed knowledge of the crime itself, must have some background information on the suspect, such as the suspect's:

- Personal background including his age, education, marital status, criminal record, parole or probation status, religious affiliation, prejudices.
- Physical and mental condition including his medical history and any addiction to narcotics, alcohol, etc.
- Relationship to victim or crime scene.
- Motive (possibly shown by his incriminating acts).
- Statements or admissions made to the arresting officers.

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If possible, investigate the suspect's alibi or story before the interrogation begins. Any discrepancies in the suspect's story will greatly assist the investigator in the interrogation. The suspect's alibi may prove truthful and actually establish his innocence. Too often, valuable time and effort have been unnecessarily expended in the interrogation of an innocent suspect. A check of the suspect's story may save the investigator a great deal of time and effort.

5.4 RECORDING

(Recording of Custodial Interrogations Refer to: [Penal Code 859.5](#) and Chief of Detectives Notice, dated May 4, 2017, "[Mandated Electronic Recording of the In Custody Interrogation of all Murder Suspects](#)")

Interrogation of murder suspects shall be audio and/or video recorded. When conducting a recorded interrogation of a suspect, emphasis should be on the following areas to ensure an effective recording.

Obtain the best available room. Avoid background conversation, slamming doors, scraping chairs, ringing telephones, and deliberate interruptions. Ensure that the recording system is working and in operation prior to placing the suspect in the interrogation room. The Form 05.10.00 interview should be conducted prior to the interrogation. Plan the approach. If two investigators are interrogating the suspect, decide who is to ask the questions. Permit the primary investigator to make the approach, ask key questions, and conclude the interrogation. The silent partner can then, and only then, ask questions which are thought to be pertinent. Ensure that the interview will not run too long, and that the suspect's rights are not inadvertently violated.

NOTE: *Once the interrogation is concluded, the investigator should book the original copy of the audio and/or video recording into [TID – Electronics unit](#). Copies can then be requested for the investigator and discovery purposes.*

5.5 COMPLETING THE INVESTIGATOR'S FINAL REPORT, FORM-5.10

The Investigator's Final Report, [Form 05.10.00](#), is an extension of the booking process and is strictly an administrative procedure. An exception exists in cases

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where the Form 05.10.00 background information is to be a factor, or evidence, against the suspect. Under these circumstances, a Miranda admonishment and either an express or implied waiver would be required prior to obtaining the information. The Form 05.10.00 interview should be tape-recorded in anticipation of potential defense arguments.

NOTE: *The [Form 05.10.00](#), when completed accurately/properly, can be used as a valuable investigative tool in future cases when trying to locate suspects, their associates, etc.*

5.6 TAKING THE STATEMENT

The investigator taking the statement should:

- Arrange seating so the interrogator and the suspect are on the same eye level and fairly close together. (Distance often creates a barrier.)
- Keep paper and pencils out of sight. Avoid taking notes.
- Avoid great differentiation in voice volume between participants.
- Include date, time, and location of the interview.
- Identify all those present.
- Admonish the suspect of his/her rights. Make sure that the suspect thoroughly understands his/her rights and then obtain an express or implied waiver.
- Where it may be questioned, be sure the suspect knows the difference between right and wrong.
- Give some thought to your phraseology. It will be transcribed verbatim and possibly read in court.
- Verbally define non-verbal communications and gain the suspect's acknowledgment in cases where the only recording of the conversation is audio. (e.g., if the suspect nods, you ask, "I see you nodding your head, do you mean 'yes'?")
- Avoid using profanity.
- Do not make promises and threats.
- Do not create an atmosphere of coercion or duress.

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An investigator should not:

- Do all the talking. Obtain something more than a “yes” or “no” from the suspect. Permit the suspect to answer. Avoid a monologue.
- Hurry. Wait for an answer and then insist that it be vocal. Do not accept head movements or grunts (“huh” and “ah-huh”) answers.
- Interrupt. Avoid both talking at once.
- Discuss the suspect’s criminal history or prior record.

5.7 WRITTEN CONFESSIONS

Reasons for a written confession:

- The audiotape may be lost or damaged.
- Jurors like to see and feel evidence when deliberating.

Written statements of suspects and witnesses should, whenever possible, be written by the witness or suspect, and should also be written in ink to maintain authenticity. When the suspect or witness wishes to make a change or correction in their statement, they should be instructed to draw a single line through the information and write their initials above the correction. This procedure can avoid possible problems at a later time during criminal court proceedings.

A signed confession, preferably a hand-written confession, conveys to the judge and jury that the confession is truly voluntary.

If the suspect or witness is unable to provide a written statement, the investigator may wish to record the statement; reduce it to writing and have the suspect or witness review and sign the statement.

All statements made by suspects may have evidentiary value. If the statement is in writing, it must be submitted prior to any complaint being issued. Critical statements should not be summarized, but should be in the suspect’s own words and, if possible, in the suspect’s own handwriting with the suspect’s signature.

These statements should be written either in question and answer form or as a narrative of the suspect’s own words in the interview. Alibis or self-serving statements must be included.

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Keep the original confession in the case package and submit copies for filing. Also keep all interrogation notes in the case package.

6. POLYGRAPH EXAMINATION

If the investigator intends to have the suspect submit to a polygraph examination, it should be done in the early stages of the investigation. Do it before the suspect discovers how much the investigator knows about the case or before the suspect has time to fabricate an alibi.

The best results on the polygraph are obtained from suspects who are rested and refreshed. Long periods of interrogation may cause fatigue that frequently contributes to errors in polygraph examinations.

NOTE: *A Department employee, who intends to have a suspect submit to a polygraph examination, should contact the [Polygraph Unit, TID](#). Technical Investigation Division is responsible for instructing Department employees as to proper methods of preparing persons to be interrogated. ([Refer to LAPD Manual Section 2/350.80](#))*

5.1 Questions and Answers on Polygraph Use

What are some of the situations in which a investigator can use the polygraph?

- Conflicting stories by the suspect(s).
- Conflicting stories by the witness(es).
- All leads fail to identify the suspect.
- A suspect requests the polygraph to show his/her innocence.
- A witness requests you to verify his/her veracity.
- To confirm or refute an allegation.
- When suspect “cops out” to only a portion of the offense.

What are some situations when a polygraph examination is not desirable?

- Suspect declines to volunteer for a polygraph examination.
- Other leads are present.
- After admission or confession unless it may be false.

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- The person is mentally incompetent.
- The suspect is under the influence of alcohol or narcotics.

5.2 Responsibility of the investigator.

The investigator is responsible for:

- Becoming familiar with Department polygraph procedure and technique.
- Talking to his/her supervisor to determine, if a polygraph is desirable.
- Discussing his/her case with the polygraph examiner.
- Being present when the polygraph examination is given.
- Obtaining a recorded or written confession or statement, as applicable, after a polygraph examination.

5.3 DO's and DON'Ts for the investigator

DON'T:

- Interrogate immediately before a polygraph examination.
- Furnish the suspect with information during interviews that might taint the polygraph examination.
- Describe the polygraph as infallible.
- Tell the suspect that only certain types of questions will be asked.
- Volunteer to the suspect that polygraph examination results are inadmissible.
- Use the polygraph as a crutch.
- Expect an examiner to conduct a “witch hunt.”
- Attempt to clear several cases with one exam.

DO:

- Re-interview an untruthful suspect as soon as possible after the polygraph examination.
- Point out the effectiveness of the polygraph.
- Withhold detailed information from the suspect.
- Tell the suspect the examiner is qualified.

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- Tell the suspect of your confidence in the polygraph.
- Advise the suspect to obtain a good night's sleep.
- Discuss the case with the examiner.
- Concentrate on primary issues.
- Advise the examiner of the basic issues to be resolved.
- Confine the polygraph examination to one specific offense.
- Accept the polygraph for what it is—an aid. It cannot do all of the work. If properly used, it may help.

7. SEROLOGY/DEOXYRIBONUCLEIC ACID UNIT (SDU): TESTING AND REQUESTING

DNA stands for deoxyribonucleic acid, which is found in the nucleus, or center, of most cells in your body. It is the “genetic blueprint” of life since it passes information from parents to offspring. The primary purpose of forensic DNA analysis is to include or exclude an individual as a possible contributor to the tested source. The Serology/DNA Unit (SDU) assists in the investigation of crime by identifying and characterizing blood, semen, saliva, and other biological material through microscopic, chemical, and DNA typing.

7.1 Types of DNA Testing

Prior to the advent of DNA typing, serological typing was used to analyze blood group markers and proteins, with little ability to identify anyone. The first DNA testing method introduced for forensic casework was commonly referred to as RFLP analysis. While it was able to differentiate individuals, it was time-consuming and required relatively large quantities of biological evidence. As a result, it is no longer used in forensic testing.

To deal with the often only small amounts of biological material found at crime scenes, the process of *Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR)* is used. This process makes millions of copies of the DNA, which is then typed using *Short Tandem Repeat (STR)* analysis. The Serology/DNA Unit can analyze up to 15 STR locations, or loci (areas of the DNA), plus Amelogenin (indicates if the sample came from a male or female). STR DNA typing is state-of-the-art testing in forensic science, and is the process used by the SDU for virtually all of its casework. The frequency of the profile generated is routinely 1 in ten billion or

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more. This means that a DNA profile is expected to be seen only once out of every ten billion individuals. The current world population is approximately 6 billion.

There are some limitations to regular STR testing for forensic casework. When samples are severely limited, damaged or degraded, full DNA profiles are often difficult to obtain. In addition, samples with mixtures of DNA create challenges for interpretation and determining which person was the source.

Other types of DNA testing are available to obtain more genetic information when regular STR analysis is limited. Several genetic markers have been identified on the Y chromosome (only present in males) that can be used in forensic applications. This technique (typically referred to as *Y-STR testing*) can be very useful if the laboratory detects complex mixtures (multiple male contributors) within a biological evidence sample. Because the Y chromosome is transmitted directly from a father to all his sons, it can also be used to trace family relationships among males. This DNA typing method is only used to compare evidence to specific suspects or individuals.

Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis is another genetic test that allows forensic laboratories to develop DNA profiles from evidence that may not be suitable for PCR-STR analysis. This technology analyzes DNA found in mitochondria, the energy-producing components of a cell. Old remains or evidence lacking nucleated cells (such as hair shafts) are typically not suitable for PCR-STR analysis, but often yield mtDNA typing results. This type of DNA can also be used to trace family relationships or aid in missing person investigations since mtDNA is transmitted directly from a mother to all her children. This DNA typing method is also only used to compare evidence to specific suspects or individuals.

7.2 Types of Samples Routinely Tested (PCR-STR Method)

The SDU routinely tests for and DNA types blood, semen and bodily fluids that contain epithelial cells, such as saliva and vaginal fluid. Any article that may have been placed in or against the mouth of a suspect or victim is a good candidate for DNA typing. In addition, due to advances in the sensitivity of DNA testing, it is sometimes possible to detect a DNA profile from an item which has been handled, worn or otherwise was in contact with the bare skin of the person. This is

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commonly referred to as “touch DNA.” Some examples are clothing, gloves, eyeglasses, cell phone earpieces or keypads, the handles of weapons or tools and steering wheels. While DNA typing on this type of evidence does not always produce a result, it should still be considered. [*See Administrative and Technical Services Bureau Notice, dated October 17, 2006 for additional details on “Touch” DNA.*](#)

Due to the level of sensitivity that allows the testing described above, it is essential that items submitted for testing are collected with the utmost care to avoid adding the DNA of the person collecting the evidence to the evidence. Latex gloves that are frequently changed, limited or no talking (or a surgical mask if you must talk while collecting) are very important.

7.3 Combined DNA Index System (CODIS)

CODIS is a DNA database maintained by the California Department of Justice (CAL DOJ) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Qualifying profiles (those typed with the STR DNA typing method) are submitted to the State DNA Identification System (SDIS) database by the SDU. If CAL DOJ determines that the profile meets National DNA Identification System standards (NDIS) it will be submitted nationally as well.

There are two main databases in CODIS:

- The “Forensic Unknown” database contains profiles from crime scene samples (including rape kits).
- The “Offender” database contains profiles from convicted felons and as of 2009 any felony arrestee.

When the SDU submits a profile to the database it is searched against both the forensic unknown database and the offender database. This process can result in two types of database matches: an “offender hit” or a “case-to-case hit.” The “offender hit” is a match between a crime scene stain and a known offender, while a “case-to-case hit” is between samples from two different crime scenes. All qualifying cases (both solved and unsolved) are eventually submitted to the database. If you want to verify this, please call (323) 415-8800, and ask to speak to the CODIS manager. Please note that the database search process can routinely

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take one month between the time the profile is submitted to CAL DOJ by the SDU and the time the SDU is given the name of the convicted offender.

The CODIS DNA database is only used for STR DNA typing. There is no CODIS-like database for Y-STR or mtDNA typing results.

7.4 Submitting a Request to the Serology/DNA Unit

Step One: Determine the Type of Service Needed

Biological fluid identification:

The first step in a Serology DNA request is to identify potential biological material on the item of evidence. Color screening tests and microscopic examination are used to identify sperm, semen, bloodstains, and skin cells (which can be left from saliva or vaginal fluid). Depending on the case circumstances and the evidence, if no biological fluid is detected, no further testing will be performed.

DNA Profiling:

Once biological material is identified DNA analysis can be performed to compare the evidence item to a victim or suspect. In the case of unsolved cases the profile can also be searched through CODIS. In some instances, the biological fluid screening process is not performed and the item is taken straight to DNA typing, particularly with “touch DNA” cases.

CODIS Hit Confirmation:

If you are notified of an offender database hit, and wish to use this information in court, a new oral swab **MUST** be obtained from the suspect (any swab collected as routine part of the booking process is sent to CAL DOJ). Once booked, you must submit a Serology DNA request as described below, in order to let the SDU know that the sample exists and you want it compared to the evidence.

Step Two: Determine the Number of Samples to Test

Given the large volume of DNA requests, limit the number of items to those needed to prove essential or key elements of the crime (implicate, exonerate or identify a suspect or victim). A routine DNA request is 3 to 5 evidence items.

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In the case of a CODIS hit confirmation, the only item needing testing is typically the suspect reference sample, unless additional analysis is needed to support additional charges for prosecution.

Requests of the following nature should be *avoided* as you plan your testing:

- Random testing of numerous stains from a bloody crime scene.
- Analysis of numerous stains to prove an individual was not present at a scene.
- Analysis of numerous stains to disprove all conceivable defense theories.
- Testing evidence (clothing, weapons) that cannot be linked to a victim or suspect.

A criminalist is always available to discuss case specifics and make testing recommendations. *Should you need to discuss a case in person, please be sure to make an appointment.*

Step Three: Obtain an Oral (buccal) Swab from any Victims, Consenting Partners and/or in Custody Suspects

Even if the suspect's DNA is "on file" with CODIS, FSD still needs an oral swab for direct comparison to the evidence. Requests with all reference samples booked will be assigned ahead of requests with reference samples pending.

Step Four: Complete the Request

1. Submit your request as early in the process as possible.
2. Please complete ALL information in a Serology DNA Request form. The request form can be found on LAPD e-forms, form [12.56.00](#).
3. Requests and property report/IR (which listing includes the items to be tested) can be emailed to RSDA@lapd.lacity.org (preferred method) or faxed to (323) 276-1945. (***NOTE:*** *No request is automatic even if a Criminalist collected the evidence*)
4. If there are any questions, or additional information is needed, you will receive an email requesting the necessary information/reference samples. A request will remain on hold until the Serology/DNA unit has all the information needed to proceed with analysis.

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5. Notify SDU via email at RSDA@lapd.lacity.org if there is ANY change in the case status, especially if it involves changes to any court or other due dates.
6. Normal processing time can be up to 90 days (reference samples only can take up to 30 days) from the date a request is ready to be assigned. If analysis is needed prior to the normal turnaround time, please refer to the “*Procedures for Requesting Serology/DNA Analysis*,” [Chief of Detectives Notice 8.6](#), dated December 18, 2014, sections III and IV and submit a 03.14.00 to request expedited analysis.

7.5 Walk-ins

Any case where you bring in evidence for immediate (walk-in) testing **MUST** be scheduled in advance through a supervisor. Only booked evidence will be examined. ***NO EXCEPTIONS***. Unless the evidence was checked out from and can be returned to the Property Room at the laboratory facility (by the examining criminalist), you must wait at the laboratory while the analysis is conducted.

7.6 Appointments

If you need to meet with a Criminalist regarding a specific case or to get advice on the best way DNA testing can aid your investigation, please make an appointment at (323) 415-8800.

7.7 Priority requests

The DNA typing process is complex and involves several steps. As a result, the SDU currently takes 1-2 months to complete a routine case.

Most requests currently received by the Serology/DNA Unit involve violent crimes. As a result, only a very valid argument can be made for the immediate testing of the evidence. The policy of the SDU is to analyze cases in the order they were requested, with priority being given to cases with suspects in custody or with confirmed court dates. Taking requests out of order disrupts the orderly flow of work (slowing down other cases) and should be done only for compelling reasons such as:

- Suspect is in custody but will be released without DNA testing

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- Confirmed court date. Case will be dismissed or substantially weakened without DNA testing
- Established violent serial suspect(s). DNA testing needed to identify suspect(s)

7.8 For further information

Inquiries should be directed to the [Serology/DNA Unit](#), FSD at (323) 415-8800.

8. VIOLENT CRIMINAL APPREHENSION PROGRAM (ViCAP)

The FBI's Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP) provides investigative and analytic support to law enforcement agencies nationwide. A key component to the program is ViCAP Web, a national database containing detailed investigative information for cases involving homicides, sexual assaults, missing persons, and unidentified human remains. The system is queried to find investigative leads and link cases. Although the ViCAP Web is managed and maintain by the FBI, cases investigated by LAPD can be entered into the ViCAP Web by Department personnel who have been granted appropriate access. VICAP is not limited to LAPD data. Data from the Nationwide Law Enforcement Teletype System (NLETS) from any agency can be entered into the system. A special set of fields can be used to identify the origin of a case as TELETYPE or REPORT, and what agency originated the case. This is useful for early detection of serial killers across state lines.

Official Submission Criteria:

- Homicides (and attempts) that are known or suspected to be part of a series and/or are apparently random, motiveless, or sexually oriented.
- Sexual assaults that are known or suspected to be part of a series and/or committed by a stranger.
- Missing persons where the circumstances indicate a strong possibility of foul play and the victim is still missing.
- Unidentified human remains where the manner of death is known or suspected to be homicide

To receive training and access to ViCAP Web or to request that a case be entered into the database, contact [Robbery-Homicide Division](#).

8.1 What is a typical use of ViCAP?

Usually an investigator (from any law enforcement agency in the world) will call the VICAP Section, requesting any cases involving a certain individual or a particular type of M.O. VICAP can be queried on any type of data it contains, and in any combination; it is completely flexible and does not use limited “canned” formats. Once the appropriate cases are located, either a one page summary is faxed to the investigator, or the name or phone number of the investigator handling the case is given to the investigator.

The data in the VICAP system is confidential. Under certain limited and controlled circumstances, the public can call the VICAP Section to make a query. Typical examples of authorized public inquiries are those made by insurance investigators, private investigators, and relatives of murder victims. Under these circumstances, a query will be made, but the only information that will be returned is a referral to the investigator handling the case.

9. WOUND TYPES

9.1 Defense Wounds

Wounds received while trying to defend oneself. They are generally found on the arms, hands, fingers, and particularly between fingers.

9.2 Distant Shot

A distant shot is where the muzzle of the weapon is farther than approximately 18 inches from the body when the shot is fired. Normally, none of the characteristics of a close shot can be detected at this distance.

9.3 Entrance Wounds

When a projectile strikes a part of the body that is not backed by bone, the skin, which is both tough and elastic, indents and stretches under the impact. As the projectile, which may have rotation as well as forward motion, forces its way through, a small area of skin comes in contact with the sides of the bullet wiping

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off smoke and grime which is deposited around the entrance wound, causing a gray zone.

Because the projectile during entry stretches the skin, the entrance wound will appear to be smaller than the diameter of the projectile that made it. If the projectile strikes the skin at an angle, the gray zone around the hole will be somewhat wider on one side and narrower on the other. Generally, there is only a small amount of bleeding from entrance wounds because the tissue destruction is not great at that point.

9.4 Exit Wounds

As the projectile passes through the body, it packs the tissue in front of it. If it has enough momentum to go completely through the body, it will finally force its way out through the packed tissues causing a ragged and torn exit wound.

Consequently, exit wounds are much larger than the projectile. The loss of blood is generally much greater at the exit than at the entrance wound. Often shreds of fat or other internal tissues will be protruding from the wound. Next to bone, the skin is the most resistant tissue in the body. It frequently happens that a projectile will go completely through the body, only to be stopped by the skin on the opposite side, where it can easily be felt. When a projectile strikes a bone, it is hard to predict where it will go. The velocity of the projectile, the size and shape of the bone, and the angle at which the projectile strikes the bone will determine its course. A high velocity rifle bullet may bore a hole through a large bone. However, if the bullet happens to strike a bone at an angle, the bullet may cause a severe fracture with great destruction of the surrounding soft tissues. This is caused by the energy of the bullet being transmitted to broken fragments of bone, making each fragment an additional projectile. Not only do the bone fragments enormously increase tissue destruction, but the bullet itself is frequently fragmented or sent spinning end-over-end, which greatly increases tissue damage and bleeding.

As a result, the exit wound is usually much larger, more ragged, and generally more destructive. A small caliber bullet entering the body and ricocheting off a bone may also cause extensive muscle and/or tissue damage.

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One of the most common examples of projectile deflection occurs when a bullet strikes the chest at an angle. The projectile pierces the skin, strikes the breastbone or the ribs, and is then deflected between the ribs and the skin. It may then go around the body and come out the back without having passed through the chest cavity. These cases are sometimes encountered when a person attempts suicide by shooting him/herself through the heart. The same thing may happen when a projectile strikes the skull at an angle and goes around the head between the skin of the scalp and the skull bones.

9.5 Gunshot Wounds

Homicide investigators should bear in mind that gunshot wounds are sometimes similar in external appearance to stab wounds since both the bullet and stabbing weapon puncture the skin. There are, however, certain physical characteristics that will identify a particular wound as having been caused by a gunshot.

The distance from which a firearm was discharged can be divided into three areas: contact shot, close shot, and distant shot. In practice, the following distinctions can be made between contact, close, and distant shots:

- **Contact Shot**—A contact shot is where the muzzle of the weapon is pressed against the body when the shot is fired. The visible damage caused by the contact shot is caused more by the flame and expanding gases than by the penetration of the bullet. It is a dirty looking, *star-shaped wound*. The skin edges are ragged and torn, with actual charring of the tissues caused by the tremendous heat of the muzzle blast. Tissue damage is especially noticeable when the muzzle has been held directly against the head. The skull provides definite resistance which impedes the expanding gases from the muzzle. As a result, the gases undermine the scalp, producing a ragged, torn, charred wound which is often larger than the exit wound. This frequently happens in suicides.
- **Close Shot**—A close shot is where the muzzle of the weapon is between approximately two and eighteen inches from the body when the shot is fired. Two telltale signs are present when a weapon is fired from this distance—smudging, stippling and tattooing.

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- **Smudging/Sooting**—Is the deposit of smoke and soot from the burned powder which is deposited around the entrance wound. It produces a dirty, grimy appearance that is only on the surface of the skin and can be wiped off with a cloth. Smudging/sooting is important because it gives an indication that the gun was held close to the person but not in actual contact.
- **Stippling**—consists of multiple abrasions of the skin due to the impact of small fragments of foreign material. If this material is gunpowder, this form of stippling is called *powder tattooing*. If the material is not gunpowder, but the abrasions produced, appear identical to those due to gunpowder, the phenomena is referred to as *pseudo-powder tattooing*. Most stippling of a non-gunpowder origin does not resemble powder tattooing and can easily be differentiated from it. The exception is stippling from shotgun filler.

If a bullet passes through a sheet of glass, stippling may be produced by the fragments of the glass. This is seen most commonly in individuals shot through the tempered-glass side window of an automobile. Such glass stippling tends to be scant, as well as covering a larger and more irregular area, with greater variation in size compared to powder tattoo marks. Fragments of glass are usually found embedded in the skin at these sites or adhering to the clothing.

- **Tattooing**—Is the residue of unburned powder granules and minute particles of molten metal from the bullet that are driven under the skin by the force of the blast. Tattooing is permanent and cannot be wiped off. With both smudging/sooting and tattooing, the size of the pattern will depend upon the caliber, powder charge, and the distance the firearm was held from the victim.

If the bullet strikes the body at an angle, the bullet would have entered from the direction which bore the majority of smudging and tattooing. If, however, the bullet is fired through clothing, these markings will be effectively obliterated. If the investigator suspects that the gun was held close to a clothed portion of the body, he/she should carefully preserve the clothing for scientific examination.

9.6 Incised Wounds

An incision is a cut, usually of the skin, but may involve muscle, cartilage, bone, and internal organs. Characteristics of an incised wound include sharp, clean-cut, regular edges; no bruising of surrounding skin; depth of wound varies at the edges; bleeds freely.

9.7 Lacerations

A laceration is a tear in the tissue and may be either external (skin) or internal (stomach wall, liver, etc.). Lacerations may be caused by either direct blunt force that produces crushing lacerations, or by indirect blunt force. These injuries can produce tears when the skin is attached to a bone, such as the scalp, and torn skin flaps when the skin is not firmly attached, as over the big muscles on the back. Lacerations are characterized by irregular form, gaping and swollen edges to the wound, and often considerable bleeding into the surrounding tissues. Another characteristic is that the wound rarely takes the form of the object producing it.

9.8 Mutilation

The method of mutilation can provide important clues regarding the suspect's M.O. Be specific in describing the condition of the mutilated body. Obviously, if parts of the body are missing, this should be documented.

9.9 Self-Inflicted Wounds

If the wounds are suspected of being self-inflicted, such as in cases of suicide, determine if the area is accessible to the victim and if there are any hesitation marks. The injuries may be numerous and, in many instances, the weapon will be nearby. There may also be scenarios where an individual intentionally injures themselves and reports to police that the wounds were inflicted by another person. In these cases, the absence of injury to sensitive areas (i.e., nipples, vagina) may be an indication of a false claim.

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9.10 Stab and Puncture Wounds

A stab or puncture wound is a piercing injury of the skin, and may extend through the superficial tissue and bone to involve internal organs. Stab wounds are produced by penetration of tissue by rigid, slender weapons with or without a sharp edge, but possessing a fairly sharp point. Surface appearance tends to conform in pattern to the entry point. The point of entry and the extent of the external injury cannot be interpreted as a measure of the internal damage. The point of entry may be inconspicuous; e.g., ice pick. The edges of the skin may be sharp or ragged depending on the weapon, with little or no skin bruising around the edges. If multiple wounds are present, each wound may differ even though produced by the same weapon.

10. ELECTRONIC/DIGITAL EVIDENCE

Homicide investigators rely greatly on the collection and analysis of digital evidence to identify possible suspects and their associates, determine their whereabouts around the time of the crime and locating them in order to affect arrests. Due to ever developing technology, differences in the description of services and terminology and the ability of mobile phones to transmit data via conventional cell towers and wireless networks, the following are some of the Department entities that can assist homicide investigators:

- Mobile Phone Records and Cellular Tower Analysis– LA CLEAR provides analysis of call detail records (CDR) and can chart tower locations. The FBI Cellular Analysis Survey Team (CAST) and certified task force officers (TFO) on the LAPD can perform in-field surveys and detailed analysis and mapping of cell towers as they relate to phone records.
- Electronic Devices Forensic Analysis – Investigators may contact TID Electronics Section at (213) 473-7650 and Commercial Crimes Division, Computer Unit at (213) 553-4657, for digital forensic examination of computers, hard drives, “thumb” drives memory cards, cameras and cell phones, SIM cards, portable and any other electronic device capable of storing electronic media.

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HOMICIDE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION RESPONSIBILITIES (UNIFORMED PERSONNEL)

A. Preserve Life

B. Arrest Suspect

C. Protect Scene

Handle every dead body call as a homicide until it is determined to be otherwise. Officers should proceed through the steps below until the death is determined to be accidental or suicide, or a death due to natural causes. (See first **NOTE**)

Complete Investigative Action /Statement Form, [Form 03.11.20](#), documenting all actions taken as well as names DOB, addresses, phone number and Serial No. of individuals contacted. Give the completed form(s) to the investigating officer.

NOTE: *As a guideline of potential subject matter/details to be included in their IASF, officers should refer to the Department approved [Officer's Crime Scene Statement Form](#). This form may be utilized to keep notes at the scene and later attached to their IASF once the details have been formally transferred to that form.*

Record all homicide information in the Field Officer's Notebook at the time obtained. Retain the notebook for court purposes.

61.Initial Call

- ☐ Record exact time R/C received, type of broadcast, and the incident number.

- ☐ If any possibility of life exists, apply appropriate rescue and first aid techniques and summon ambulance to scene.

62.Arrival at Scene

- ☐ Record exact time of arrival.
- ☐ If ambulance crew is not present, determine if possibility of life exists.
- ☐ Enter immediate crime scene area to view victim. (Preferably one officer-use one path.)

- ☐ Record any alterations to the crime scene that were necessary-e.g., lights, body moved-if entry into the crime scene was necessary to ascertain victim's condition.
- ☐ Protect the crime scene. Cordon off vulnerable area. Make sure the perimeter is large enough.

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NOTE: *If accidental or suicide, refer to Section #8. If natural death, refer to Section #9.*

- ☐ If victim is removed from scene by ambulance crew, ensure that one officer accompanies victim to hospital. If death is imminent, attempt to elicit dying declaration.
- ☐ If victim's clothing is removed at the hospital, the accompanying officer shall maintain control of the clothing (e.g. notify hospital personnel of a hold) and contact detectives for further instructions.
- ☐ Record names, addresses, DOB and telephone numbers of all persons at the crime scene. Remove them from immediate area and maintain control.
- ☐ If ambulance crew is present, record names, serial numbers and obtain Rescue Report, Form F-660.
- ☐ Determine if ambulance crew or any other person moved the body or any items within the crime scene. If any alterations were made, record:
 - What alteration(s) were made.
 - When made.
 - Purpose for making alteration.
 - Responsible party.

- ☐ Initiate and maintain a crime scene log, recording names, serial numbers and unit numbers of personnel at scene; time arrived and departed.
- ☐ If P/R is present, obtain valid identification, record identity and knowledge of crime.
- ☐ If suspect has just fled the crime scene prior to officer's arrival, initiate crime broadcast if information is available.
- ☐ Supplemental broadcast as necessary.

63.Preliminary Investigation

- ☐ Witness: Isolate, separate, do not permit contact with any suspect. Obtain valid I.D., complete F.I.

NOTE: *Witnesses are free to leave at any time and cannot be forced to stay at scene to provide a statement.*

- ☐ Examine entire crime scene area. (Preferably one officer). Conduct visual examination only. Use one route, caution: Do not step on evidence.
- ☐ Do not touch areas or surfaces where possibility of evidence exists. (If available, wear gloves.)

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- ☐ Do not smoke inside crime scene.
- ☐ Do not flush toilets or run water in sinks/tub.
- ☐ Record any alterations necessarily made at crime scene; e.g., unlocking doors, opening windows, turning lights on, etc., during your investigation.
- ☐ Depart from immediate crime scene using one route. (Preferably the same as entry.)
- ☐ Secure and protect the crime scene pending the arrival of follow-up investigators.

ATTENTION: Searches of an emergency nature to locate suspect(s) or additional victims can be made. However, crime scene searches for evidence shall be made by detectives, in full compliance with the provisions of the Mincey decision, requiring either consent or a search warrant.

4. Notifications

- ☐ Make notifications by telephone, if possible. (Do not use any phones located inside crime scene.)

- ☐ Record time of notification and person notified.
- ☐ Contact W/C. Apprise of situation:
 - Request a supervisor.
 - Provide a call-back telephone number where you can be contacted.
- ☐ Contact geographic detectives and be guided by their advice. (When detectives are not on-duty, request W/C to request on-call detective team.)

NOTE: *If death is an apparent "CRIB DEATH," notify the Abused Child Unit during normal business hours or the Detective Command Post for the on-call team if the Abused Child Unit is closed.*

5. Expansion of Crime Scene Control

- ☐ The senior officer assigned the radio call shall ensure that no one enters the crime scene. (Includes other officers and news media)
- ☐ Make no statements to news media. Refer to detectives.
- ☐ Do not direct comments regarding incident to spectators, etc.

EXCEPTIONS: Doctors and Fire

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**HOMICIDE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION RESPONSIBILITIES
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Department ambulance crews will be permitted entry if necessary to protect life. Record names. Clergymen shall be allowed to approach dying persons or dead bodies.

NOTE: *Persons allowed to enter crime scene shall be accompanied by an officer and cautioned regarding contamination or alteration of evidence.*

- ☐ Determine scope of general crime; e.g., outside terrain, garages, yards.
- ☐ Establish a perimeter, secure and protect general crime scene.
- ☐ Request additional units, if necessary, and assign to specific security locations.
- ☐ Request ropes, barricades, or other equipment necessary to protect scene and control spectators.

6. Assistance to Investigators

- ☐ Stand by for detectives.
- ☐ Continue to protect the crime scene until relieved by detectives.
- ☐ Administer a Gunshot Residue Test (GSR) as soon as possible.

- ☐ Assist detectives as directed by them.
- ☐ Submit Crime Scene Log to follow-up detective.
- ☐ Submit Investigative Action / Statement Form containing all information obtained by the officer during the preliminary investigation. Attach the [*Officer's Crime Scene Statement Form*](#) if utilized and all data recorded in Field Officer's notebook.

7. Suspect in Custody

- ☐ Determine if suspect is armed. Search for weapons.

NOTE: If a weapon is recovered, record description and location recovered in a notebook. Maintain custody of weapon and be guided by detective's instruction regarding booking.

- ☐ Do not attempt to unload weapons or change position of evidence.
- ☐ Handcuff suspect.
- ☐ If suspect is arrested outside of crime scene, do not return suspect to crime scene. If suspect is apprehended inside, immediately

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remove from the crime scene.

- ☐ Note and preserve evidence found on suspect-e.g., blood, debris-and advise detective.
- ☐ Do not permit suspect to wash hands or use the toilet to avoid contamination of evidence on his/her person.
- ☐ When applicable, administer Gunshot Residue Test to the suspect(s) as soon as possible.
- ☐ Do not permit any communication between suspect and other parties.
- ☐ Do not initiate interrogation phase with suspect.
- ☐ Do not Mirandize, but carefully record all spontaneous statements.
- ☐ Observe and record behavior of suspect; e.g., sweating, nervous, emotional, erratic actions, or lack of unusual behavior.
- ☐ Transport to station if directed by detectives or situation warrants.

8. Suicide and Accident

- ☐ If death appears to be suicidal or

accidental, handle as a homicide. Proceed with the homicide checklist.

- ☐ Secure immediate scene.
- ☐ Preserve all evidence; e.g., weapons, pills, vials and notes.
- ☐ Notify detectives, or Detective Command Post, as appropriate, and be guided by their advice.
- ☐ Request witnesses to stand by for detectives.
- ☐ If an ambulance was summoned, retain Rescue Report, Form F-660, for the detective.

9. Natural Deaths

- ☐ Do not remain alone with the deceased. Request a responsible relative to remain with you.
- ☐ If possible, two officers should be present.

NOTE: *Do not search the body or premises.*

- ☐ If an ambulance was summoned, retain the Rescue Report Form F-660, for attachment to the Death Report.

APPENDIX A

HOMICIDE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION RESPONSIBILITIES
(UNIFORMED PERSONNEL)

- ☐ Determine history of illness and if a doctor has been in attendance within 20 days.
- ☐ If a doctor has been in attendance, determine if he/she is willing to sign a death certificate.
- ☐ Request a supervisor. Be guided by his/her advice.
- ☐ Notify geographic detectives and be guided by their advice. (Notify Department Command Post if detectives are not available.)
- ☐ Contact Coroner's Office and provide:
 - Deceased name, sex, descent and age.
 - Location, date and time of death.
 - Who pronounced death.
 - Special requirements for Coroner personnel.
 - Officer's name and call-back number.
- ☐ Stand by until Coroner's arrival. If Coroner agrees that death is natural, complete Death Report.

NOTE: *If doctor has been in attendance and he/she is willing to sign the death certificate and a responsible person is present, no further police involvement is necessary.*

If this criteria is met, except that no responsible person is present, notify the Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center, Phone, (323) 226-7161, for removal of the body. Stand by for the County Mortuary Unit. **No Death Report is required.**

If no doctor was in attendance, *or* if a doctor **is not willing to** sign a death certificate, a Death Report is required.

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX A

HOMICIDE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION RESPONSIBILITIES (UNIFORMED PERSONNEL)

OFFICER'S CRIME SCENE STATEMENT FORM

As a guideline of potential subject matter/details at a crime scene to be included in an officer's Investigative Action/Statement Form (IASF), this form may be utilized by officers to keep notes at a scene. Once the notes are formalized onto the officers IASF, this form shall be attached to the completed IASF.

Name: _____ Serial #: _____ Unit: _____ **Complete** Incident # _____

Location of Incident: _____

1. How were you directed to the incident? (*Be specific*)

2. What time did you arrive?

3. Who was there?

4. Has the crime scene been maintained continuously since your arrival? Y/N If No, explain

5. Weather Conditions: (*Dry, clear, raining, misty, etc.*)

6. Describe the existing outdoor lighting: (*Daylight, street lamp*)

Did you view the immediate scene, have contact with the victim or witness(es)? YES or NO
If NO to all, proceed to question #21

7. Was the victim at the scene when you arrived? Y/N Where paramedics already on scene? Y/N
Describe the location and position of the victim(s) upon your arrival:

8. Did the victim make any statement in your presence? Y/N

Prepared by Investigative Analysis Section

April 27, 2021

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX A

HOMICIDE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION RESPONSIBILITIES (UNIFORMED PERSONNEL)

-
9. Was there any indication of theft? Y/N If yes, describe: (*Pockets turned out, ransacking, etc.*)
-
-
-
-
-
-
10. Was there any alteration to the crime scene or the victim? Y/N If yes, describe by whom and For what purpose. (*Paramedics/EMT, interior door forced by ofcers while clearing building, etc.*)
-
-
-
-
-
-
11. Was the victim identified? Y/N If yes, indicate how or by whom the identified was established:
-
-
-
-
12. Was there any indication of gang activity on the part of the victim? (*Tattoos, clothing*) Y/N Describe:
-
-
-
-
13. Were the victim's family/friends at the scene? Y/N At the hospital? Y/N How and from whom Did they learn of the incident and what specifically were they told had happened in that Notification?
-
-
-
-
-
-
14. Was there an interior/indoor crime scene? Y/N If yes, did you enter it? Y/N For what purpose:
-
-
-
-

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX A

HOMICIDE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION RESPONSIBILITIES (UNIFORMED PERSONNEL)

15. Describe the existing interior lighting, and which, if any, lights **you** turned on/off:
- _____
- _____
- _____
16. Describe your observations and actions upon arrival: *(Include relevant evidence, tactical considerations resulting in the alteration of evidence, points of entry and exit)*
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
17. Were any photographs taken of the scene by officers prior to the arrival of detectives/TID? Y/N
If yes, indicate for what purpose and where are they located now:
- _____
- _____
- _____
18. Was video surveillance equipment present at or near the scene? Y/N If yes, indicate:
(a.) location (b.) was it functional? (c) what is the status of the tape now?
- _____
- _____
19. Based on the initial information developed, was any immediate follow-up investigation conducted? Y/N:
- _____
20. If multiple victims transported from the scene, indicate their sex, age and descent, together with the corresponding hospital(s) where they were transported. Indicate if any were accompanied by officers:
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX B HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

Name of Victim: _____ Date of Occurrence: _____

Location of
Occurrence: _____ DR. No.: _____

Assigned
Detectives: _____ Area: _____

Investigators shall apply these cardinal rules:

- 1. Do not alter the position of evidence found at the crime scene until after photographs, measurements, fingerprints, and written documentation.**
- 2. Do not rely on memory; record all information.**

ATTENTION: The following check-off items begin with those processes that normally occur at the actual crime scene location.

ATTENTION: Searches, other than those of an emergency nature to locate suspect(s) or additional victims, will necessitate compliance with the provisions of the Mincey Decision, requiring either consent to search or a search warrant.

1. **Arrival at Crime Scene** (Write Investigator Notes below.)
Location

- ☐ Record your arrival time.
- ☐ Record outside weather/temperature conditions.
- ☐ Record outside lighting conditions.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Interview patrol unit(s) or other personnel assigned at scene. (Write Investigator Notes below.)

Determine the Following:

- ☐ Location of victim.
- ☐ Location and condition of suspect(s).
 - In custody (see Chapter II/7.2, Suspect-In-Custody, procedure).
 - Not in-custody (initiate crime broadcast as necessary).
- ☐ If other parties are injured.
 - If ambulance has been summoned.
- ☐ Present extent of crime scene protection.
- ☐ Number of witnesses present.
 - Ensure that witnesses are separated.
 - Ensure that witnesses remain available for interview.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

2. **Implement Crime Scene
Control Measures:**

(Write Investigator Notes below.)

- ☐ Identify perimeter of the crime scene.
- ☐ Update crime scene protection proceedings as necessary.
- ☐ Implement procedures to safeguard all evidence found at crime scene.
- ☐ Immediately initiate policy to limit entry into the crime scene.
- ☐ Limit movement of citizens living within the crime scene perimeter.
- ☐ Assign an officer to log names/units of personnel involved at crime scene.

ATTENTION: Entry to crime scene shall be limited to the investigators responsible for the case, and those individuals designated by the responsible investigators.

- ☐ Establish a single entry path into the crime scene area (attempt to avoid the path possibly used by the suspect).

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Record names of all parties who moved the dead body prior to and during police presence at scene. (Write Investigator Notes below.)

ATTENTION: At this juncture, the investigator may view the deceased body to inquire into the mode of death and condition of the dead body. **The body or other evidence shall not be moved at this point.**

3. Investigative Logs/and Notifications

- ☐ Initiate crime scene logs as applicable.
- ☐ Identify and record all police units and private persons involved at the crime scene.
- ☐ Record arrival/departure times of officially involved units or other parties involved.
- Notify FID of in-custody death.
 - Contact the DOC when FID is closed.
 - Notify Department Command Post (DOC) if not already contacted by patrol units, and advise of case status.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- Contact TID/FSD appropriate sections. (Write Investigator Notes below.)
- Advise TID/FSD of any special lab equipment that will be required.

NOTE: *Photography, Latent Prints and the Crime Lab are all separate sections within TID.*

- ☐ Notify Department Command Post (DOC) of any special equipment that may be needed; e.g., barricades, ladders, ropes, etc.
- ☐ Contact watch commander and update on case status.
- ☐ Contact concerned Bureau and the Administrative Information Unit, Department Command Post (DOC), as soon as practicable after the preliminary investigation (Provide information as per [LAPD Manual Section 4/710.10](#)).
- ☐ Contact the Coroner's Office.
 - Advise Coroner of location, name of deceased (if known), description of deceased, etc.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- Advise Coroner's Office of special conditions existing at scene, or equipment that will be required. (Write Investigator Notes below.)
- Advise Coroner's Office of appropriate time for their arrival.

4. Suspect Information

ATTENTION: Implement the following procedures if the suspect is arrested and is present at the crime scene:

- ☐ Safeguard all evidence found on the suspect.
 - Record who located evidence and where the evidence was found.
 - Record each person who maintains the evidence to ensure chain of evidence.
- ☐ Ensure that suspect does not wash his/her hands. Preserve Evidence.
- ☐ Ensure that FSD tests suspect(s) hands when metal weapon(s) used.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Direct that suspects not be taken inside crime scene area if arrested elsewhere. (Write Investigator Notes below.)
- ☐ Remove suspect from crime scene area if arrested there. Avoid contamination.
- ☐ Record demeanor or emotional state of suspect.
- ☐ Record spontaneous statements made by suspect.
- ☐ Remove suspect from witness or spectators who may be present.

NOTE: *Implement the following procedures if a decision is made to interrogate suspect.*

- ☐ Advise suspect of his/her constitutional rights prior to questioning.
- ☐ Determine that suspect fully understands his/her rights.
- ☐ Receive an intelligent waiver from suspect prior to questioning.
- ☐ Ensure that the interview is audio taped and/or videotaped if possible.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Advise patrol units or others not involved in the investigation to refrain from questioning suspect. (Write Investigator Notes below.)

- ☐ Advise that suspect be placed in separate holding cell when transported to station or other location.

5. Alibi Statements

- ☐ Record alibi statements made by suspect(s).
- ☐ Investigate alibi statement(s) and report results in writing.

6. Crime Scene Processing

NOTE: *The crime scene shall be the area designated by the investigator as the area which is relevant to the investigation.*

- ☐ Implement procedures to ensure there is no altering of:

- 1) The position of dead body,
- 2) The clothing worn by the deceased, or
- 3) The overall crime scene,

that takes place until full documentation is complete.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Establish a policy for crime scene integrity: (Write Investigator Notes below.)
- No smoking, eating or drinking, by anyone, is permitted inside crime scene area.
 - Do not turn water on, or flush toilets.
 - Avoid using phones located inside crime scene. Do not contaminate.
 - Record condition of lights, lamps, electric clocks, TV, radio, etc.
 - Document the changed status of all light switches, doors or windows, gates, etc., unnecessarily locked, opened, etc., to prevent entry to police.
 - Log the names of all personnel who entered crime scene area.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Implement expanded control measures in large or vulnerable crime scene areas: (Write Investigator Notes below.)
- Implement procedures to protect evidence from inclement weather (if outside).
 - Establish a single path route in outside terrain crime scenes.
 - Alert personnel to the presence of shoeprints/tire tracks.

NOTE: *Clergymen and doctors shall be permitted to approach dead or dying persons. They shall be cautioned to avoid destroying any evidence. ([LAPD Manual Section 4/210.32](#))*

7. **Crime Scene Investigative Techniques**

REMEMBER: Do not move the body or other evidence until after full documentation has been completed. This will include: Photographs, measurements, fingerprints, and written documentation.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Examine area immediately surrounding dead body for evidence particles. (Write Investigator Notes below.)
- Note and record condition of ground/floor for evidence of drag marks.
 - Evaluate position of the dead body.
 - Determine if postmortem lividity is logically located.
 - Note and record condition of victim's hands for signs of evidence.
 - Note and record creases, folds, on victim's clothing, bedding, etc.
 - Note and record condition of victim's pockets.
- ☐ Record the presence of insect life on dead body or in immediate vicinity.
- Record extent of insect damage to body.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Note and record condition of victim's soles on shoes. (Write Investigator Notes below.)
Preserve particles to determine if material corresponds to immediate ground area.
- ☐ Record and safeguard any evidence tracings observed in pants, cuffs, or other areas of clothing.
- Record the direction of fallen chairs, lamps, etc.
 - Record the direction and size of blood smears/drops.
 - Account for all bullet holes and casings.

ATTENTION: In those cases where the arrival of the ambulance unit precedes the arrival of the police and their presence was not under the direction of police officers, determine the following:

- ☐ Exact arrival time of ambulance unit.
- ☐ Extent of movement caused to dead body during examination.
- ☐ Routes taken by ambulance crew to reach the victim.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Areas touched while inside crime scene area. (Write Investigator Notes below.)
- ☐ Extent of alteration caused to light switches, doors, windows, etc., when entering location.
- ☐ Interview ambulance crew personnel in order to determine if the victim made any statements.
- ☐ Location of Rescue Report, Form F-660.

8. Evidence Processing and Control

ATTENTION: Prior to handling any evidence, you shall complete the following processes:

- (1) Photographs
- (2) Measurements
- (3) Fingerprints
- (4) Documentation

EVIDENCE:

- ☐ Ascertain that all evidence is identified.
- ☐ Establish procedures to protect all evidence.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Photograph evidence in its original position. (Write Investigator Notes below.)
- ☐ Develop chalk outlines as necessary.
- ☐ Record position/location of evidence.
- ☐ Measure all evidence to fixed and immovable points of reference.
- ☐ Record name of person discovering evidence
- ☐ Initiate proceedings for fingerprinting of evidence.

NOTE: Homicide investigators shall ensure relevancy, control, and direction in terms of ***what*** will be photographed and fingerprinted.

- ☐ Record name of person recovering evidence.
- ☐ Record name of person assigned to transport evidence to station.
- ☐ Establish procedures for safeguarding evidence pending packaging and marking.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ensure that all evidence is protected, marked and packaged in accordance with Manual regulations. (Write Investigator Notes below.)

- ☐ Ensure that the names and Serial Nos. of all persons involved in the chain of custody of evidence are recorded.

9. Coroner at Scene

Investigator Responsibilities:

- ☐ Record deputy coroner's arrival time.
- ☐ Photograph folds/creases, readily apparent on victim's clothes, prior to moving body.
- ☐ Photograph underside areas as body is turned over:
- Photograph folds/creases on clothes, bedding, etc.
- ☐ Obtain a preliminary estimate on time of death.
- ☐ Advise deputy coroner of any special precautions to victim's hands, etc. (For further evidence recovery.)

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Obtain coroner property slip. (Write Investigator Notes below.)
Attach to Death Report.

- ☐ Record deputy coroner
departure time.

**10. Conduct Detailed Search of
Crime Scene Area**

- ☐ Search for blood smears/other
evidence. Check underside of
tables, chairs, etc.
- ☐ Examine trash bins for
additional evidence.
- ☐ Search garages, attics, cellars,
roofs, yards, alleys, for
additional evidence.
- ☐ Photograph all additional
evidence located. Attempt to
develop fingerprint as
necessary.
- ☐ Assign officers to canvass
immediate area for witnesses:
- Record negative responses
also.
- ☐ Obtain an Investigative Action /
Statement Form, Form 03.11.20
from officers at the crime scene
reporting information /
responses relative to case.

APPENDIX B
HOMICIDE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

11. Crime Scene Wrap-Up

(Write Investigator Notes below.)

- ☐ Consider taking photographs of all vehicles in the immediate vicinity.
- ☐ Confirm all witness information by placing yourself at their vantage points:
 - Determine if witness could actually see the occurrence from their stated location.
- ☐ Search mail boxes/record date on mail. Maintain custody as necessary.
- ☐ Reconstruct aspects of the crime event as necessary.
- ☐ Ensure that the location is secured prior to leaving.
 - Implement procedures for continued protection of scene if continued processing is planned.
- ☐ Proceed to station for further processing of case:
 - Witness interviews.
 - Interrogation.
 - Complete Reports.

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX C ANATOMICAL DRAWING FORMS

OFFICE OF OPERATIONS

ORDER NO. 26

December 28, 1993

TO: All Personnel, Office of Operations

FROM: Director, Office of Operations

SUBJECT: ANATOMICAL DRAWING FORMS

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

PURPOSE

This Order institutes four temporary anatomical drawing forms (See Attachment) for use during criminal investigations.

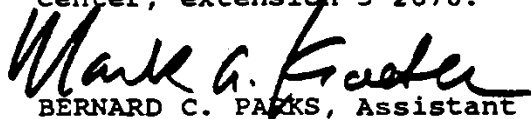
INFORMATION

Detectives have routinely used the Department of Coroner's anatomical drawing forms to take investigative notes. This practice has created confusion during court proceedings when the notes are mistakenly believed to have been written by the Coroner. To avoid this confusion the Los Angeles Police Department has developed temporary anatomical drawing forms for use by Department personnel.

PROCEDURE

Los Angeles County Department of Coroner report forms shall not be used by Department personnel for taking investigative notes. The attached temporary forms shall be used for this purpose until permanent Department forms are available. Detectives are reminded to include the DR number, the victim's name, and the detective's name and serial number on the forms.

The attached forms shall be used as master copies for duplication until permanent forms are developed. Additional master copies are available at Investigative Analysis Section, Room 810, Parker Center, extension 5-2676.



BERNARD C. PARKS, Assistant Chief
Director
Office of Operations

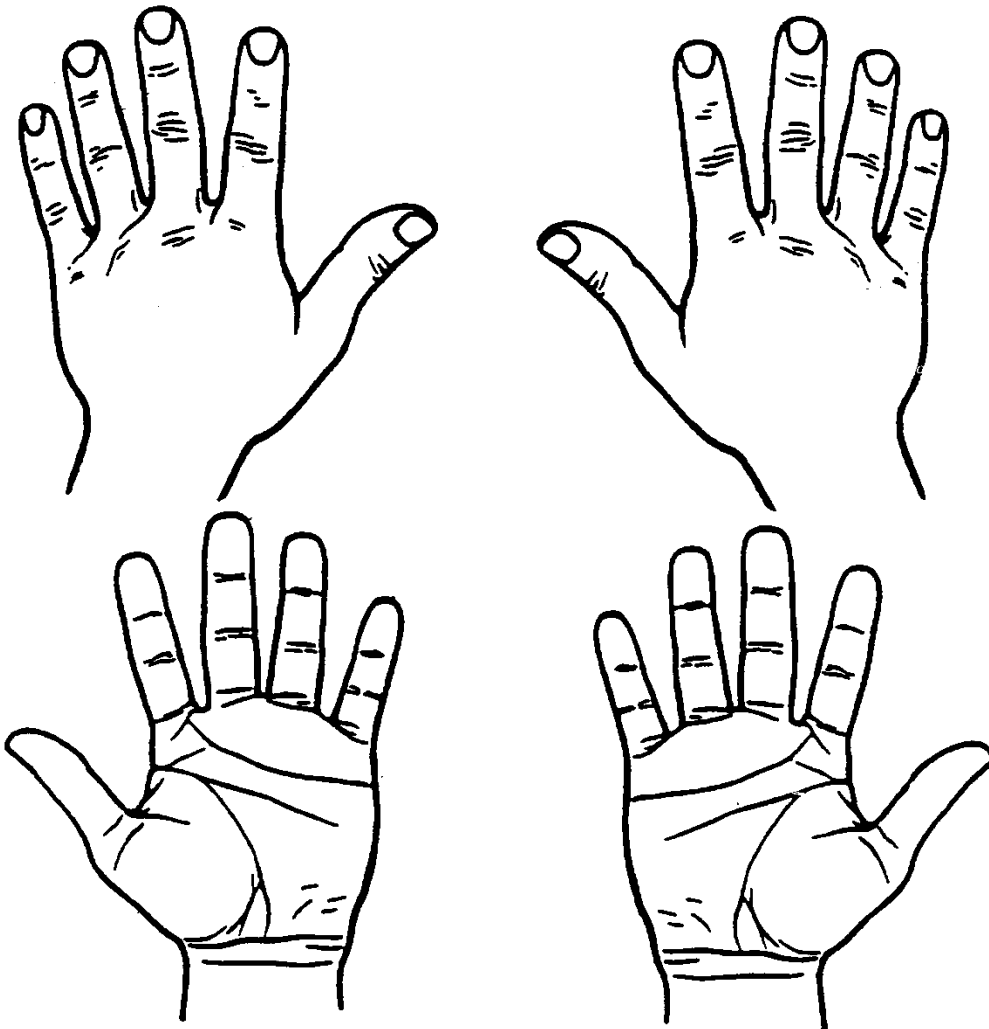
Attachments

DISTRIBUTION "0"

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX C ANATOMICAL DRAWING FORMS

DR# _____



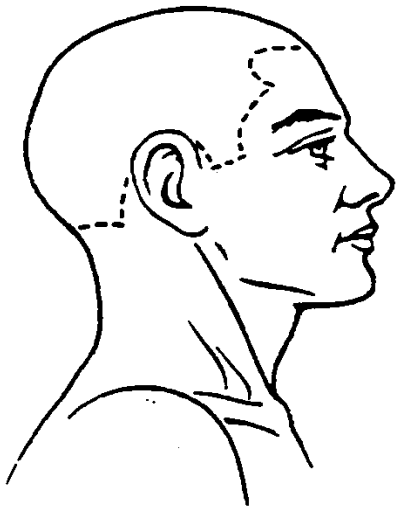
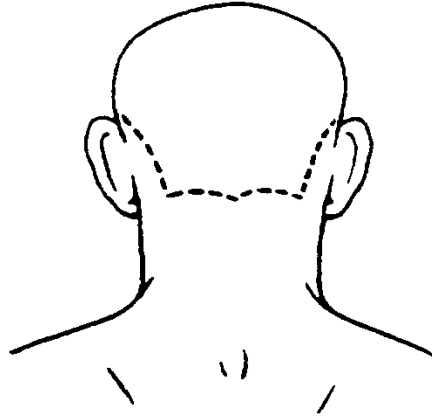
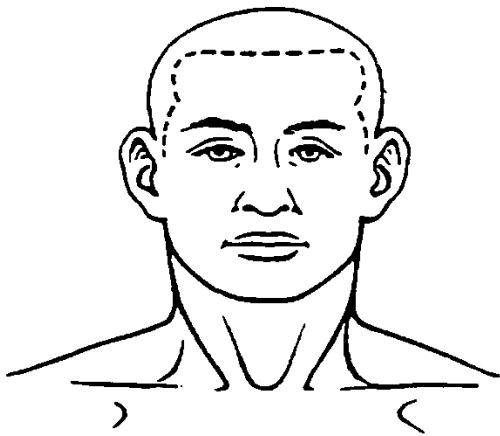
DECEDENT _____

DETECTIVE _____ SERIAL# _____

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX C ANATOMICAL DRAWING FORMS

DR# _____



DECEDENT _____

DETECTIVE _____

SERIAL # _____

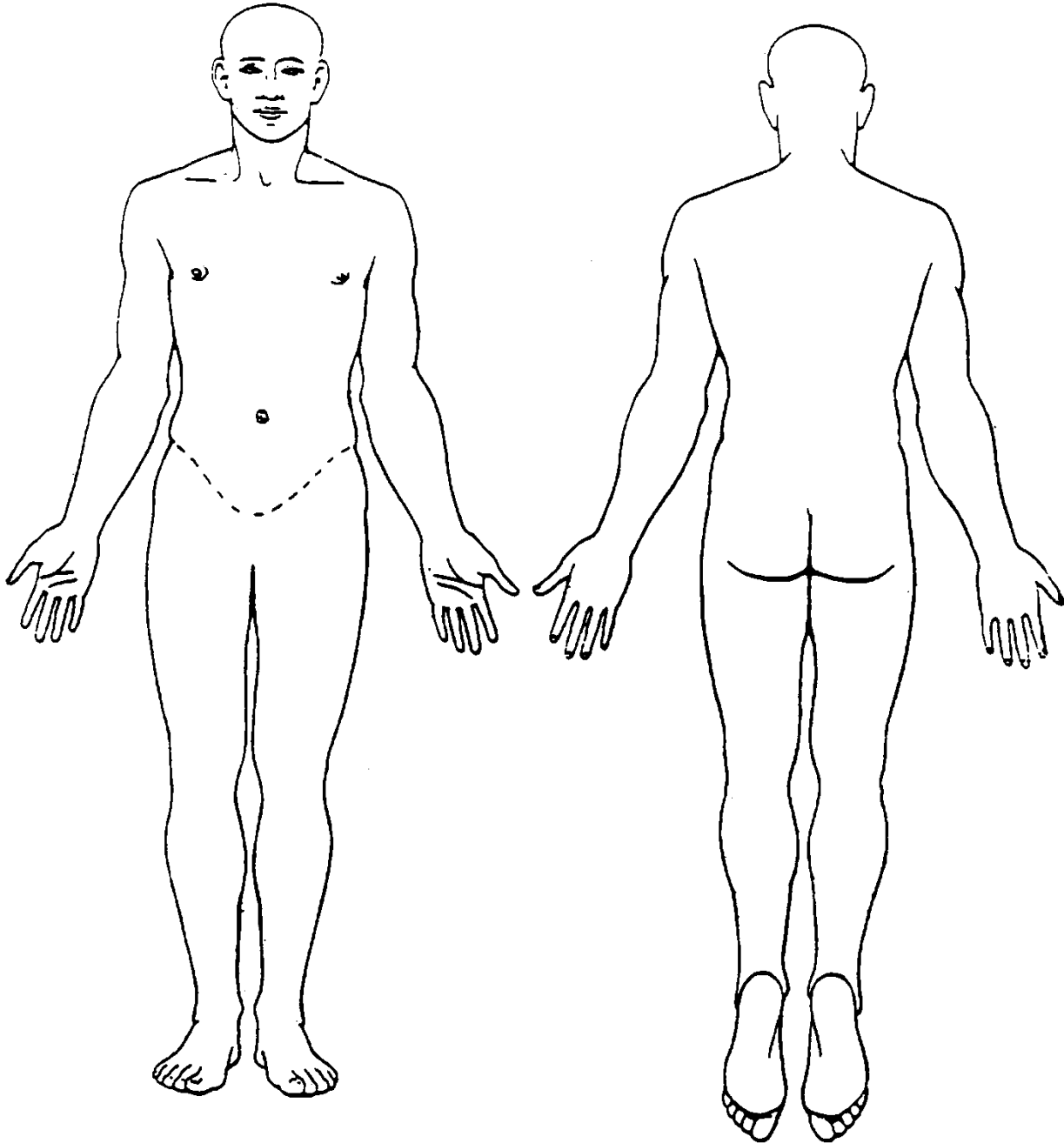
Prepared by Investigative Analysis Section

April 27, 2021

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX C ANATOMICAL DRAWING FORMS

DR # _____



DECEDENT _____

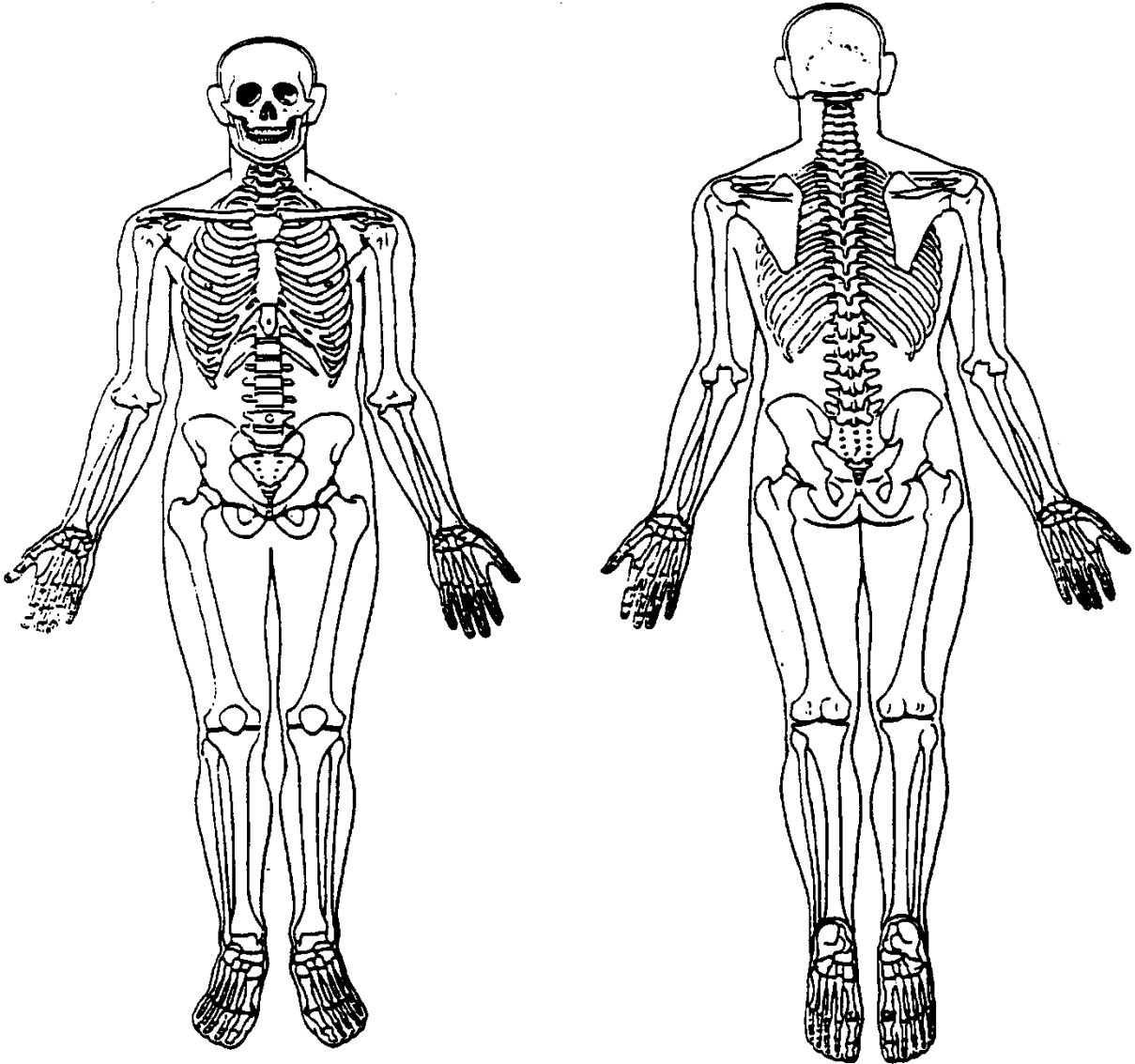
DETECTIVE _____

SERIAL # _____

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX C ANATOMICAL DRAWING FORMS

DR. _____



DECEDENT _____

DETECTIVE _____

SERIAL # _____

Prepared by Investigative Analysis Section

April 27, 2021

APPENDIX D

MURDER INVESTIGATION PROGRESS REPORT FORMAT

Murder Investigation Progress Report

Page 2

- b. If the suspect has no prior arrest record, include this information under this heading.
- c. Suspect's residence and business addresses and any other location at which he may be found (unless this information appears elsewhere in the progress report).
- d. If the suspect has fled to a foreign country, and a prosecution may be initiated in that country, maintain required documents (birth/baptismal certificate, etc.) in Murder Book or include information which would allow foreign authorities to establish foreign citizenship (parents' full names, date and place of birth, date and place of baptism). Include same documentation for victim.

II. CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION

Time police first notified and time of the investigator's arrival at crime scene.

A. Exterior characteristics of crime scene. In narrative form, describe:

- 1. Weather conditions (cloudy, full moon, rain, etc.).
- 2. Lighting and visibility.
- 3. Type of structure and/or terrain involved (single family wood frame residence, parking lot, alley, hillside, etc.).
- 4. Other exterior characteristics considered relevant to the case (industrial noises which prevented victim's screams from being heard, etc.).
- 5. General location and brief description of significant evidence found (prints, blood stains, weapons, etc.).

B. Interior characteristics of crime scene (if applicable). In narrative form, describe:

APPENDIX D
MURDER INVESTIGATION PROGRESS REPORT FORMAT

Murder Investigation Progress Report

Page 3

1. The involved room(s) including temperature.
 2. Lights, heater, radio, TV on or off, stopped clocks.
 3. Evidence of persons other than the victim having been at the crime scene (different brands of cigarettes, multiple table settings, more than one bed in use, personal effects, etc.).
 4. Indications of ransacking or altercation.
 5. Point of entry and exit.
 6. Trademarks of suspect.
 7. Other significant or relevant crime scene characteristics.
 8. General location and brief description of significant evidence found (prints, bloodstains, weapons, etc.).
- C. Characteristics of body. In narrative form, describe:
1. Location and position.
 2. Appearance (bloody, beaten, portions missing, etc.).
 3. Preliminary observations of wounds and trauma.
 4. Condition (decomposition, lividity, rigor mortis, ambient and liver temperature, petechial hemorrhage, etc.).
 5. Victim's clothing and bedding (direction of folds and creases, tears, holes caused by weapons, etc.).
- D. Weapons used or suspected of being used to commit the murder. Include those not in custody. Include registration and stolen information on firearms.

III. FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATION

A chronological narrative of the investigation. Include the following:

APPENDIX D
MURDER INVESTIGATION PROGRESS REPORT FORMAT

Murder Investigation Progress Report

Page 4

- A. Circumstances surrounding the discovery of the victim, who made the discovery and who notified police.
- B. Date, time and location of events relating to and preceding the crime.
- C. Activities of the victim, suspect and witnesses immediately prior to the crime.
- D. How the crime occurred (if known).
- E. Results of investigative leads developed from:
 - 1. Physical evidence.
 - 2. Witnesses or other persons.
 - 3. Crime lab analysis of evidence.
- F. Results of search warrants—Briefly state the date and time of the execution, the location searched and the evidence found. Explain any significant circumstances of the execution. The search warrant and affidavit shall be maintained in the Murder Book.
- G. Brief description of evidence which may assist in the arrest of the suspect or connect the suspect to the crime.
- H. Investigative processes completed and results (computer queries, files checked, agencies contacted, police bulletins, etc.).
- I. Vehicles related to the investigation. It is not necessary to list every vehicle parked on the street; however, this information should be maintained in the Murder Book.
- J. Brief synopsis of significant suspect/witness/victim statements that have assisted in the follow-up investigation (the “meat of the interview”). Do not include witnesses’ addresses and telephone numbers. If a statement is taped, provide written summary of statement and tape identification number. If a suspect has made no statement or has not been interviewed, include this information under this heading.

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX D MURDER INVESTIGATION PROGRESS REPORT FORMAT

Murder Investigation Progress Report

Page 5

K. Injury and autopsy information (brief description of cause of death).

L. Additional information—Connecting reports, etc.

Any information not included under previous headings which is pertinent to the case or which ties together loose ends shall be included in this section. Include under this heading a list of all significant reports/documents. This list serves as a checklist of reports/documents maintained in the Murder Book.

If the investigator has any personal opinions regarding some aspect of the case, these opinions shall be supported by evidence or other corroboration.

Personal opinions without foundation are of little value and may be detrimental to future investigative efforts. Personal opinions should not be relied upon too heavily in developing investigative conclusions.

IV. “THINGS TO DO”

Brief list of planned investigative steps. This list must be kept current and updated as needed.

Approved:

Supervisor

Detective

Section Officer-in-Charge

Detective

Commanding Officer
(Operations Support Division or specialized detective division)

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX E SECURITY HOLD REQUEST LETTER TO CORONER / SECURITY HOLD POLICY

LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT



MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

P. O. Box 30158
Los Angeles, Calif. 90030
Telephone: [Phone number]
TDD: (877) 275-5273
Reference No. [XX.XX]

ERIC GARCETTI
Mayor

[Current date]

Los Angeles Coroner's Office
1104 N. Mission Road
Los Angeles, CA 90033

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to ask that a confidential security hold be placed on the autopsy of [Victim's full name], Coroner's Case No. [Case No.]. [Victim's name] was killed on [Day and date], in the City of Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Police Department, [Division or entity] is investigating the murder. It is essential for the investigation that the findings are not made public, as they would greatly damage the final outcome of the investigation.

Thank you for your support. Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Detective [Name] at [Area code and phone number].

Very truly yours,

MICHEL R. MOORE
Chief of Police

[COMMANDING OFFICER'S NAME, Rank]
Commanding Officer
[Division or entity]

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX E SECURITY HOLD REQUEST LETTER TO CORONER / SECURITY HOLD POLICY



DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL EXAMINER-CORONER
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Administrative/Executive Policy Manual



Policy # 2044, Rev 1
Security Hold Policy

PURPOSE:

This policy establishes a uniform procedure and standards for requests for or releases of a security hold ("hold") of a Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner ("Department") case file to withhold or delay disclosure of records and/or information to the public (including the decedent's family members) or the media. This policy applies for requests from law enforcement agencies, County Counsel, the District Attorney's office, the Public Defender's office, the Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner, other governmental agencies, or a qualifying member of the family of a child under 18 years of age (as defined in Code of Civil Procedure section 130) ("Requestor").


POLICY:

The Department shall independently evaluate a request for a hold in accordance with relevant federal, state, and local laws, and this policy.¹ In determining whether, and under what conditions, to grant a request, the Department should strive to balance the need to support the administration of justice (i.e., to ensure the successful completion of an investigation, and/or maintain the confidentiality of potential witnesses or informants when appropriate) with the interests of the public and the decedent's surviving family member(s) in the public disclosure of the records.

All information and documents associated with the case file, including photographs, video recordings, negatives, and X-rays, shall be encompassed within the hold. However, unless specifically requested, the scope of a hold does not apply to the following information:

- decedent's name
- case number
- age
- race
- sex
- date of birth
- date of death
- last known city of residence
- cause or manner of death

¹ This policy does not apply to a security hold that is ordered by a state or federal court having appropriate jurisdiction. In such case, the scope of the security hold is subject to the provisions of the court order. County Counsel should be notified whenever a court order is issued for a hold on, and its removal from, a case file.

Approved:  Page 1 of 16 Effective Date: August 24, 2020
Jonathan R. Lucas, M.D.
Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner

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Note: A hold request shall not apply to data required to be submitted in order to enter a death in the State's Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS).

The status of a hold should be periodically checked by the Public Services Division. A hold shall remain in effect until released by the Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner or his/her designee.

Employees who temporarily release a hold from a case are responsible for reinstating the hold. The time and date of release and reinstatement of the hold should be documented in Case Notes.

A hold does not preclude the Department from sharing information or documents in a case file with County Counsel or its designated legal counsel.

PROCEDURE:

A. Procedures Applicable to All Requests

1. All requests for a hold shall be immediately referred to the Media/Public Information Officer ("Media/PIO") at (323) 343-0783, and via E-mail at pio@coroner.lacounty.gov and copied to the Supervising Coroner Investigator group E-mail (edl-doc_supervisinginvestigators@coroner.lacounty.gov).

Referrals that are communicated after business hours or on weekends and holidays are to be immediately referred to the Supervising Coroner Investigator at (323) 343-0722 and to the PIO and Supervising Coroner Investigator group E-mails.

2. The Requestor must submit (e.g., by fax, email, or personal delivery) a written hold request on agency letterhead stationary signed by supervisory personnel of the Requestor's agency, e.g., Sergeant, Lieutenant, or other supervisor. All verbal requests for a hold shall be timely (i.e., within 2-4 calendar days) followed by a written request from the Requestor.
3. The Media/PIO or Supervising Coroner Investigator shall notify the Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner, all division chiefs, the Media/PIO, and other staff of the hold request through a security hold group E-mail, and document the request in a Case Notes entry. The following shall be included in the E-mail notification and Case Notes:
 - a. The Requestor's name, agency, and contact number;
 - b. Date and time of the request;
 - c. Whether the death is related to an officer-involved² use of force incident; and

² All further references to "officer" includes a peace officer and custodial officer.

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- d. An attached original/copy of the hold request letter to Case Notes. The hold request letter should contain the Requestor's reason for the hold request and specific details supporting the request. It is helpful to reiterate this information in Case Notes directly.
 4. Requests for a hold or release by a Deputy Medical Examiner shall be submitted directly to, and be approved by, the Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner or his/her designee.
 5. The Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner or his/her designee shall review the request, evaluate the facts and circumstances then known, and make a determination on the request. If, in the discretion of the Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner or his/her designee, additional facts are necessary for an adequate evaluation of the hold request, appropriate inquiry should be performed. The rationale for the determination whether to issue a hold or not should be documented in Case Notes or a separate document, and the Requestor should be notified of the decision or other instruction, if any.
 6. In the case of the death of a child under 18 years of age who is killed as a result of a criminal act, a qualifying family member of the deceased child may request, in writing, that the autopsy report, all evidence, and documents associated with the Department's investigative file be sealed and not disclosed, as provided under Code of Civil Procedure section 130.
 7. The Public Services Division shall review the file for its completeness and physically secure the file within Public Services Division.
 8. Computer Managers of the CME system shall be advised of any file being placed on hold.

B. Additional Procedures Applicable to Officer-Involved Use of Force Incidents

1. In the case of a request for a hold involving a death related to an officer-involved use of force incident, the Public Services Division shall send a "Response to Agency Request for Security Hold/Officer Involved Incident" (attached) to the Requestor.
2. The Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner or his/her designee shall review the request, evaluate the facts and circumstances then known, and make a determination whether to grant the request based on this Policy and Penal Code section 832.7 (see Standards to be Applied, below; and Appendix A).

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PERIODIC STATUS REVIEW AND RELEASE

A. Procedures Applicable to All Requests

1. A hold will remain in effect until the Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner or his/her designee orders its release.
2. The Public Services Division should periodically perform a status check -- approximately every six months from the date of the incident -- on the hold through a review of Case Notes and CME, and/or any other inquiries as deemed necessary to update the hold status.
3. A hold is released following an evaluation by the Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner or his/her designee as provided below, and may follow the Requestor's written request for removal of the hold.
4. In the case of a sealed file under Code of Civil Procedure section 130, the autopsy report, evidence, and documents associated with the investigative file may be disclosed as provided in that statute³ to the following:
 - a. To law enforcement, prosecutorial agencies and experts hired by those agencies, public social services agencies, child death review teams, or the hospital that treated the child immediately before death;
 - b. To the defendant and the defense team in the course of criminal proceedings or related habeas proceedings; or
 - c. To civil litigants in a cause of action related to the victim's death with a court order upon a showing of good cause and proper notice under Code of Civil Procedure section 129.
5. The release of a hold should be communicated to the security hold group via E-mail.
6. The Public Services Division shall update the CME case management system and Case Notes with documentation of the hold release. Any requests for copies of the autopsy report, or case file as appropriate, may then be honored, subject to being redacted under applicable law.

B. Additional Procedures Applicable to Officer-Involved Use of Force Incidents

1. As to cases involving a death related to an officer-involved use of force, the Department shall comply with the provisions of Penal Code section 832.7, which provides additional timelines and the required information needed to support any extension(s) of the hold (see Standards to be Applied, below; and Appendix A). Any extension of the hold beyond the statutorily defined timelines shall be initiated by a written request from the Requestor detailing the reasons for the extension. The

³ See Code of Civ. Proc., § 130, subd. (a)(1)-(a)(3). Section 130 provides for other acceptable disclosures that require court intervention or court orders.

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Department may, but is not required to, initiate contact with the Requestor to obtain detailed, updated information to support a further extension of the hold under Penal Code section 832.7.

2. The Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner or his/her designee shall review and evaluate all information submitted by the Requestor in the request for an extension of the hold and may request additional information from the Requestor. The Department may release the hold if there are no pending requests for extensions from the Requestor or the information received from the Requestor to support the extension is insufficient or inadequate.
3. In determining whether the interest in extending the hold clearly outweighs the public interest in releasing the hold, the Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner or his/her designee may seek, receive, and consider input from any inspector general or independent oversight agency having jurisdiction over the law enforcement agency employing the officer(s) involved in the use of force.

STANDARDS TO BE APPLIED

A. General Standards Applicable to All Requests

In determining whether a request for a hold should be granted, the Department should, based on information known at the time, consider the following factors in weighing whether the public interest in not disclosing the document(s) and/or information⁴ clearly outweighs the public interest in its public disclosure, in compliance with applicable law:⁵

- a. Whether disclosure reveals the identity and/or location of a confidential witness(es) or informant(s);⁶
- b. Whether any confidential witness(es) or informant(s) has consented to the release of the document(s) or information;⁷

⁴ Records that are created and maintained by a public agency are public records subject to the California Public Records Act (Govt. Code, § 6250, *et seq.*). Public records that may be exempt from disclosure include the following categories of records under Government Code section 6254: (1) records of investigations and investigatory files compiled by a local agency for law enforcement purposes (Govt. Code, § 6254, subd. (f)); and (2) records that are exempt or prohibited from disclosure under federal or state law, including the provisions of the Evidence Code relating to privilege (Govt. Code, § 6254, subd. (k).)

⁵ E.g., A public entity has a privilege to refuse disclosure of, and to prevent another from disclosing, official information obtained in confidence (as defined in Evidence Code section 1040, subdivision (a)), if such disclosure is against the public interest because the necessity for preserving confidentiality outweighs the necessity for disclosure in the interest of justice. (Evid. Code, § 1040, subd. (b)(2).)

⁶ See Govt. Code, § 6254, subd. (f).

⁷ Id.

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- c. Whether disclosure potentially endangers the safety of a witness, informant, or other person involved in the investigation;⁸
- d. Whether disclosure potentially endangers the successful completion of the investigation or related investigation;⁹
- e. Whether there is an active or pending investigation concerning the death of the decedent;
- f. Whether disclosure reveals confidential information acquired by a public employee in the course of his/her duty;¹⁰
- g. Whether disclosure violates a reasonable expectation of privacy of a subject or person referenced in the document(s) or information;¹¹ and/or
- h. Any other facts relevant to whether the public interest in non-disclosure clearly outweighs the public interest in disclosure.¹²

B. Additional Standards Applicable to Officer-Involved Use of Force Incidents - Penal Code Section 832.7

In determining whether a request for a hold or for release/disclosure of records and/or information in a case in which the death involved a use of force by an officer, the Department must, based on all information known at the time, consider the following additional standards and deadlines set forth in Penal Code section 832.7, subdivision (b):¹³

1. The following records must be released and/or disclosed: autopsy reports; all investigative reports; photographic, audio, and video evidence; transcripts or recordings of interviews; and all materials compiled and presented for review to the district attorney or other person/government agency charged with determining whether criminal charges will be filed against an officer in connection with the incident resulting in death. The Department must redact a released and/or disclosed record for only the following purposes:
 - a. To remove personal data or information about the peace officer's family members;
 - b. To preserve the anonymity of complainants and witnesses;

⁸ Id.

⁹ Id.

¹⁰ Evid. Code, § 1040.

¹¹ E.g., Govt. Code, § 6254, subd. (f)(4)(B)(i); Code Civ. Proc., § 129.

¹² Govt. Code, § 6255.

¹³ These additional standards and deadlines do not apply to pending cases being investigated by a grand jury, a district attorney's office, or the Attorney General's office. (Pen. Code, § 832.7, subd. (a).)

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- c. To protect confidential medical, financial, private, or other information protected under federal law; or
- d. Where there is a specific, articulable, and particularized reason to believe that disclosure would pose a significant danger to the physical safety of the officer, or another person;¹⁴ or
- e. Where the detailed facts indicate that the public interest served by not disclosing the information clearly outweighs the public interest served by disclosure of the information.¹⁵ Factors that may be considered include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Factual details of the law enforcement investigation that have been released to the public;
 - 2) Factual details of the incident that have been released to the public by the involved officer(s) or their representative(s);
 - 3) Factual details of the incident that have been released by third-parties who were involved in the incident; or
 - 4) Whether the results or report of another (independent) autopsy examination have been released to the public.
2. During an active or pending criminal investigation, the Department may delay disclosure for up to 60 days from the date the use of force occurred (the "incident date"), or until the district attorney determines whether to file criminal charges related to the use of force,¹⁶ whichever occurs earlier. The Department shall document in Case Notes the specific basis for the extension, including how the interest in delaying disclosure clearly outweighs the public interest in disclosure, and the estimated date for disclosure of the withheld information.
3. After 60 days from the incident date, the Department may continue to delay disclosure if the disclosure could reasonably be expected to interfere with a criminal enforcement proceeding against an officer who used the force. The Department shall document in Case Notes or a separate document the specific basis for the extension, including how disclosure could reasonably be expected to interfere with a criminal enforcement proceeding, and the estimated date for disclosure. Extension requests must be evaluated at 180-day intervals, until: (a) the specific basis for the hold has been resolved; (b) when the investigation or proceeding is no longer active;¹⁷ or (c) 18 months after the incident date, whichever occurs sooner.

¹⁴ See Pen. Code, § 832.7, subd. (b)(5).

¹⁵ Pen. Code, § 832.7, subd. (b)(6).

¹⁶ The district attorney's decision may relate to the filing of criminal charges either against the officer who used the force or someone other than the officer who used the force. (See Pen. Code, § 832.7, subd. (b)(7)(A)(ii)-(iii).)

¹⁷ Circumstances include when a verdict is rendered at trial, or when a plea of guilty or no contest is entered. (Pen. Code, § 832.7, subd. (b)(7)(B).)

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4. If there is a criminal enforcement proceeding pending against someone other than the officer who used force, the disclosure of records may be delayed longer than 18 months only if clear and convincing evidence shows that the interest in preventing prejudice to the active and ongoing criminal investigation or proceeding outweighs the public interest in prompt disclosure of the records.
 5. During an administrative investigation into the use-of-force incident, the Department may delay disclosure until: (a) the investigating law enforcement agency determines whether the use of force violated a law or agency policy, but no longer than 180 days after the employing agency's discovery (by the person authorized to initiate an investigation at the agency) of the use of force or allegation of use of force; or (b) 30 days after the close of any criminal investigation related to the officer's use of force, whichever is later.¹⁸
 6. The release of such records shall not include photographs, facsimiles, facsimiles of photographs, or video recordings that depict any portion of the bodily remains of the decedent, as provided by Code of Civil Procedure section 129.
 7. In determining whether the interest in granting or extending the hold clearly outweighs the public interest in releasing the hold, the Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner or his/her designee may seek, receive, and consider input from any inspector general or independent oversight agency having jurisdiction over the law enforcement agency employing the officer(s) involved in the use of force.

¹⁸ Pen. Code, § 832.7, subd. (b)(7)(C).

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Government Code Section 6254

Government Code Section 6254, provides as follows in relevant part:

"Except as provided in Sections 6254.7 and 6254.13, this chapter does not require the disclosure of any of the following records:

- (f) Records of complaints to, or investigations conducted by, or records of intelligence information or security procedures of, ... or any investigatory or security files compiled by ... any investigatory or security files compiled by any other state or local agency for correctional, law enforcement, or licensing purposes. However, state and local law enforcement agencies shall disclose the names and addresses of persons involved in, or witnesses other than confidential informants to, the incident, the description of any property involved, the date, time, and location of the incident, all diagrams, statements of the parties involved in the incident, the statements of all witnesses, other than confidential informants, to the victims of an incident, or an authorized representative thereof, an insurance carrier against which a claim has been or might be made, and any person suffering bodily injury or property damage or loss, as the result of the incident caused by arson, burglary, fire, explosion, larceny, robbery, carjacking, vandalism, vehicle theft, or a crime as defined by subdivision (b) of Section 13951, unless the disclosure would endanger the safety of a witness or other person involved in the investigation, or unless disclosure would endanger the successful completion of the investigation or a related investigation. However, this subdivision does not require the disclosure of that portion of those investigative files that reflects the analysis or conclusions of the investigating officer.

Evidence Code Section 1040

In addition to Government Code Section 6254, subdivision (f), Evidence Code Section 1040 authorizes the District Attorney to prevent disclosure of certain official information and records.

Evidence Code Section 1040 provides as follows:

- (a) As used in this section, "official information" means information acquired in confidence by a public employee in the course of his or her duty and not open, or officially disclosed, to the public prior to the time the claim of privilege is made.
- (b) A public entity has a privilege to refuse to disclose official information, and to prevent another from disclosing official information, if the privilege is claimed by a person authorized by the public entity to do so and either of the following apply:
 - (1) Disclosure is forbidden by an act of the Congress of the United States or a statute of this state.
 - (2) Disclosure of the information is against the public interest because there is a necessity for preserving the confidentiality of the information that outweighs the necessity for disclosure in the interest of justice; but no privilege may be claimed under this paragraph if any person authorized to do so has consented that the information be disclosed in the proceeding. In

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determining whether disclosure of the information is against the public interest, the interest of the public entity as a party in the outcome of the proceeding may not be considered.

Since the District Attorney is a state constitutional officer with specific authority to control the conduct of criminal investigations, under Evidence Code Section 1040, that office can preclude the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner from releasing investigative autopsy reports if the release would jeopardize an ongoing criminal investigation.

Accordingly, under the provisions of the California Public Records Act and Section 1040 of the Evidence Code, the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner must defer to the requests of the District Attorney, and that the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner withhold all applicable investigative autopsy reports from disclosure until they have completed their criminal investigation.

Penal Code Section 832.7

Penal Code Section 832.7, provides as follows:

- (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b), the personnel records of peace officers and custodial officers and records maintained by any state or local agency pursuant to Section 832.5, or information obtained from these records, are confidential and shall not be disclosed in any criminal or civil proceeding except by discovery pursuant to Sections 1043 and 1046 of the Evidence Code. This section shall not apply to investigations or proceedings concerning the conduct of peace officers or custodial officers, or an agency or department that employs those officers, conducted by a grand jury, a district attorney's office, or the Attorney General's office.
- (b)
 - (1) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), subdivision (f) of Section 6254 of the Government Code, or any other law, the following peace officer or custodial officer personnel records and records maintained by any state or local agency shall not be confidential and shall be made available for public inspection pursuant to the California Public Records Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 6250) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code):
 - (A) A record relating to the report, investigation, or findings of any of the following:
 - (i) An incident involving the discharge of a firearm at a person by a peace officer or custodial officer.
 - (ii) An incident in which the use of force by a peace officer or custodial officer against a person resulted in death, or in great bodily injury.
 - (B)
 - (i) Any record relating to an incident in which a sustained finding was made by any law enforcement agency or oversight agency that a peace officer or custodial officer engaged in sexual assault involving a member of the public.
 - (ii) As used in this subparagraph, "sexual assault" means the commission or attempted initiation of a sexual act with a member of the public by means of force, threat, coercion, extortion, offer of leniency or other official favor, or under the color of

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authority. For purposes of this definition, the propositioning for or commission of any sexual act while on duty is considered a sexual assault.

- (iii) As used in this subparagraph, "member of the public" means any person not employed by the officer's employing agency and includes any participant in a cadet, explorer, or other youth program affiliated with the agency.
- (C) Any record relating to an incident in which a sustained finding was made by any law enforcement agency or oversight agency of dishonesty by a peace officer or custodial officer directly relating to the reporting, investigation, or prosecution of a crime, or directly relating to the reporting of, or investigation of misconduct by, another peace officer or custodial officer, including, but not limited to, any sustained finding of perjury, false statements, filing false reports, destruction, falsifying, or concealing of evidence.
- (2) Records that shall be released pursuant to this subdivision include all investigative reports; photographic, audio, and video evidence; transcripts or recordings of interviews; autopsy reports; all materials compiled and presented for review to the district attorney or to any person or body charged with determining whether to file criminal charges against an officer in connection with an incident, or whether the officer's action was consistent with law and agency policy for purposes of discipline or administrative action, or what discipline to impose or corrective action to take; documents setting forth findings or recommended findings; and copies of disciplinary records relating to the incident, including any letters of intent to impose discipline, any documents reflecting modifications of discipline due to the Skelly or grievance process, and letters indicating final imposition of discipline or other documentation reflecting implementation of corrective action.
- (3) A record from a separate and prior investigation or assessment of a separate incident shall not be released unless it is independently subject to disclosure pursuant to this subdivision.
- (4) If an investigation or incident involves multiple officers, information about allegations of misconduct by, or the analysis or disposition of an investigation of, an officer shall not be released pursuant to subparagraph (B) or (C) of paragraph (1), unless it relates to a sustained finding against that officer. However, factual information about that action of an officer during an incident, or the statements of an officer about an incident, shall be released if they are relevant to a sustained finding against another officer that is subject to release pursuant to subparagraph (B) or (C) of paragraph (1).
- (5) An agency shall redact a record disclosed pursuant to this section only for any of the following purposes:
 - (A) To remove personal data or information, such as a home address, telephone number, or identities of family members, other than the names and work-related information of peace and custodial officers.
 - (B) To preserve the anonymity of complainants and witnesses.
 - (C) To protect confidential medical, financial, or other information of which disclosure is specifically prohibited by federal law or would cause an unwarranted invasion of personal

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privacy that clearly outweighs the strong public interest in records about misconduct and serious use of force by peace officers and custodial officers.

- (D) Where there is a specific, articulable, and particularized reason to believe that disclosure of the record would pose a significant danger to the physical safety of the peace officer, custodial officer, or another person.
- (6) Notwithstanding paragraph (5), an agency may redact a record disclosed pursuant to this section, including personal identifying information, where, on the facts of the particular case, the public interest served by not disclosing the information clearly outweighs the public interest served by disclosure of the information.
- (7) An agency may withhold a record of an incident described in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) that is the subject of an active criminal or administrative investigation, in accordance with any of the following:
- (A)
- (i) During an active criminal investigation, disclosure may be delayed for up to 60 days from the date the use of force occurred or until the district attorney determines whether to file criminal charges related to the use of force, whichever occurs sooner. If an agency delays disclosure pursuant to this clause, the agency shall provide, in writing, the specific basis for the agency's determination that the interest in delaying disclosure clearly outweighs the public interest in disclosure. This writing shall include the estimated date for disclosure of the withheld information.
 - (ii) After 60 days from the use of force, the agency may continue to delay the disclosure of records or information if the disclosure could reasonably be expected to interfere with a criminal enforcement proceeding against an officer who used the force. If an agency delays disclosure pursuant to this clause, the agency shall, at 180-day intervals as necessary, provide, in writing, the specific basis for the agency's determination that disclosure could reasonably be expected to interfere with a criminal enforcement proceeding. The writing shall include the estimated date for the disclosure of the withheld information. Information withheld by the agency shall be disclosed when the specific basis for withholding is resolved, when the investigation or proceeding is no longer active, or by no later than 18 months after the date of the incident, whichever occurs sooner.
 - (iii) After 60 days from the use of force, the agency may continue to delay the disclosure of records or information if the disclosure could reasonably be expected to interfere with a criminal enforcement proceeding against someone other than the officer who used the force. If an agency delays disclosure under this clause, the agency shall, at 180-day intervals, provide, in writing, the specific basis why disclosure could reasonably be expected to interfere with a criminal enforcement proceeding, and shall provide an estimated date for the disclosure of the withheld information. Information withheld by the agency shall be disclosed when the specific basis for withholding is resolved, when the investigation or proceeding is no longer active, or by no later than 18 months after the date of the incident, whichever occurs sooner, unless extraordinary circumstances warrant continued delay due to the ongoing criminal investigation or proceeding. In that case, the agency must show by clear and convincing evidence that the interest in

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preventing prejudice to the active and ongoing criminal investigation or proceeding outweighs the public interest in prompt disclosure of records about use of serious force by peace officers and custodial officers. The agency shall release all information subject to disclosure that does not cause substantial prejudice, including any documents that have otherwise become available.

- (iv) In an action to compel disclosure brought pursuant to Section 6258 of the Government Code, an agency may justify delay by filing an application to seal the basis for withholding, in accordance with Rule 2.550 of the California Rules of Court, or any successor rule thereto, if disclosure of the written basis itself would impact a privilege or compromise a pending investigation.
- (B) If criminal charges are filed related to the incident in which force was used, the agency may delay the disclosure of records or information until a verdict on those charges is returned at trial or, if a plea of guilty or no contest is entered, the time to withdraw the plea pursuant to Section 1018.
- (C) During an administrative investigation into an incident described in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1), the agency may delay the disclosure of records or information until the investigating agency determines whether the use of force violated a law or agency policy, but no longer than 180 days after the date of the employing agency's discovery of the use of force, or allegation of use of force, by a person authorized to initiate an investigation, or 30 days after the close of any criminal investigation related to the peace officer or custodial officer's use of force, whichever is later.
- (8) A record of a civilian complaint, or the investigations, findings, or dispositions of that complaint, shall not be released pursuant to this section if the complaint is frivolous, as defined in Section 128.5 of the Code of Civil Procedure, or if the complaint is unfounded.
- (c) Notwithstanding subdivisions (a) and (b), a department or agency shall release to the complaining party a copy of his or her own statements at the time the complaint is filed.
- (d) Notwithstanding subdivisions (a) and (b), a department or agency that employs peace or custodial officers may disseminate data regarding the number, type, or disposition of complaints (sustained, not sustained, exonerated, or unfounded) made against its officers if that information is in a form which does not identify the individuals involved.
- (e) Notwithstanding subdivisions (a) and (b), a department or agency that employs peace or custodial officers may release factual information concerning a disciplinary investigation if the officer who is the subject of the disciplinary investigation, or the officer's agent or representative, publicly makes a statement he or she knows to be false concerning the investigation or the imposition of disciplinary action. Information may not be disclosed by the peace or custodial officer's employer unless the false statement was published by an established medium of communication, such as television, radio, or a newspaper. Disclosure of factual information by the employing agency pursuant to this subdivision is limited to facts contained in the officer's personnel file concerning the disciplinary investigation or imposition of disciplinary action that specifically refute the false statements made public by the peace or custodial officer or his or her agent or representative.

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- (f)
- (1) The department or agency shall provide written notification to the complaining party of the disposition of the complaint within 30 days of the disposition.
 - (2) The notification described in this subdivision shall not be conclusive or binding or admissible as evidence in any separate or subsequent action or proceeding brought before an arbitrator, court, or judge of this state or the United States.
 - (g) This section does not affect the discovery or disclosure of information contained in a peace or custodial officer's personnel file pursuant to Section 1043 of the Evidence Code.
 - (h) This section does not supersede or affect the criminal discovery process outlined in Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 1054) of Title 6 of Part 2, or the admissibility of personnel records pursuant to subdivision (a), which codifies the court decision in *Pitchess v. Superior Court* (1974) 11 Cal.3d 531.
 - (i) Nothing in this chapter is intended to limit the public's right of access as provided for in *Long Beach Police Officers Association v. City of Long Beach* (2014) 59 Cal.4th 59.

Code of Civil Procedure Section 130

Code of Civil Procedure Section 130 allows a qualifying member of the family of a child under 18 years of age to request a security hold under specific circumstances.

Code of Civil Procedure Section 130 provides as follows:

- (a) Subject to the provisions of this section, when a child who is under 18 years of age is killed as a result of a criminal act and a person has been convicted and sentenced for the commission of that criminal act, or a person has been found to have committed that offense by the juvenile court and adjudged a ward of the juvenile court, upon the request of a qualifying family member of the deceased child, the autopsy report and evidence associated with the examination of the victim in the possession of a public agency, as defined in Section 6252 of the Government Code, shall be sealed and not disclosed, except that an autopsy report and evidence associated with the examination of the victim which has been sealed pursuant to this section may be disclosed, as follows:
 - (1) To law enforcement, prosecutorial agencies and experts hired by those agencies, public social service agencies, child death review teams, or the hospital that treated the child immediately prior to death, to be used solely for investigative, prosecutorial, or review purposes, and may not be disseminated further.
 - (2) To the defendant and the defense team in the course of criminal proceedings or related habeas proceedings, to be used solely for investigative, criminal defense, and review purposes, including review for the purpose of initiating any criminal proceeding or related habeas proceeding, and may not be disseminated further. The "defense team" includes, but is not limited to, all of the following: attorneys, investigators, experts, paralegals, support staff, interns, students, and state and privately funded legal assistance projects hired or consulted

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APPENDIX E SECURITY HOLD REQUEST LETTER TO CORONER / SECURITY HOLD POLICY

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL EXAMINER-CORONER

*Policy # 2044, Rev 1
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for the purposes of investigation, defense, appeal, or writ of habeas corpus on behalf of the person accused of killing the deceased child victim.

- (3) To civil litigants in a cause of action related to the victim's death with a court order upon a showing of good cause and proper notice under Section 129, to be used solely to pursue the cause of action, and may not be disseminated further.
- (b) Nothing in this section shall prohibit the use of autopsy reports and evidence in relation to court proceedings.
- (c) Nothing in this section shall abrogate the rights of victims, their authorized representatives, or insurance carriers to request the release of information pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 6254 of the Government Code. However, if a seal has been requested, an insurance carrier receiving items pursuant to a request under that subdivision is prohibited from disclosing the requested items except as necessary in the normal course of business. An insurance carrier shall not, under any circumstances, disclose to the general public items received pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 6254 of the Government Code.
- (d) This section may not be invoked by a qualifying family member who has been charged with or convicted of any act in furtherance of the victim's death. Upon the filing of those charges against a qualifying family member, any seal maintained at the request of that qualifying family member under this section shall be removed.
- (e) A coroner or medical examiner shall not be liable for damages in a civil action for any reasonable act or omission taken in good faith in compliance with this section.
- (f) If sealing of the autopsy report has been requested by a qualifying family member and another qualifying family member opposes sealing, the opposing party may request a hearing in the superior court in the county with jurisdiction over the crime leading to the child's death for a determination of whether the sealing should be maintained. The opposing party shall notify all other qualifying family members, the medical examiner's office that conducted the autopsy, and the district attorney's office with jurisdiction over the crime at least 10 court days in advance of the hearing. At the hearing, the court shall consider the interests of all qualifying family members, the protection of the memory of the deceased child, any evidence that the qualifying family member requesting the seal was involved in the crime that resulted in the death of the child, the public interest in scrutiny of the autopsy report or the performance of the medical examiner, any impact that unsealing would have on pending investigations or pending litigation, and any other relevant factors. Official information in the possession of a public agency necessary to the determination of the hearing shall be received in camera upon a proper showing. In its discretion, the court may, to the extent allowable by law and with good cause shown, restrict the dissemination of an autopsy report or evidence associated with the examination of a victim. This section shall not apply if a public agency has independently determined that the autopsy report may not be disclosed pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 6254 of the Government Code because it is an investigative file. In that instance, nothing in this section shall preclude the application of Sections 6258 and 6259 of the Government Code.
- (g) If a seal has been maintained pursuant to this section, a qualifying family member, or a biological or adoptive aunt, uncle, sibling, first cousin, child, or grandparent of the deceased child may

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request that the seal be removed. The request to remove the seal shall be adjudicated pursuant to subdivision (f), with the party requesting the removal of the seal being the opposing party.

- (h) Nothing in this section shall limit the public access to information contained in the death certificate including: name, age, gender, race, date, time and location of death, the name of a physician reporting a death in a hospital, the name of the certifying pathologist, date of certification, burial information, and cause of death.
- (i) When a medical examiner declines a request to provide a copy of an autopsy report that has been sealed pursuant to this section, the examiner shall cite this section as the reason for declining to provide a copy of the report.
- (j) For purposes of this section:
 - (1) A "child who is under 18 years of age" does not include any child who comes within either of the following descriptions:
 - (A) He or she was a dependent child of the juvenile court pursuant to Section 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code at the time of his or her death, or, pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 10850.4 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, abuse or neglect is determined to have led to his or her death.
 - (B) He or she was residing in a state or county juvenile facility, or a private facility under contract with the state or county for the placement of juveniles, as a ward of the juvenile court pursuant to Section 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code at the time of his or her death.
 - (2) "Evidence associated with the examination of a victim" means any object, writing, diagram, recording, computer file, photograph, video, DVD, CD, film, digital device, or other item that was collected during, or serves to document, the autopsy of a deceased child.
 - (3) "Qualifying family member" means the biological or adoptive parent, spouse, or legal guardian.
- (k) Nothing in this section shall limit the discovery provisions set forth in Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 1054) of Title 6 of the Penal Code.
- (l) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the authority of the court to seal records or restrict the dissemination of an autopsy report or evidence associated with the examination of a victim under case law, other statutory law, or the rules of court.
- (m) The provisions of this section are severable. If any provision of this section or its application is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

APPENDIX G
SUBJECT PHOTO



LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT PHOTO

Name (LAST, First MI): _____

Date (Time): _____ (____)

Location: _____

Photo By: _____ DR No. _____

APPENDIX H
RECOMMENDED TEXTS ON HOMICIDE INVESTIGATIONS

1. Practical Homicide Investigation
Tactics, Procedures and Forensic Techniques
By: Vernon J. Geberth
2. Practical Homicide Investigation—Checklist and Field Guide
By: Vernon J. Geberth
3. Techniques of Crime Scene Investigation, 3rd Edition
By: Arne Svensson, Otto Wendell and Barry A. Fisher
4. Bloodstain Pattern Interpretation
By: Herbert Leon MacDonnell
5. Interpretation of Bloodstain Evidence at Crime Scenes
By: William G. Eckert and Stuart H. James
6. Gunshot Wounds
By: Vincent J.M. Di Maio
7. Forensic Pathology
By: Vincent J.M. Di Maio
8. Medicalological Investigation of Death
By: Werner U. Spitz and Russell S. Fisher
9. Footwear Impression Evidence
By: William Bodziak, FBI
10. Tire Imprint Evidence
By: Peter McDonald
11. Eyewitness Testimony
By: Elizabeth F. Loftus

**APPENDIX H
RECOMMENDED TEXTS ON HOMICIDE INVESTIGATIONS**

12. Witness for the Defense
By: Elizabeth R. Loftus and Katherine Ketcham
13. The Evidence Never Lies
By: Alfred Allan Lewis with Herbert Leon MacDonnell
14. Sexual Homicide—Patterns and Motives
By: Robert K. Ressler, Ann W. Burgess and John E. Douglas
15. Autoerotic Fatalities
By: Robert R. Hazelwood, Park Elliott Dietz and Ann W. Burgess
16. Obsession
By: John Douglas and Mark Olshaker
17. Mind Hunter—Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit
By: John Douglas

Previous Texts Taken From Prior Homicide Manual

18. Criminal Investigation
By: H. Gross and R. L. Jackson
19. Homicide Investigation
By: LeMoyne Snyder
20. Modern Criminal Investigation
By: H. Soderman and J. J. O'Connell
21. Outline of Death Investigations
By: Raymond I. Harris
22. Scientific Investigation and Physical Evidence
By: Leland V. Jones
23. Studies in Homicide
By: Marvin Wolfgang

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX I GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abortion:	Uterus empties itself prematurely; criminal abortion is willful production of a miscarriage of a woman who is pregnant, whether by administering drugs, or using instruments, or by any other means not authorized by law.
Abrasion:	Wearing away of the skin in small shreds by friction.
Accident:	An unforeseen occurrence, especially one of an injurious character.
Adipocere:	Peculiar waxy substance formed during the decomposition of animal bodies buried in moist places. It consists principally of insoluble salts of fatty acids—also called “grave wax” (soap-like appearance).
Acute:	Sharp or severe.
Amnesia:	Lack or loss of memory, especially in remembering past experiences.
Anatomy:	Study of the structure of the human body.
Anemia:	Insufficient oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood.
Anesthetics:	A group of drugs capable of producing either localized or general loss of sensation. Example: (1) chloroform—heavy, colorless liquid with a characteristic odor and taste; (2) ether—colorless, volatile liquid with penetrating odor.
Aneurysm:	A sac formed by the dilation of the walls of an artery or of a vein and filled with blood.
Angina:	Spasmodic pain.
Ante mortem:	Before death.
Anterior:	Toward the front.
Antidote:	A remedy for counteracting a poison.
Antitoxin:	A substance found in the blood serum and in other body fluids which is specifically antagonistic to some particular toxin.
Anus:	The distal end and outlet of the alimentary canal.

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX I GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aorta:	The great trunk artery that carries blood from the heart to be distributed by branch arteries through the body.
Arsenic:	A medicinal and poisonous element; a brittle, lustrous, graying solid, with a garlic-like odor.
Artery:	Any one of the vessels through which the blood passes from the heart to the various parts of the body.
Asphyxia:	Suffocation.
Aspiration of Vomitus:	Breathing or drawing in vomitus into the respiratory tract, blocking it.
Autopsy:	The internal examination of a body after death.
Axilla:	Armpit.
Blanching:	Develops when pressure is applied to discolored skin.
Cadaveric Spasm:	Stiffening and rigidity of a single group of muscles occurring immediately after death.
Carbon Monoxide:	A colorless, odorless, very toxic gas.
Carbon Dioxide:	A heavy, colorless gas.
Cardio:	A combining form denoting relationship to the heart.
Cardio-vascular:	Pertaining to the heart and blood vessels.
Cartilage:	The gristle or white elastic substance attached to articular bone surface and forming certain parts of the skeleton.
Castration:	Removal of the gonads (primary sex organs).
Cavity:	A hollow place or space.
Cerebral:	Pertaining to the cerebrum, which is the main portion of

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX I GLOSSARY OF TERMS

	the brain occupying the upper part of the cranium.
Cervical:	Pertaining to the neck.
Chronic:	Sickness of long duration.
Circulation:	Movement in a regular course; as the circulation of the blood.
Cirrhosis:	A disease of the liver, marked by progressive destruction of liver cells.
Coagulate:	To cause or to become clotted.
Colon:	That part of the large intestine which extends from the cecum to the rectum.
Congenital:	Existing at or dating from birth.
Contrecoup:	Injury resulting from a blow on a remote part.
Contusion:	Bruise as a result of rupture of the blood vessels.
Convulsion:	A violent, involuntary contraction or series of contractions of the voluntary muscles.
Coronary:	A term related to the heart, arteries/veins.
Corpse:	The dead body of a human being.
Cranium:	The skull or brain pan.
Culpable:	Meriting condemnation or blame.
Cyanosis:	Blueness of the skin, often due to cardiac malformation causing insufficient oxygenation of the blood (increase in carboxy-hemoglobin).
Decomposition:	The separation of compound bodies into their constituent Principles—postmortem degeneration of the body.
Degeneration:	Deterioration.
Delirium:	A mental disorder marked by illusions, hallucinations, physical restlessness and incoherence.

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Depraved:	Perverted.
Deteriorate:	To become worse—impairment.
Diagnosis:	The art of identifying a disease from its signs or symptoms.
Diaphragm:	The musculomembranous partition that separates the abdomen from the thorax.
Disarticulation:	Amputation or separation at a joint.
Disease:	Any departure from a state of health; illness or sickness.
Disinterment:	Digging up body after burial.
Distal:	Remote, farthest from the center.
Dorsal:	Pertaining to the back.
Dotage:	Feebleness of mind in old age.
Duodenum:	The first portion of the small intestine.
Dysentery:	A term given to a number of disorders marked by inflammation of the intestines, and attended by pain in the abdomen and frequent stools containing blood and mucus.
Eczema:	An inflammatory skin disease.
Embalming:	The treatment of the dead body to prevent putrefaction.
Embolism:	A blocking of an artery or vein by a clot or obstruction (usually carried by blood circulation).
Embryo:	The fetus in its earlier stages of development.
Epidermis:	The outermost layer of the skin.
Epilepsy:	A chronic functional disease characterized by brief seizures in which there is loss of consciousness, with a succession of tonic or clonic convulsions.
Extenuate:	To lessen.

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX I GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Exhume:	The disinterring or removal of a body from the grave.
Fatal Injury:	An injury resulting in death.
Felonious Homicide:	The killing of a human being without justification or excuse.
Femur:	The thigh bone.
Fetish (Sexual):	Sexual attraction to materials and objects not conventionally viewed as being sexual in nature.
Fetus:	The unborn offspring of a human or an animal.
Fistula:	An abnormal passage leading from an abscess to the body surface.
Fratricide:	The act of killing one's brother or sister.
Frontal:	Front of the head.
Gangrene:	Death of tissue, characterized by anoxia and marked by inflammation.
Hemorrhage:	Bleeding.
Histotoxic:	Poisonous to tissue or tissues.
Homicidomania:	Impulsive desire to commit murder.
Hydrophobia:	The usual common name for rabies in man.
Hypertension:	High blood pressure.
Incision:	A wound inflicted by an instrument with a sharp cutting edge.
Infanticide:	The act of killing an infant soon after birth.
Infarct:	An area of necrosis (death of a cell or group of cells) in a tissue produced by sudden arrest of circulation in a vessel.
Myocardia Infarction:	An area of death in heart tissue, usually resulting from coronary thrombosis.

HOMICIDE MANUAL

APPENDIX I GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Pulmonary Infarction:	An area of necrosis in lung tissue produced by sudden arrest of circulation in a vessel.
Inhalation:	The drawing of air or other vapor into the lungs.
Intestine:	The membranous tube that extends from the stomach to the anus.
Intra:	Prefix meaning within.
Laceration:	A split or tear of the skin produced usually by blunt force.
Lateral:	Pertaining to a side.
Ligament:	Any fibrous, tough band which connects bones or supports viscera.
Ligature:	Anything which binds or ties.
Liver:	A large gland situated in the upper part of the abdomen on the right side, usually of a dark red color.
Lividity:	Postmortem discoloration due to the gravitation of blood.
Lumbar:	Pertaining to or near the lower region of the back.
Masochism:	Sexual perversion in which the pervert takes delight in being subjected to degrading, humiliating, or cruel treatment such as flogging or choking.
Matricide:	The act of killing one's mother.
Medial:	Pertaining to the middle.
Membrane:	A thin layer of tissue which covers a surface or divides a space or organ.
Meningitis:	Inflammation of the meninges (thin membranous covering of brain).
Miscarriage:	The premature emptying of a uterus prior to 28 weeks of gestation.
Monomania:	Insanity on a single subject or class of subjects.

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Mummification:	The complete drying up of the body as the result of burial in a dry place, or by exposure to dry atmosphere.
Myocardium:	The heart muscle.
Narcomania:	An insane desire for narcotics or alcohol.
Natal:	Pertains to birth.
Nausea:	Tendency to vomit; sickness at the stomach.
Necrophilism:	Morbid attraction to corpses; sexual intercourse with a dead body.
Non compos Mentis:	Not of sound mind; insane.
Occipital:	Back of the head.
Ossification:	Formation of bone or a bony substance.
Osteitis:	Inflammation of a bone.
Osteomyelitis:	Inflammation of bone caused by pyogenic organism.
Pancreas:	A large elongated gland behind the stomach.
Papillary:	Pertaining to or resembling a nipple, ridges, or grooves.
Paralysis:	The loss of the power of voluntary motion.
Paranoia:	Mental disorder characterized by the development of ambitions or suspicions into delusions of persecution.
Parenticide:	The act of killing one's parents.
Pathology:	The part of medicine which explains the nature, cause, and symptoms of disease.
Patricide:	The act of killing one's father.
Permeation:	The spreading throughout a tissue or organ of a disease process.
Petechial Hemorrhages:	Hemorrhages that occur in minute (pinlike) points beneath the skin.

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Phalanx/ Phalanges:	Any bone of a finger or toe.
Phomania:	Insanity marked by a tendency to commit murder.
Pneumatic:	Pertaining to air or respiration.
Postmortem:	After death.
Proximal:	Nearest to the center.
Psychosomatic:	Pertaining to the mind-body relationship.
Pubic:	Pertaining to the pubes (anterior pelvic bones).
Pulmonary:	Pertaining to the lungs.
Pulmonary Embolism:	The closure of the pulmonary artery or one of its branches by an embolus.
Putrefaction:	Decomposition of soft tissues by bacteria and enzymes.
Rancid:	Having a musty, rank taste or smell.
Respiration:	The act or function of breathing.
Retardation:	Delay or hindrance.
Rigor Mortis:	A rigidity or stiffening of the muscular tissue and joints of the body after death.
Sacro:	Combining form denoting relationship to the sacrum.
Schizophrenia:	A mental disorder.
Sclerosis:	Induration or hardening.
Semen:	The thick, whitish secretion of the reproductive organs in the male.
Senile:	Pertaining to old age.
Spasm:	Sudden, violent, involuntary contraction of a muscle or group of muscles.

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Sputum:	Matter ejected from the mouth; saliva and mucus.
Still Birth:	Twenty-eight (28) weeks of gestation, or over, and born dead.
Strangulation:	Any abnormal constriction of the throat, causing a suspension of breathing.
Suffocation:	The stoppage of respiration.
Tarsus:	The instep proper of the foot with its seven bones.
Tetanus:	An acute infectious disease caused by bacteria which release a powerful toxin.
Thermo:	Combining form denoting relationship to heat.
Thrombo:	Combining form denoting relationship to clot.
Tibia:	The inner and larger bone of the leg below knee.
Tissue:	An aggregation of cells united in the performance of a particular function.