

CHAPTER 2

The Crime Scene: Field Notes, Documenting, and Reporting

Chapter 2 Multiple Choice

1. Which of the following is the most important method for police officers in initially documenting a crime scene?

- a. Photographing the crime scene
- b. Taking field notes
- c. Obtaining laboratory reports
- d. Sketching the crime scene

Answer: B

Objective: Explain what specific field notes should be taken during a criminal investigation.

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Level: Intermediate

2. An officer uses field interview cards (FI cards) to:

- a. record names of potential witnesses in a neighborhood canvass.
- b. sketch physical evidence at a crime scene.
- c. jot down notes about suspicious persons not connected with any case.
- d. make personal notes about a case when the officer does not intend for any other person to see the notes.

Answer: C

Objective: Explain what specific field notes should be taken during a criminal investigation.

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Level: Intermediate

3. Which of the following is the most accurate interpretation of the “best evidence rule”?

- a. Videotapes are usually better than photos.
- b. Testimony is better than physical evidence.
- c. Original notes are usually better than photocopies.
- d. Authenticated photocopies are admissible in court.

Answer: C

Objective: Explain what specific field notes should be taken during a criminal investigation.

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Level: Intermediate

4. The note-taking process should begin:

- a. when the first witness is identified.
- b. when the responding officer notices evidence for the first time.
- c. as soon as an officer gets a call to the scene of a crime.
- d. after the search of the crime scene is complete.

Answer: C

Objective: Explain what specific field notes should be taken during a criminal investigation.

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Level: Intermediate

5. Which of the following would be the best wording to use in a report?
- John Brown indicated he was white.
 - John Brown said, "He was white."
 - Subj. stated sus. was wht.
 - The witness indicated he was white.

Answer: B

Objective: Identify the qualities of a good investigative report.

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Level: Intermediate

6. Which of the following is NOT considered essential information for a report?
- Preliminary information
 - A list of possible suspects
 - Information about witnesses
 - Information about physical evidence

Answer: B

Objective: Identify the qualities of a good investigative report.

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Level: Intermediate

7. Which of the following is meant to provide a reader with information about an investigation quickly and succinctly?
- Field notes
 - The report
 - Photographs
 - Sketches

Answer: B

Objective: Identify the qualities of a good investigative report.

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Level: Intermediate

8. Which one of the following is NOT one of the three-pronged rule of thumb about reports?
- They should be factual.
 - They should be written using police jargon.
 - They should be thorough.
 - They should be to the point.

Answer: B

Objective: Identify the qualities of a good investigative report.

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Level: Basic

9. Which of the following is the best use of a close-up photo?
- Conducting surveillance
 - Getting a picture of a getaway car

- c. Noting bullet holes in a wall
- d. Documenting blood splatters on a rug

Answer: C

Objective: Explain the correct methods for photographing the crime scene.

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Level: Intermediate

10. For photographs to be admissible in court, they must be:

- a. legal.
- b. at least 16" X 24" in size.
- c. material and relevant.
- d. None of the above.

Answer: C

Objective: Explain the correct methods for photographing the crime scene.

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Level: Intermediate

11. Which of the following best expresses the purpose of using markers at a crime scene?

- a. To register specific places on videotape of the crime scene
- b. To assist in listing all physical evidence at the scene
- c. To provide a sense of the size of physical evidence
- d. To note the exact location of bullet holes at the crime scene

Answer: C

Objective: Explain the correct methods for photographing the crime scene.

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Level: Intermediate

12. Which of the following is the best example of a prejudicial photo?

- a. A photo of a body with chalk drawn around it
- b. A color photo of blood stains on a wall
- c. An arrest photo of the suspect showing him dirty and unkempt
- d. A photo of the murder weapon, taken at the scene

Answer: C

Objective: Explain the correct methods for photographing the crime scene.

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Level: Intermediate

13. Which types of investigation commonly use surveillance photography?

- a. Prostitution
- b. Vice and organized crime
- c. Drugs and missing persons
- d. Burglary and theft

Answer: B

Objective: Explain the correct methods for photographing the crime scene.

Page: 30

Level: Intermediate

14. The advantage of a crime scene sketch that cannot be accomplished with any type of photography is the:

- a. ability to improve lighting conditions.
- b. elimination of unnecessary detail.
- c. unique ability of the artist come through.
- d. addition of missing or necessary detail.

Answer: B

Objective: Describe how crime scene sketches are made.

Page: 30

Level: Intermediate

15. Which of the following methods is best for sketching an outdoor crime scene that has no easily identifiable points of reference?

- a. The cross-projection method
- b. The Mercator projection
- c. The coordinate method
- d. The triangulation method

Answer: D

Objective: Describe how crime scene sketches are made.

Page: 31-32

Level: Intermediate

16. Which of the following is NOT a common sketching method?

- a. The cross-projection method
- b. The Mercator projection
- c. The coordinate method
- d. The triangulation method

Answer: B

Objective: Describe how crime scene sketches are made.

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Level: Intermediate

17. Which of the following is NOT typically included with a crime scene sketch?

- a. The investigator's name and rank
- b. The date, time, type of crime, and assigned case number
- c. The list of possible suspects
- d. The scale of the drawing

Answer: C

Objective: Describe how crime scene sketches are made.

Page: 30-31

Level: Basic

18. Supplemental information by officers should include:

- a. Time of arrival at crime scene
- b. Lighting and weather conditions

- c. Names of officers contacted
- d. All of the above

Answer: D

Objective: Identify the qualities of a good investigative report.

Page: 22

Level: Intermediate

19. For every photograph taken at the crime scene, the officer should annotate the:
- a. Shutter speed
 - b. Time of photograph
 - c. Distance
 - d. All of the above

Answer: D

Objective: Explain the correct methods for photographing the crime scene.

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Level: Intermediate

20. This is the backbone of the criminal prosecution process:
- a. Time of events
 - b. Official police report
 - c. Photographs
 - d. Recordings

Answer: B

Objective: Summarize the legal precedents for the admissibility of photographs as evidence in court.

Page: 22

Level: Basic

Chapter 2 True-False

1. Ideally, an officer should begin to take notes after she has arrived at the crime scene, after all evidence has been located (including witnesses), but before any arrests are made.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: False

Objective: Explain what specific field notes should be taken during a criminal investigation.

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Level: Basic

2. The investigator's field notes should include the date and time of her assignment to the case.
- a. True
 - b. False

Answer: True

Objective: Explain what specific field notes should be taken during a criminal investigation.

Page: 22

Level: Basic

3. Officers usually write field notes in the order in which information was learned, rather than in chronological order.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: False

Objective: Explain what specific field notes should be taken during a criminal investigation.

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Level: Intermediate

4. An officer may use a tape recorder instead of taking field notes; however, it is highly recommended that the officer make a transcript of the tape.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: True

Objective: Explain what specific field notes should be taken during a criminal investigation.

Page: 21

Level: Basic

5. Once the officer has prepared the official detailed investigative report, it is okay to discard the original field notes.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: False

Objective: Explain what specific field notes should be taken during a criminal investigation

Page: 21

Level: Basic

6. The report should be structured to give information about an investigation quickly and succinctly.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: True

Objective: Identify the qualities of a good investigative report.

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Level: Basic

7. The face sheet contains a summary of an investigation.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: True

Objective: Identify the qualities of a good investigative report.

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Level: Basic

8. Investigators should remember that it is the officer's memory, not the official police report that is the backbone of the criminal prosecution process.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: False

Objective: Identify the qualities of a good investigative report.

Page: 22

Level: Basic

9. New information that is gathered during an investigation should be included in the supplemental report.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: True

Objective: Identify the qualities of a good investigative report.

Page: 25

Level: Basic

10. Typically, crime scene photographers should take between 25 and 50 photos, depending on the nature and complexity of the crime.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: False

Objective: Explain the correct methods for photographing the crime scene.

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Level: Basic

11. Photos frequently convey information more accurately than does an officer's verbal explanation.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: True

Objective: Explain the correct methods for photographing the crime scene.

Page: 26

Level: Basic

12. As a rule, the crime scene photographer will find that natural light at the scene is adequate for good-quality photos.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: False

Objective: Explain the correct methods for photographing the crime scene.

Page: 27

Level: Basic

13. It is vital in prosecuting a case for the person who took the photos of a crime scene to be the one who testifies about them in court.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: False

Objective: Explain the correct methods for photographing the crime scene.

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Level: Basic

14. A rough sketch is one drawn by the police officer at the crime scene and is not generally drawn to scale.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: True

Objective: Describe how crime scene sketches are made.

Page: 30

Level: Basic

15. The finished sketch is simply a completed sketch drawn from information contained in photographs or from the drawer's memory.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: False

Objective: Describe how crime scene sketches are made.

Page: 31

Level: Basic

16. The increased use of photography at crime scenes has made sketching crime scenes unnecessary and obsolete.

- a. True
- b. False

Answer: False

Objective: Describe how crime scene sketches are made.

Page: 31-32

Level: Basic

Chapter 2 Fill in the Blank

1. _____ made during the search of a crime scene are the basic record of the search and the evidence discovered.

Answer: field notes

Objective: Explain what specific field notes should be taken during a criminal investigation.

Page: 20

Level: Intermediate

2. The _____ - _____ process should begin as soon as an officer gets a call to the scene of a crime.

Answer: note-taking

Objective: Explain what specific field notes should be taken during a criminal investigation.

Page: 20

Level: Intermediate

3. When first encountering a witness or a victim, it is important for the investigator to allow the person to state in his or her own words what occurred. This is best accomplished by asking the simple question, “_____?”

Answer: what happened?

Objective: Explain what specific field notes should be taken during a criminal investigation.

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Level: Difficult

4. Field notes may be required later as _____ in court.

Answer: evidence

Objective: Explain what specific field notes should be taken during a criminal investigation.

Page: 21

Level: Intermediate

5. The _____ sheet, or initial page, of the initial complaint contains a summary of an investigation.

Answer: face

Objective: Identify the qualities of a good investigative report.

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Level: Basic

6. Information should be _____ before stating it as fact in an official report.

Answer: verified

Objective: Identify the qualities of a good investigative report.

Page: 23

Level: Intermediate

7. Measurements for a crime scene sketch should extend along and from _____ and identifiable points.

Answer: fixed

Objective: Describe how crime scene sketches are made.

Page: 31

Level: Intermediate

8. The _____ sketch is simply a completed sketch drawn from information contained in photographs or from the drawer’s memory.

Answer: finished

Objective: Describe how crime scene sketches are made.

Page: 31

Level: Basic

9. A _____ sketch is one drawn by the police officer at the crime scene and is not generally drawn to scale.

Answer: rough

Objective: Describe how crime scene sketches are made.

Page: 31

Level: Basic

10. The _____ _____ _____ is the backbone of the criminal prosecution process.

Answer: Official police report

Objective: Summarize the legal precedents for the admissibility of photographs as evidence in court.

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Level: Intermediate

Chapter 2 Matching

Locate the correct matches from Column 1 to Column 2

1. Hearsay	a. element of a report
2. Chain of custody	b. evidentiary items
3. Weapon	c. list of who handles evidence
4. Preliminary information	d. initial page
5. Physical evidence	e. 2 nd party information
6. Modus operandi	f. method of operation
7. Face sheet	g. required to admit into evidence
8. Authentication	h. time/manner complaint was received

1. e
2. c
3. a
4. h
5. b
6. f
7. d
8. g

Chapter 2 Essay Questions

1. For each official police report, there must be sufficient information to define and describe the accounts of a crime. List a minimum of 5 areas of information which should be contained within this report.

Answer: Type of offense, date and time of offense, location of violation, description of a suspect vehicle, description of weapons possessed by suspect, description of how the violation was discovered, who was involved, descriptions of evidence in the case, and evidence which was seized.

Objective: Identify the qualities of a good investigative report.

Page: 25-6

Level: Intermediate

2. Define and discuss the advantages and disadvantages to taking crime scene photographs.

Answer: Advantages—provide easy storage and retrieval data at the crime scene, remove many inferences by practically placing the judge/jury at the crime scene, and gives the investigator a source of reference as to the location of evidence at the crime scene. Disadvantages—does not show true or actual distances, can distort color or perceptions, and they can be ruined by mechanical errors in processing.

Objective: Explain the correct methods for photographing the crime scene.

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Level: Intermediate

3. Certain information should always be included within the photographic log of a crime scene investigator. Define the six types of required information.

Answer: Type of case, description of subject of photograph, location, names of persons handling evidence, assigned case number and any other relevant information.

Objective: Determine what types of information should be included in a photographic log.

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Level: Intermediate

Chapter 2 Critical Thinking

1. You have responded to a crime scene and will be in charge of processing this scene. It is imperative that you complete a crime scene sketch for accuracy and use in court. Discuss the pertinent information which you will place in the sketch and why this is important.

Answer: Investigator's complete name, date, time, type of crime, assigned case number, officers names who assist in producing the crime scene sketch, address of the crime scene, its position in a building, landmarks, the scale of the drawing, the primary items of evidence, and a key/legend identifying symbols or points of reference used within the sketch. The sketch is an official document meaning that it is the backbone of the prosecution of the case.

Objective: Describe how crime-scene sketches are made.

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Level: Intermediate

2. Identify the various methods used within the sketching of crime scenes. Additionally, define what this method is and how it is used.

Answer: Coordinate method—measures and object from two fixed points of reference, the baseline technique is often used within this method. Triangulation method—bird's eye view of the scene which uses fixed objects from which to measure, useful in sketching outdoor crime scenes. Cross-projection method—used for indoor crime scenes, top-down view with the walls folded down to reveal locations of bullet holes, blood spatter, etc.

Objective: Describe how crime-scene sketches are made.

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Level: Difficult