

TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
Forensic Services Division

Violent Crime Response Team Standard Operating Procedures
Diagramming and Sketching



10. VCRT Procedures

10.17 Crime Scene Sketching/Diagramming

10.17.1 Scope

Sketches can help a VCRT Member recall the details of a crime. They also help persons who were not present, such as prosecutors, courts, and jury members, to better understand the crime scene. Sketches offer a record of the relationship and measurements of items at the scene to each other and help supplement photographs. Crime scene sketches are also used for creating the final crime scene diagram.

10.17.2 Definitions

Refer to VCRT 11.0 Definitions and Abbreviations

10.17.3 Chemicals and Reagents

None

10.17.4 Equipment and Supplies

Pen
Pencil
Paper

10.17.5 Procedure

There are several different styles of sketches. The choice of which of the following methods to be used is the choice of the VCRT Member.

Floor Plan

A floor plan or "bird's eye view" sketch is the most common type of sketch. It is a sketch on one horizontal plane that shows the scene as if viewed from above. It can show the crime scene or a portion of the crime scene.

Elevation

A sketch of one vertical plane that illustrates the scene as viewed from the side. An elevation sketch is used when the vertical rather than the horizontal is of interest. For example, if bloodstains or bullet holes were observed on a wall, the elevation drawing of the wall would be used to depict this scene.

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Exploded View

An exploded view sketch is a floor plan/overview diagram drawn with the addition of vertical walls folded outward into the horizontal plane of the diagram.

Perspective

The perspective sketch is a sketch that depicts objects of evidence as they would appear to the eye with reference to relative distance and depth. This type of sketch is similar to what an artist would draw.

A sketch and diagram will include, at a minimum, the following information

- Compass orientation
- Items of evidence/markers
- Permanent reference points
- Not to scale
- Laboratory case number
- Date
- Scene location
- Initials or name of sketcher (rough sketch only)
- Initials of VCRT Members (final diagram only)
- Date and time diagram started and finished (rough sketch only)
- Initials or name(s) of individuals making measurements (rough sketch only)
- Additional objects that clarify relative locations of evidence (e.g., furniture, geographical features, roads, etc.)

It is important to keep the objects in a crime scene sketch in proportion to one another, insofar as possible.

All relevant items of evidence must be individually identified.

Refer to section VCRT 2.3 for information regarding sketches or diagrams.