

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Forensic Services Division

Violent Crime Response Team Standard Operating Procedures VCRT Members & Training



1.4. Violent Crime Response Team Members

1.4.1 The Violent Crime Response Team (VCRT) is composed of laboratory employees from the Forensic Services Division and typically consists of five specialists trained in the following disciplines:

- Latent Prints
- Firearms
- Microanalysis
- Forensic Biology
- Documentation

1.4.2 Specialists are designated as those team members primarily responsible for the location, collection, and preservation of a particular type of evidence.

1.4.3 Additionally, each team will be supervised by a designated VCRT Leader.

1.4.4 VCRT Training Program

1.4.4.1 All laboratory personnel will successfully complete all the requirements of the Forensic Crime Scene Investigation School prior to being assigned to a VCRT.

1.4.4.2 This training program will be documented on the VCRT Training Checklist (Appendix J).

1.4.4.3 Prior to assuming independent crime scene work, all personnel must also successfully complete a competency test. The competency test shall include the following:

- A practical examination in the form of a mock crime scene;
- A written test report;
- A oral examination in the form of a mock case and mock trial.

1.4.4.4 Any deviations from the expected results of competency test will be addressed by the Crime Scene Coordinator and Technical Leader and a plan of action will be determined. The Quality Assurance Manager will be notified in writing of the plan of action.

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1.4.4.5 The Crime Laboratory Regional Supervisor may require additional training of team members prior to assigning them to a VCRT. This will be documented in a memorandum and/or on the VCRT rotation schedule.

1.4.4.6 If retraining is necessary for any reason, applicable steps such as attending Forensic Crime Scene Investigation School, working with the Crime Scene Coordinator/Technical Leader or designee, etc. shall be taken before continuing casework.

1.4.5 Crime Scene Coordinator

1.4.5.1 The Crime Scene Coordinator will be appointed by the Assistant Director of Forensic Services.

1.4.5.2 The Crime Scene Coordinator will coordinate the state-wide Violent Crime Response Team program and develop and maintain policies and procedures for the program.

1.4.5.3 The Crime Scene Coordinator will also establish, monitor, and maintain records of a uniform state-wide training program for members of the VCRT program. This training program will be documented on the VCRT Training Checklist (Appendix J).

1.4.5.4 The Crime Scene Coordinator will perform other duties as assigned.

1.4.6 Crime Scene Technical Leader

1.4.6.1 The Crime Scene Technical Leader will be appointed by the Assistant Director of Forensic Services.

1.4.6.2 The Technical Leader will assess team members' participation in the program and develop, coordinate, monitor competency, and proficiency testing for participants.

1.4.6.3 The Technical Leader will perform other duties as assigned.

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1.4.7 Crime Scene Team Leader

1.4.7.1 Violent Crime Response Team Leaders are approved by the Assistant Director of Forensic Services.

1.4.7.2 The VCRT Leader has an advanced level of understanding in the requirements needed in processing a crime scene that is only achieved through training and experience and is responsible for all aspects of the VCRT.

1.4.7.3 The VCRT Leader's (or designee's) responsibilities will include, but are not limited to:

- making contact with the lead investigator on the scene for specific information
- identifying specialized equipment or skills that may be required to process the scene
- assembling the team
- assessing scene security and communicating any concerns to the requesting agency
- assuring that the crime scene is properly documented
- preparing a diagram of the crime scene including overall measurements of the scene and the location of items of evidence collected at the scene, when appropriate
- determining search patterns, when appropriate
- assigning team member duties
- ensuring any evidence retained by the VCRT is properly marked and sealed before leaving the crime scene, see VCRT 7.3, and that the chain of custody of all evidence recovered from the scene is established
- providing a list of items recovered
- conducting a debriefing with investigators, if they are available
- conducting a final walk through of the scene ensuring any remaining evidence is collected and all laboratory equipment is recovered
- ensuring the integrity of the retained evidence is maintained until placed into secure storage at the laboratory
- ensuring that the VCRT vehicle is restocked upon return from the crime scene

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- preparing a report describing the scene, the evidence collected, and the results of any presumptive tests or procedures performed at the scene as well as any additional required paperwork
- testifying in court, when requested

1.4.8 Crime Scene Team Member

1.4.8.1 The team member is a Forensic Services Division employee who has received specialized training in the recognition, documentation, collection, handling, and processing of evidence at a crime scene.

1.4.8.2 The team member will:

- properly record, collect, and package the evidence identified
- take notes and record their own activities and the results of any presumptive tests or procedures performed at the crime scene
- photograph the crime scene, as necessary
- video record the crime scene, as necessary
- perform other duties as assigned

1.4.9 On-Call Status

1.4.9.1 State-wide on-call coverage is provided by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's three regional crime laboratory's personnel 24-hours a day, every day of the year.

1.4.9.2 Members of the VCRT are included in an on-call roster. This on-call roster should be clear and concise as to the primary responsibilities of the team members and include the coverage for which region of the state each team is responsible.

1.4.9.3 Additional teams or members may respond to a crime scene at the discretion of the Assistant Director of Forensic Services (or designee).

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1.4.9.4 The following expectations apply to the VCRT personnel providing on-call coverage:

1.4.9.4.1 Every effort will be made by the VCRT to depart the laboratory as quickly as possible. VCRT members should routinely be prepared to depart the laboratory within one (1) hour of receiving notification during business hours or two (2) hours during non-business hours. However, certain circumstances may require an expedited departure time (e.g., law enforcement use of force investigations).

1.4.9.4.2 Once an on-call schedule has been published, team members will make every effort to cover the days/weeks that they have been scheduled.

1.4.9.4.3 If team members are unable to cover their call due to a personal conflict or illness, the team member will be responsible for finding their own replacement. This replacement must be approved by the on-call VCRT Leader.

1.4.9.4.4 The Crime Laboratory Regional Supervisor must be notified, as soon as possible, if problems filling shifts are encountered.

1.4.9.4.5 Team members scheduled for court must go off call the day prior to their testimony and go back on call when they are within an hour of their home/crime laboratory.

1.4.9.4.6 While on-call, VCRT members shall remain fit for duty.