

DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER 99-39

OFFICE of the CHIEF OF POLICE
REPLACES: SOP 501.26.00

DATE: July 8, 1999

FIELD INVESTIGATORS

I. PURPOSE.

To describe the organization and availability of the primary crime scene processing component of the Police Department. This will include the coordination of effort with CID investigators and the utilization of forensic specialists as necessary.

II. DEFINITIONS.

Crime Scene - The location where a crime or serious accident has occurred, or where strong evidentiary signs exist to indicate a crime has taken place.

Crime Scene Processing - The specific actions taken at a crime or accident scene, consisting of photography, processing the area for fingerprints, the preparation of a scene sketch, and the collection and preservation of physical evidence.

Field Investigator - A uniformed officer assigned to field operations who has received specialized training and is responsible to process crime and/or accident scenes in addition to their regular duties.

III. AVAILABILITY.

Each patrol squad shall, whenever possible, include two Field Investigators within its ranks who will be responsible to process crime and/or serious accident scenes. These uniformed officers will work twelve hour shifts in conjunction with their assigned squads, the rotation of which will generally provide twenty-four hour, seven day a week coverage. To develop the skills necessary to effectively accomplish the preceding task, Field Investigators shall, in addition to the training received by all officers assigned to field operations, be required to successfully complete

additional specialized training to include photography, fingerprinting, and the collection and preservation of evidence.

Should an incident occur where a crime scene or auto accident requires processing and no Field Investigator is on duty, the supervisor or ranking officer shall preserve the scene until a Field Investigator from the next on-coming shift reports for duty and can perform such processing as is necessary. In those instances where weather, pedestrian traffic, etc. precludes the lengthy preservation of a crime or accident scene, the on-duty supervisor or commander will order the recall of an off-duty Field Investigator to perform the required scene processing. Priority contact in these situations shall be one or both of the Field Investigators assigned to the on-coming shift.

Supervisors, detectives, and other members of the department who possess the requisite skills and training, may process a crime or accident scene, or otherwise take fingerprints and/or photographs, where circumstances preclude the availability and/or exclusive use of a Field Investigator.

In high-profile cases, or in those cases where an inordinate amount of evidentiary material is present at a scene, the department may request the St. Louis County Police Department's Crime Scene Unit or an accident reconstruction team to assist those Field Investigators already deployed at a scene. In such instances, the request should be made as soon as the initial scene assessment is completed, if possible.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES.

Field Investigators shall be responsible for crime and accident scene processing, prisoner processing, photographic services, the procurement of elimination fingerprints, evidence packaging, the submission of evidence for forensic evaluation, and report writing.

V. COORDINATION OF SCENE PROCESSING.

Field Investigators will generally operate quasi-independently in a majority of criminal/accident cases. However, at major incident scenes (e.g. homicide, rape, robbery, etc.), a supervisor or commander assigned to the Criminal Investigations Division shall assume full and complete responsibility for the investigative portion of the case, and will routinely coordinate and provide broad direction to the activities of those Field Investigators who may be present.

VI. FIELD INVESTIGATOR COORDINATION OFFICER.

A supervisor assigned to the Field Operations Bureau shall, in addition to their routine responsibilities, serve as the coordination officer for the department's complement of Field Investigators. This position shall be responsible to select and order supplies, ensure processing kits are stocked and available for use, arrange technical and skill training, and coordinate administrative/training activities with the Criminal Investigative Division.

VII. COMPENSATION.

The department shall compensate each Field Investigator for their additional responsibilities and technical skills with specialty pay. However, the additional compensation shall be payable solely upon the successful completion of all required training courses by candidate Field Investigators.

BY ORDER OF:

RICHARD T. MORRIS
Chief of Police

RTM:dld

CALEA Reference: 83.1.1