

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Forensic Services Division

Violent Crime Response Team Standard Operating Procedures Overview



1.2 Overview

1.2.1 A crime scene may be defined as any site or location associated with and potentially containing evidence of the crime being investigated by the requesting law enforcement agency. A crime scene is generally considered to be an area, object, or person from which evidence is identified, documented, and collected. The area of a crime scene is defined by the actions and distances covered by both offenders and victims. The crime scene may extend over several separate locations with evidence potentially present at each location.

1.2.2 The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Forensic Services Division provides assistance in cases involving death, serious bodily injury likely to result in death, scenes that are being investigated as possible homicides, police-involved shootings and other criminal acts to be determined by, and at the discretion of, the Assistant Director of Forensic Services (or designee).

1.2.3 The following services can be provided at a scene:

Scene documentation, evidence location and documentation, collection, and packaging of biological fluids, hair, fibers, footwear impressions, tire impressions, firearms, bullet trajectory related evidence, latent prints, toolmarks, presumptive testing, and other materials or substances of evidentiary value.

1.2.4 The investigation of law enforcement use of force and/or in-custody death scenes may differ with regard to establishment and documentation of known circumstances preceding the use of force. Therefore, the scope of the VCRT's role in scene processing may differ on a case by case basis (see VCRT 1.8 for additional information).

1.2.5 Technical assistance (tech assist) can also be provided in the processing of a scene. A tech assist may be defined as a scene that is discipline specific and may not require the entire VCRT to accomplish. Typically, a tech assist can be scheduled in advance, be employed to work a specific task, utilize a certain piece of equipment, provide a high level of technical expertise, or provide additional manpower for an investigation currently being processed. The documentation requirements for the

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tech assist are limited to the scope of the requested task and do not typically include the larger investigation, except by request.

1.2.6 Crime scenes may be found anywhere and may need to be processed under various environmental conditions. Because crime scenes can be fragile and items of evidentiary value must be preserved, scenes will need to be either processed in a timely manner or protected from adverse physical conditions whenever possible.

1.2.7 The methods outlined in this manual are recommended for use in a crime scene investigation. The sequence and choice of examinations and/or analyses used in a crime scene will be implemented at the discretion of the VCRT Leader.