

St. Joseph, Missouri Police Department



DIRECTIVE TYPE: GENERAL ORDER		INDEX NUMBER: GO 0204
SUBJECT: CRIME SCENE MANAGEMENT		
ISSUE DATE: May 15, 2002	REVISED: 11/04/10, 5/14/13, 2/6/19	AMENDS/RESCINDS: No Previous
REVISIONS CONTINUED:		DISTRIBUTION: B

I. POLICY

One of the most basic services of a police agency is to investigate crimes that have occurred within its jurisdiction. It is the goal of the St. Joseph Police Department to aggressively pursue its investigations as successfully and efficiently as possible. The employees of the department shall appropriately respond to and investigate all violations of city ordinances and state and federal laws that are reported by citizens or observed by employees that occur within its jurisdiction.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Preliminary Investigations:

1. Officers of the Patrol Division will be responsible for conducting appropriate preliminary investigations of all assigned or discovered crimes occurring within the jurisdiction of the St. Joseph Police Department.
2. The assignment of the investigating patrol officer will normally be made by the F1 Communications Operator in accordance with the duties and responsibilities of patrol officers.
 - a. During those times when the number of police units that are available for calls for service are limited, the communications operator will have the discretion to assign the most available unit.
 - b. Patrol supervisors shall have the discretion to alter investigative assignments of the personnel under their supervision.

B. Responsibilities of Investigating Patrol Officer:

1. Upon responding to the scene of a crime, the assigned patrol officer is responsible for the following when applicable:
 - a. Providing assistance to any injured persons at the scene.
 - b. Protection of the crime scene.
 - c. Preservation of evidence.

- d. Observing and noting all conditions and events, including time, temperature, weather conditions, lighting, etc.
- e. Preliminary identification and interview of the complainant, the victim of the crime and/or witnesses to the crime.
- f. Arrest and interview of suspect if present or near the crime scene (For major crimes refer to Section II.F of this order).
- g. Photographing and processing of the crime scene, or requesting properly trained personnel to assist.
- h. Search of the crime scene and collection of evidence, or requesting properly trained personnel to assist.
- i. Canvass of the neighborhood and/or area.
- j. Proper reporting of the investigation and documentation of all investigative activities within the crime scene.
- k. Notification of immediate supervisor of serious incidents.
- l. Notification of the Buchanan County Medical Examiners Chief Investigator on unattended deaths not of a suspicious nature. If the Chief Investigator cannot be reached the Buchanan County Medical Examiner should be contacted directly. Both contact numbers will be on file in the Communications Center.

C. Responsibilities of the Patrol Supervisor:

1. The patrol officer's supervisor will be notified of any serious crime as soon as possible. The supervisor will be responsible for the overall management of the preliminary investigation and for the smooth coordination of the efforts of department members and other involved law enforcement agencies at the scene.
2. In the case of a homicide, suicide, serious assault, or other crime of serious community impact, the patrol supervisor shall respond to the scene and assume the initial management responsibilities.
3. In the case of critically missing or at-risk persons, the patrol supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring that appropriate resources are allocated for field investigation and search efforts. The supervisor will also be responsible for notification of the appropriate command staff in the event the AMBER plan requires activation.
4. The patrol supervisor shall retain management control of the *preliminary* investigation and integrity of the crime scene until it is completed.
5. The patrol supervisor will coordinate with the detective supervisor if the case warrants that response.
6. The patrol supervisor will be responsible for the assignment of additional patrol personnel to the crime scene.
7. The patrol supervisor shall be responsible for insuring that patrol personnel complete functions related to the incident, including proper documentation.
8. The patrol supervisor shall insure the notification of the watch commander, or in his absence, the Commander of the Patrol Division in appropriate situations.

D. Responsibilities of the Watch Commander:

1. In the case of serious incidents, the patrol supervisor or their designee shall immediately notify the watch commander. The watch commander will then become the incident commander responsible for the coordination of the efforts of department members and other law enforcement agencies at the crime scene.
2. The incident commander shall be responsible for:
 - a. Notification of the Professional Standards Officer if appropriate.
 - b. Media releases during the preliminary investigation.
 - c. Notification of the Buchanan County Medical Examiners Chief Investigator, if required, and a Crime Scene Investigator is not on scene. If the Chief Investigator cannot be reached the Buchanan County Medical Examiner should be contacted directly. In the case of a death, notification of the family of the victim.
 - d. Insure timely notification of the Divisional Commanders and the Chief of Police when required.

E. Responsibilities of the Detective Supervisor:

1. In the case of a serious crime, members of the Detective Division may be requested by the incident commander to initiate an immediate follow-up investigation. A detective supervisor, if available may respond to the scene. If a detective supervisor does respond to the crime scene, they will assume the following responsibilities:
 - a. Insure that Crime Scene Investigators adequately process the scene.
 - b. Arrange for suspect and witness interviews after initial information is gained at the scene.
 - c. Management of the investigative activities of detective division personnel at the scene.
 - d. Assume command of the investigation at the time that the preliminary investigation is complete.

F. Responsibilities of Detectives

1. Detectives may respond to a crime scene at which time they will familiarize themselves with all aspects of the preliminary investigation and offer any viable suggestions they may have concerning the investigation to the supervisor in charge of the scene.
2. If a detective is on scene, they shall coordinate all joint investigative efforts involving other divisions through the incident commander or the supervisor in charge.
3. The detective may perform an in-depth interview of potential witnesses that are at or near the crime scene.
4. The detective may perform an in-depth interrogation of suspects believed to be involved in the crime.
5. Detective personnel may obtain a Search Warrant if circumstances of the crime require one. A patrol officer may also do this, should detective personnel not respond.

G. Responsibilities of Crime Scene Investigators

1. When called out Crime Scene Investigators are responsible for the collection of all evidence where their expertise is required and timely documentation of same.
2. The Crime Scene Investigator upon their arrival will contact the on-scene supervisor for briefing and assignment.
3. Ensuring contact with the Buchanan County Medical Examiners Chief Investigator is made and documented in cases involving suspicious deaths. If the Chief Investigator cannot be reached the Buchanan County Medical Examiner should be contacted directly.

Chris Connally, Chief of Police

Date