

Crime Scene Basics Worksheet #2

Useful information must be carefully, systematically, _____, and _____ collected.

If the crime scene is not treated _____, it can make vital information not only useless, but also even deceptive, pointing an investigation in the wrong direction.

List the steps an investigator must follow in handling a crime scene:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are some methods of documentation?

Why is maintaining the chain of custody important regarding evidence?

Activity: Evaluating a Crime Scene

The crime scene:

The body of a scientist, whose name and identity are being withheld, is discovered in the high school science lab at ELCA. The body is located in the corner of the classroom in a sprawled position with the face up. The victim is wearing a disguise of some kind, and a small amount of dirt is lying nearby. There is some evidence of a struggle, and foul play has not been ruled out. A broken beaker is found next to an overturned microscope. It appears that the victim may have attempted to identify the aggressor by writing an incriminating note, which is found torn and crumpled next to the body. Blood, hair, and fiber evidence are collected at the scene along with a variety of fingerprints. Police are baffled by what actually took place.

Consider each of the possible scenarios as to how the scene was handled. Carefully review each, taking into account proper crime scene processing.

Scenario A:

One morning, a teacher, Mr. Jones, enters a classroom to find the body of a former science teacher sprawled on the classroom floor. He immediately checks the body for a pulse. Hearing a janitor in the hall, he calls him into the room. The janitor notices the blood around the body and, wearing gloves, attempts to clean it up, hoping to avoid its spread to the rest of the room. Meanwhile, Mr. Jones runs next door and calls the principal, Mr. Johnson. The principal, having just entered the office, hurries down to the crime

scene. He moves around the area, carefully avoiding the body. Making a quick decision, he calls Mr. Gilliam at home, who immediately calls the police. The first officer to arrive at the scene puts up a barrier and posts guards at the entrance to the room. The forensic technician soon arrives to process the crime scene.

Scenario B:

An early morning janitor spots the body through the classroom door and immediately calls the police. The first officer to arrive enters the room and walks around the body, accidentally stepping in the blood and tracking it through the soil, leaving a bloody shoe print on the floor. He quickly wipes his shoe on the lab coat and checks the body for a pulse. Finding none, he calls for additional help. As he waits, he views the crime scene. Spotting the torn and crumpled paper on the floor, he smooths it out and pieces it together. Some blood, apparently from the body, is on the note, making it difficult to read, so he replaces it where he found it. The second officer to arrive at the scene puts up barrier tape and isolates the scene, preventing Mr. Jones and Mr. Johnson from coming in. The forensic technician soon arrives to process the scene.

Scenario C:

Patrolling the halls in the early morning hours, security officer Mike notices a light on in the classroom. He slowly opens the door and notices the body on the floor. He immediately calls for backup and secures and isolates the scene, preventing anyone from entering the room. As the supporting officers arrive, he places a barrier around the area and posts guards at the scene. The second officer to respond attempts to enter the area but is not allowed to enter until the forensic experts have completely recorded the scene and collected the evidence.

Questions:

1. List some examples of physical evidence.

2. In scenario A, describe how the crime scene was contaminated. What incorrect procedures were used? What was done correctly?

3. In scenario B, describe how the crime scene was contaminated. What incorrect procedures were used? What was done correctly?

4. In scenario C, describe how the crime scene was contaminated. What incorrect procedures were used? What was done correctly?
