



MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

725 – CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATIONS

GENERAL ORDER: 2025-37
ISSUED: August 4, 2025

EFFECTIVE: August 4, 2025

REVIEWED/APPROVED BY:
Assistant Chief Nicole Waldner
DATE: July 2, 2025

ACTION: Amends General Order 2023-21 (May 16, 2023)

WILEAG STANDARD(S): 6.3.3

ROLL CALL VERSION

**Contains only changes to current policy.
For complete version of SOP, see SharePoint.**

725.15 INITIAL RESPONSE (WILEAG 6.3.3)

A. PATROL OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

First responding officers shall initiate the preliminary investigation and perform tasks designated below until otherwise directed by a higher ranking officer, ~~investigator~~ **detective**, or another member of the police force specifically assigned to conduct the criminal investigation **when safety permits and as soon as practical to do so.**

2. Upon arrival, verify that a crime has been committed and relay essential information to the dispatcher and to other responding officers. Members shall obtain this information, in part, by interviewing and identifying the victim(s) and/or witness(es) to obtain as much information as quickly as possible. While it is critical to gather this information as quickly as possible, members should consider the emotional state of victim(s) and/or witness(es).
(WILEAG 6.3.3.2)

3. Officers may “freeze the scene” for a brief period of time in order to determine whether those individuals present are involved and to identify any potential witnesses. Officers shall only detain individuals for a reasonable period of time necessary to determine whether the person is involved in the crime or a witness. Officers shall not detain a person if it is determined they are not a witness or suspect.

b. Upon determining a person is a witness, the officer shall notify the primary officer or ~~investigator~~ **detective** in charge of the investigation, the incident commander, or a supervisor so the witness can be interviewed as soon as reasonably possible.

11. Officers shall attempt to identify any witnesses who are present at the crime scene and shall separate witnesses to the extent possible, to avoid tainting their recollection of the event.

a. Every reasonable effort should be made to ensure that witnesses remain at the scene, to allow for a detailed interview by ~~investigators~~ **detectives** or investigating

officers. While officers and investigators ~~detectives~~ may request a witness statement, the witness is not required to answer any questions, cooperate with law enforcement, and are free to leave at any point. The only exception to a person being free to leave is when a member temporarily freezes the scene (see subsection 3 above).

13. A canvass of nearby buildings shall be conducted, in an effort to locate additional witnesses. Officers shall note all addresses within the established perimeter and shall document the identities of all persons present within the buildings. A canvass of vehicles within the established perimeter shall also be conducted and their location, description, and identifying information shall be noted, including registered ownership information.
 - a. Members conducting a canvass shall utilize the *Canvass Checklist*. Members shall leave a *Door Hang* on any building where a person does not answer the door ~~when the member is conducting a canvass related to a gun fire incident~~.
 - b. A secondary canvass shall be conducted within 24-hours of all homicides and non-fatal shootings. The shift commander of the Homicide Division or ~~Violent Crimes~~ ~~Gun Violence~~ Division shall coordinate with the shift commander of the district where the incident occurred to determine if the secondary canvass will be conducted by the Criminal Investigation Bureau or Patrol Bureau.
(WILEAG 6.3.3.2)

725.20 SCENE INVESTIGATION (WILEAG 6.3.3)

A. ~~INVESTIGATOR~~ ~~DETECTIVE~~ RESPONSIBILITIES

1. An ~~investigator~~ ~~detective~~ shall assume responsibility for oversight and completion of all crime scenes as defined by the CIB shift commander.
2. In the absence of a supervisor, the ~~investigator~~ ~~detective~~ shall have the authority and responsibility to establish priorities, document statements of witnesses and suspects, make decisions regarding witnesses and suspects and conduct all other activities relevant to a comprehensive investigation of the incident.
3. They shall ensure that a thorough investigation is conducted and any tasks that are not completed at the end of their tour of duty shall be documented as follow-up, in the manner prescribed by their work location. The task of completing follow-up may be delegated to other ~~investigators~~ ~~detectives~~; however, the overall responsibility for completion of the case rests with the initial ~~investigator~~ ~~detective~~.
4. All ~~investigators~~ ~~detectives~~ who conduct any relevant tasks at a crime scene shall document their results in a written report prior to securing from duty. From time to time, it may be necessary to complete reports at a later date; however, this shall only be done with the approval of a supervisor.
(WILEAG 6.3.3.4)
5. ~~Investigators~~ ~~Detectives~~ shall complete a crime scene diagram (either electronically

or sketched) for all fatal and non-fatal shootings, suspicious deaths, or any other major crime scenes where a supervisor deems a crime scene diagram will assist in future investigative or prosecutorial action. ~~Investigators~~ Detectives shall save the crime scene diagram in the case file.

7. In the event that an arrest is made or probable cause exists to make an arrest, the ~~investigator~~ detective shall ensure that all reports are collected and presented to a prosecutor for review, in a timely manner.

B. SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

4. The supervisor shall assign tasks to the ~~investigators~~ detectives and other personnel as deemed necessary and shall liaison with personnel at the scene and other locations to ensure that relevant information is disseminated.

725.25 EVIDENCE COLLECTION (WILEAG 6.3.3)

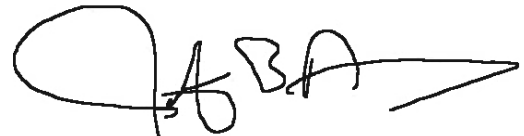
A. INVESTIGATOR ~~DETECTIVE~~ RESPONSIBILITIES

~~Investigators~~ Detectives shall ensure that all evidence is safeguarded, photographed, measured, diagrammed and collected. The procedures shall conform to established laws and department guidelines. ~~Investigators~~ Detectives are responsible for maintaining the integrity of the crime scene(s) until the initial investigation is completed and are responsible for ensuring that the following tasks have been completed, when applicable to the investigation.

- B. In the absence of an ~~investigator~~ detective, police officers investigating a crime scene shall be responsible for the same tasks.

1. When arriving at a scene, ~~investigators~~ detectives shall liaison with the initial responding officer, or sergeant in charge of the scene, and obtain the preliminary information. They shall then ensure that the appropriate perimeter has been established and evidence is properly protected.
3. At all crime scenes, an ~~investigator~~ detective shall be responsible for evidence collection. Only those persons necessary to the investigation shall enter the inner perimeter.
(WILEAG 6.3.3.3)
4. Police officers, ~~investigators~~ detectives, and forensic investigators, and crime scene ~~investigators~~ may be required to wear protective clothing, to include gloves, foot coverings, protective suits and head coverings, to prevent cross contamination of evidence. The facts of the case and type of evidence to be collected will determine whether protective clothing is needed.
5. When investigating a death, the ~~investigator~~ detective shall take note of the location, position, condition and description of the body. Take note of injuries or trauma to the body and the presence of any weapons or contraband on or near the body.

7. Prior to moving and collecting any evidence, the investigator ~~detective~~ shall note the location, position and description of items and shall take reasonable steps to ensure that a diagram can be created if needed. Measurements shall be taken for all major crime scenes.
8. The crime scene and corresponding evidence shall be photographed prior to collection. The investigator ~~detective~~ is responsible for ensuring that the photographer is aware of the location of all evidence.
10. The investigator ~~detective~~ shall examine the scene for the presence of biological evidence such as blood, hair, semen, etc. and shall cause the items to be collected in the manner consistent with current protocol established by the CIB or the Forensics Division.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JBA' with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

JEFFREY B. NORMAN
CHIEF OF POLICE

JBN:mfk