

Crime and Disaster Scene Integrity

403.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance in handling a major crime or disaster.

403.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office to secure crime or disaster scenes so that evidence is preserved, and to identify and mitigate the dangers associated with a major crime or disaster scene for the safety of the community and those required to enter or work near the scene.

403.3 SCENE RESPONSIBILITY

The first deputy at the scene of a crime or major incident is generally responsible for the immediate safety of the public and preservation of the scene. Deputies shall also consider officer safety and the safety of those persons entering or exiting the area, including those rendering medical aid to any injured parties. Once a deputy has assumed or been assigned to maintain the integrity and security of the crime or disaster scene, the deputy shall maintain the crime or disaster scene until he/she is properly relieved by a supervisor or other designated person.

403.4 FIRST RESPONDER CONSIDERATIONS

The following list generally describes the first responder's function at a crime or disaster scene. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive, is not necessarily in order and may be altered according to the demands of each situation:

- (a) Locate or identify suspects and determine whether dangerous suspects are still within the area.
- (b) Provide first aid to injured parties if it can be done safely.
- (c) Evacuate the location safely as required or appropriate.
- (d) Secure the inner perimeter.
- (e) Secure an outer perimeter.
- (f) Identify potential witnesses.
- (g) Start a chronological log noting critical times and personnel allowed access.

403.5 SEARCHES

Deputies arriving at crime or disaster scenes are often faced with the immediate need to search for and render aid to victims, and to determine if suspects are present and continue to pose a threat. Once deputies are satisfied that no additional suspects are present and/or there are no injured persons to be treated, deputies should thereafter secure the scene and conduct no further search until additional or alternate authority for the search is obtained, such as consent or a search warrant.

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403.5.1 CONSENT

When possible, deputies should seek written consent to search from authorized individuals. However, in the case of serious crimes or major investigations, it may be prudent to also obtain a search warrant. Consent as an additional authorization may be sought, even in cases where a search warrant has been granted.

403.6 CRIME OR DISASTER SCENE CLEANUP

Crime scene cleanup on public property will be requested through the fire department. Private property owners should be advised to contact their insurance carrier or the state's Crime Victim Compensation Program for submitting a claim for reimbursement for a crime scene cleanup (Wis. Stat. § 949.06(1)(f)).

Cleanup of human health hazards at methamphetamine labs will be requested through the local health department and the Wisconsin Department of Justice (WisDOJ) Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should be notified to assess environmental impacts from hazardous substance spills or improper waste disposal (Wis. Stat. § 292.11).

403.7 CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DIVISIONAL COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Criminal Investigation Divisional Commander is responsible for:

- (a) Ensuring reasonable access to qualified personnel, equipment and supplies for processing crime scenes.
- (b) Establishing procedures for collecting, processing and preserving physical evidence in the field.
- (c) Establishing procedures for photographing, video-recording and other imaging used to collect and preserve evidence.
- (d) Establishing procedures for processing, developing, lifting and labeling fingerprints.
- (e) Establishing procedures for the safe collection, storage, transportation and submission of biological and other evidence for DNA testing and evaluation.

403.8 TRAINING

The Criminal Investigation Divisional Commander should ensure that members who are responsible for the collection and preservation of DNA evidence receive appropriate training.