

EXPANDED COURSE OUTLINE
REGULAR BASIC COURSE
LEARNING DOMAIN 30
CRIME SCENES, EVIDENCE AND FORENSICS

Effective date of outline: August 1, 2015

I. LEARNING NEED

Peace officers must have a general understanding of the total range of basic criminal investigation procedures in order to make the appropriate decisions regarding the identification and preservation of physical evidence at the scene of a crime.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- A. Identify the goal of a criminal investigation
 - 1. Successful prosecution of the guilty and exoneration of the innocent
- B. Perform the steps of a preliminary criminal investigation, including:
 - 1. Proceed safely to the scene
 - 2. Determine need for emergency medical services and aid any injured persons
 - 3. Verify that a crime, if any, has occurred
 - 4. Identify and arrest the suspect(s), if appropriate
 - 5. As soon as possible, provide dispatch with any suspect information including physical descriptions, direction of flight, mode of travel, and other pertinent information
 - 6. Contain and protect the crime scene and cause the proper collection of physical evidence
 - 7. Locate and interview victim(s) and/or witness(es) and identify other sources of information
 - 8. Collect all available information necessary to write a clear and accurate report (who, what, when, where, why and how)
- C. Demonstrate actions peace officers may employ to preserve possible physical evidence at a crime scene
 - 1. Establish inner and outer perimeter
 - 2. Assign personnel to maintain the perimeters place fixed barriers to maintain the integrity of the scene.
 - 3. Maintain a crime scene log of all individuals who had access to the crime scene

4. If necessary, take additional actions to protect physical evidence from environmental factors unauthorized individuals, etc.
- D. Identify the primary purpose of the:
1. Initial survey of a crime scene
 2. Crime scene search
- E. Identify criteria for allowing crime scene photographs to be admitted as evidence by the court
1. Show an object or person relevant to the crime
 2. Accurately represent without distortion the object or scene photographed
 3. Are marked properly to identify contents and location
 4. Are not use solely to appeal to the emotions or prejudice the court or jury.
- F. Identify elements to be included on a crime scene diagram
1. Layout of the entire scene
 2. Measured locations within the crime scene of each piece of evidence
 3. Locations of significant features of the scene.

II. LEARNING NEED

Peace officers must be aware of and comply with the general guidelines for the collection, packaging, and processing of physical evidence found at a crime scene to ensure that each piece of evidence is admissible in a court of law.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- A. Demonstrate appropriate precautions that should be taken prior to collection and removal of physical evidence from a crime scene
1. Be aware of and comply with specific agency policies procedures and guidelines for evidence collection and packaging
 2. Document the existence, condition, and location of each piece of evidence located within the crime scene using photographs sketches/diagrams and written entries in the officer's field notes. Include information regarding exact location, color, pattern, size, shape, etc.
 3. Collect and package all evidence in an appropriate manner using techniques that will not harm or compromise the evidentiary value of the item.
- B. Identify the purpose of collecting control/known samples
1. To establish a link between a piece of evidence and a person or a crime scene, the unique identity of the object must be shown to the exclusion of all other similar objects.

- C. Identify the primary reason for establishing a chain of custody record
1. To establish a when an item is first collected and tagged as evidence. From this time supplying complete clear concise information and using appropriate documentation techniques will aid in keeping the chain of custody intact
- D. Prepare the information that should be noted on a chain of custody record
1. The report number
 2. Who initially found the item
 3. Where and when the item was found
 4. A description of the item
 5. Who recovered, packaged and labeled the item
 6. Who transported the item
 7. Where it was submitted
 8. Where, how and when the item was secured.
- E. Identify the three forms of fingerprint impressions that may be found at a crime scene
1. Visible
 2. Latent
 3. Plastic
- F. Apply the basic steps for developing latent fingerprints
1. Impressions left by secretions from perspiration or oils on the skin
 2. Most commonly found at a crime scene
 3. Invisible to the naked eye until developed
- G. Identify general guidelines for collecting and processing physical evidence that may be located at a crime scene
1. Be aware of your agency policies and procedures
 2. Document the existence, condition, and location of each piece of evidence located within the crime scene using photographs, sketches/diagrams, and written entries in the officer's field notes. Include information regarding exact location color, pattern, size, shape.
 3. Collect and package all evidence in an appropriate compromise the evidentiary value of the item.
 4. Once each piece of evidence is packaged, seal with agency policies or guidelines.
 5. Document the collection of each piece of evidence collected along with the techniques used for collection and packaging in field notes and investigative report.
 6. When applicable, collect, package and process control/known standard samples in the same manner as the corresponding evidence samples from the crime scene

III. REQUIRED TESTS

- A. A scenario test that requires the student to demonstrate proficiency in conducting a preliminary investigation of a felonious assault. At a minimum, the test shall evaluate the following competencies:
1. Problem solving/Decision-Making – analyzing situations and implementing plans through one’s actions to solve problems. Using verbal or physical skills to determine the appropriate resolution to a situation.
 2. Legal authority/Individual Rights. The identification of laws and constitutional rights governing consensual encounters, detentions, and arrests.
 3. Officer safety – The demonstration of situational and tactical awareness and appropriate response.
 4. Communication – The use of effective verbal and non-verbal skills to convey intended meaning and establish understanding.

Presenters must use the POST-developed Scenario Test and the POST Scenario Competency Evaluation and Grading Test Forms or presenter-developed forms approved by POST, which minimally include the performance dimensions used for this scenario test.

IV. REQUIRED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- A. A learning activity that requires the student to systematically search a simulated crime scene and generate crime scene notes and a crime scene sketch. The learning activity shall minimally test the student’s ability to:
1. Use a systematic method to search the scene and recover all items of physical evidence.
 2. Generate crime scene notes that document observations, scene conditions and investigative actions
 3. Generate a crime scene sketch that includes measurements, reference points, identification of evidence, a legend and the direction of north
 4. Locate latent and plastic prints placed on objects of varying texture and color
 5. Complete the necessary forms generally utilized by law enforcement to insure the chain of custody
- B. The student will participate in one or more learning activities from the POST – developed *Instructor’s Guide to Learning Activities for Leadership, Ethics and Community Policing (December 2005)* or other comparable sources regarding

crime scenes, evidence and forensics. At a minimum, each activity, or combination of activities must address the following topics:

1. Application of SARA or other problem solving model in the conduct of a thorough preliminary investigation
2. How a peace officer may collaborate with the community to solve a crime and identify underlying conditions that contribute to the crime problem
3. Modeling ethical leadership by a peace officer in the performance of an investigation
4. Impact of an effective investigation on a peace officer's trustworthiness and credibility during courtroom testimony

V. HOURLY REQUIREMENTS

<u>Description</u>	<u>Hours</u>
POST Minimum Required Hours	<u>12</u>
Agency Specific Hours	<u>2</u>
Total Instructional Hours	<u>14</u>