
Crime and Disaster Scene Integrity

403.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The protection and integrity of a crime scene is of the utmost importance for the successful apprehension of criminals and successful prosecution. The integrity of a disaster scene is equally as critical for the protection of life and property and investigation by proper authorities.

403.2 CRIME SCENE RESPONSIBILITY

The first deputy at the scene of a crime or major incident is generally responsible for taking reasonable efforts to preserve the scene. Deputies shall also consider officer safety and public safety, including reasonable efforts to render medical aid to any obviously injured parties. Once a deputy has assumed or been assigned to maintain the integrity of the crime/disaster scene, the deputy shall continue to do so until he/she is relieved by a supervisor.

403.2.1 FIRST RESPONDER CONSIDERATIONS

The following list generally describes the functions which the first responder should reasonably attempt to take at a crime or disaster scene. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive, is not necessarily in order and may be altered according to the demands of each situation, the availability of resources, capacity of personnel and totality of each circumstance:

- (a) Ensure no suspects are still in the area.
- (b) Broadcast emergency information, including all requests for additional assistance.
- (c) Provide first aid to injured parties if it can be done safely.
- (d) Evacuate the location as required.
- (e) Secure the inner and outer perimeter if needed.
- (f) Protect items of apparent evidentiary value.
- (g) Identify potential witnesses.
- (h) Start a chronological log noting critical times and personnel allowed access.

403.2.2 EXECUTION OF HEALTH ORDERS

Any sworn member of this department is authorized to enforce all orders of the local health officer that have been issued for the purpose of preventing the spread of any contagious, infectious or communicable disease (Health and Safety Code § 120155).

403.3 SEARCHES AT CRIME OR DISASTER SCENES

Deputies arriving at crime or disaster scenes are often faced with the immediate need to search for and render aid to victims and determine if suspects are present and continue to pose a threat. Once deputies are satisfied that no additional suspects are present and/or there are no injured persons to be treated, those exigent circumstances will likely no longer exist. Deputies should

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thereafter secure the scene and conduct no further search until proper authority for the search is obtained.

403.3.1 CONSENT

Deputies should seek consent to search from authorized individuals where possible. However, in the case of serious crimes or major investigations, it may be prudent to obtain a search warrant. Consent may be sought even in cases where a search warrant has been granted.