



**Maryland-National Capital Park Police
Prince George's County Division**



DIVISION DIRECTIVE

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| TITLE COLLECTION AND PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE | | | PROCEDURE NUMBER PG606.0 |
| SECTION Investigative Procedures | DISTRIBUTION A | EFFECTIVE DATE 05/01/19 | REVIEW DATE 05/01/21 |
| REPLACES PG606.0 "Collection and Preservation of Evidence", issued 10/15/04 | | | |
| RELATED DIRECTIVES PG605.0, 1200.0 | REFERENCES CALEA 42, 83 | AUTHORITY <i>S.R. Johnson</i> Chief Stanley R. Johnson | |

I. PURPOSE

To designate and govern the responsibilities for securing, protecting, preserving and processing incident scenes by all officers and to establish the proper procedures for Investigators and Evidence Technicians concerning the collection and processing of physical evidence at those scenes.

II. POLICY

The effective exercise of the law enforcement responsibility in the investigation of crime and in the prosecution of offenders requires that information be obtained through the application of scientific knowledge and methods. It is the policy of this Division that, to accomplish this, it is necessary to identify, collect, properly preserve and transmit promptly to a laboratory those items of physical evidence found at incident scenes which may lead to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrator.

III. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. It is the responsibility of every officer at the scene of an incident/crime where usable physical evidence exists to secure, protect and preserve that evidence until such time that it can be collected and processed by an Evidence Technician and/or Investigator.
 - 1. When the immediate services of an Evidence Technician or Investigator are needed at an incident/crime scene for evidence processing and collection, one will be requested as soon as practical. If an Evidence Technician is available and/or Investigator is called out, interim instructions will be provided to the officer on the scene by the responding Evidence Technician or Investigator.

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- B. Evidence Technicians and/or Investigators will be responsible for processing all incident scenes when requested to do so by a Shift Supervisor.
- C. The Evidence Technician and/or Investigator will be responsible for maintaining the chain of custody and ensuring that evidence is properly examined.
- D. All officers responsible for the collection and preservation of evidence will carry with them at all times while on duty and in a cruiser, sufficient equipment for; the recovery of latent prints, scene sketches and evidence collection.

IV. EVIDENCE TECHNICIANS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Evidence Technicians will collect all evidence at incident scenes in such a manner as to preserve its condition, prevent the introduction of foreign materials, ensure as complete a sample as possible and practical and mark the evidence in the proper manner so as not to destroy it. All evidence collected will be labeled in such a manner as to make it readily and uniquely identifiable. All evidence that is collected, photographs that are taken, sketches made, etc. will be documented on either the Property Record and/or the Crime Scene Processing Log, to include; the description, make, model and serial number (if applicable), name of collector and where obtained. Any item that cannot be marked will be sealed in a proper container that will then be labeled. All evidence will be packaged or placed in an appropriate container so as not to lose or destroy any evidence.
 - 1. All blood samples or blood soaked items will be packaged in appropriate containers and given to an investigator on the scene who will transport the item(s) to Headquarters or the Southern Station Evidence Bay where they will be placed in the refrigerator in the Investigative processing facility.
 - 2. Items that need to be air-dried will be transported as above and placed in the processing facility until such time as they can be packaged and transported to the appropriate laboratory.
 - 3. Fragile or sensitive items will be packaged in such a manner as to protect the item from damage.
- B. All evidence collected will be recorded on a Property Record and given to the Investigator-in-charge at the scene or placed in the evidence vault at Headquarters. The Property Record will be utilized with the proper notations each time a transfer is made in the chain of custody.
- C. A field sketch will be made when evidence is recovered from an incident scene, when required. When doing so the Evidence Technician will ensure that all significant items are included so that an accurate detailed drawing can be done. Features to be included are; all pertinent dimensions, orientation of the crime scene to north, relationship to buildings, roads or geographical features, exact location of incident including street address where appropriate, locations of evidence and/or victim(s), date and time of sketch, names of all persons involved in making the sketch.

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- D. Evidence Technicians will be responsible for processing all recovered stolen motor vehicles and submitting a Crime Scene Processing Log along with any recovered latent prints to the Investigative Operations Unit.
 - 1. It may be necessary to delay the processing of certain vehicles due to adverse weather conditions. In these instances, the vehicle is to be transported to the Southern Station evidence bay and secured until such time as the processing can be done. The Evidence Technician will notify the on-duty Investigator that the vehicle is being stored pending favorable weather.
 - a. The processing responsibility will remain with the initial Evidence Technician unless otherwise directed by an Investigator.
 - 2. All vehicles wanted in connection with a homicide, robbery, rape or serious assault will not be processed until approved by an Investigator.
- E. Evidence Technician will not begin to process the scene of any major crime scene, as enumerated in Division Directive PG604.0 - "Criminal Investigation Procedures", until an Investigator arrives at the location or directs the member to start.

V. INVESTIGATOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Investigative Operations is responsible for requesting all laboratory examinations of all physical evidence collected at any crime/incident scene and forwarding the evidence to the laboratory in a timely manner.
 - 1. In cases where blood or other physiological fluids are obtained, the Investigator will contact the laboratory to ascertain any specific instructions as to the manner and procedures necessary for the submission of this evidence.
 - 2. This evidence will be submitted as soon as possible after it is ready for packaging. Any delays will be noted in the Investigator's report.
 - 3. Utilizing the bottom portion of the Property Record, a record will be made each time a transfer of custody takes place. Additionally, any forms or reports required by the laboratory will be completed by the Investigator.
 - 4. A transmittal letter will accompany any evidence that is not hand delivered to the laboratory. A property record will be submitted with the evidence documenting receipt and chain of custody. The lab will be requested to return a written report of the examination once the examination has been completed.
 - a. All evidence submitted to a laboratory for examination will include the following information:

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- 1) Name of the officer last having custody of the item.
 - 2) Date and time of submission or mailing and the method used for transmission.
 - 3) Date and time of receipt in the laboratory.
 - 4) Name and signature of the person in the laboratory receiving the evidence.
5. In all felony cases, if physical evidence is not recovered or photographs not taken, it is the responsibility of the Investigator-in-charge to document the reason(s) why.
- B. Whenever possible, the Investigator will submit known samples for comparison with all evidence submitted for laboratory examination.
1. In cases where the laboratory requires a known sample for comparison and one is not available, the evidence will be stored by Investigations until such time as a known sample becomes available or the evidence is no longer needed.
- C. It will be the responsibility of the Investigator-in-charge to take, or direct the taking of, appropriate photographs at the scene of all rapes, armed robberies, 1st degree assaults and arson, and any other case where it is deemed necessary.
1. All evidence will be photographed before it is moved or tampered with.
 2. When necessary, photographs will be taken with a scale to show the relationship of the evidence to its surroundings.
 3. A log will be maintained giving the date, time, location, case number and name of the photographer for each photo taken.

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