

The Seven S's of Crime-Scene Investigation

Securing the Scene

- Responsibility of first responder to restrict unauthorized persons from entering the scene in order to avoid transfer, loss, or contamination of evidence.

Separating the Witnesses

- Witnesses are separated to avoid discussing what they have seen
- Questions to ask witnesses:
 - When did the crime occur?
 - Who called in the crime?
 - Who is the victim?
 - What did you see happen?
 - Where were you when you observed the crime scene?
 - Can you identify the perpetrator?

Scanning the Scene

Primary crime scene - location where the crime took place

Secondary crime scene - location other than the primary crime scene that is in some way related to the crime, where evidence is found

Seeing the Scene

- Seen in person
- Photos of overall scene and close-ups (with and without measuring ruler), triangulation with stationary objects for reference points, photos at different angles and distances, close-up photos of evidence and bodies

Sketching the Scene

- Objects measured from two immovable landmarks
- Direction and distance labeled
- Include doors, windows, furniture, etc.
- Outdoor scenes should include trees, vehicles, hedges, etc.

Searching for Evidence

- Search is done in a systematic fashion, using either a grid, linear, quadrant or spiral pattern

Securing and Collecting Evidence

- Evidence needs to be properly packaged, labeled and sealed
- Paper bindle - folded paper used to hold trace evidence
- Evidence goes on the center of the paper, paper is folded, placed inside a plastic or paper bag, bag is sealed, collectors name is written over the folded edge

Chain of Custody

- When evidence is analyzed, chain of custody procedure is utilized to ensure the integrity of the evidence
- Chain of custody - the documented and unbroken transfer of evidence

Steps in Chain of Custody

1. Evidence is packaged, sealed and labeled
2. Next person opens sealed bag at a different location
3. performs their examination
4. Repackages evidence in original packaging
5. seals it in a new evidence bag
6. signs the sealed bag & the chain of custody log.