

# **TENNESSEE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

## *Forensic Services Division*

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### **Violent Crime Response Team Standard Operating Procedures**

#### **Collecting Fire Debris**

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## **10.28 Collecting Fire Debris**

### **10.28.1 Purpose**

This procedure provides general guidelines in the collection of fire debris and flammable liquids.

### **10.28.2 Equipment & Reagents**

Metal paint cans  
Shovel

### **10.28.3 Procedure**

**10.28.3.1** When processing a suspected arson scene, the following items should be collected :

- All igniting devices
- Charred debris and related material from where the accelerant was placed
- Samples of carpeting, padding, plaster, upholstery, wood or other substances that may have been penetrated by flammable liquids. Any fresh stains should be collected.
- Samples of soil which may have been saturated by flammable fluids
- Suspect clothing worn at the time of the crime, including shoes, if appropriate
- Liquids containing possible accelerants
- Broken glass from bottles and material used as a wick from an incendiary device ("Molotov cocktail")

**10.28.3.2** When collecting arson evidence:

- Use clean unused airtight metal paint cans.
- Do not completely fill the paint cans with debris (should be no more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  full)
- Seal each collected item separately and securely.
- Mark all containers with appropriate identifiers.
- Document locations from which evidence samples were collected in the notes, sketches, and photographs.