09-003 Use of Crime Scene Barriers

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTIVE

Field Operations Support Services

USE OF CRIME SCENE BARRIERS

Purpose

This directive establishes procedures for the use of crime scene barriers.

Background

Homicide scenes are often contained for extended periods of time as homicide investigators gather the necessary information for the preparation of their case. Often the victim and/or victims have been left at the scene of the crime pending the completion of the investigation and the recovery of the body by the Coroner's Office. In these cases the victim(s) may be in an area that is visible to the general public for an extended period of time. In order to preserve the dignity of the victim(s), crime scene barriers should be considered in order to help eliminate the view of the victim(s) from the general public.

Policy and Procedures

At the scene of a dead body or homicide, the responsibility for preliminary investigation lies with the initial responding deputy sheriff. Once emergency services have responded and concluded that the victim is deceased and will be left at the scene for further investigation by Homicide Bureau detectives and the ultimate recovery of the body by the Coroner's Office, the following procedures should be followed:

The initial responding deputy shall be responsible for establishing, protecting, and preserving the crime scene until relieved by Homicide Bureau detectives. The scene shall be secured, contained, and sectored (separate areas for homicide investigators, command staff, media, and general public). A Major Incident Log (SH-CR-620) shall be maintained by the handling deputy until all Department personnel have left the scene and the containment is discontinued.

In cases wherein the remains are visible to the general public and/or the media, and the scene cannot be sufficiently contained using conventional methods, (complete closure of the area, crime scene tape, or the use of radio cars) crime scene barriers should be considered in order to preserve the dignity of the deceased.

Crime scene barriers shall be maintained at each station/unit within Field Operations Regions, and all stations shall have the ability to deploy them at any time. Once it has been determined by the handling deputy that a crime scene barrier is necessary, the handling unit (handling deputy, field supervisor, or watch commander) shall contact the Homicide Bureau lieutenant and obtain concurrence prior to deploying the crime scene barrier. The contact person should get an ETA for Homicide Bureau's response to the crime scene. Should

Homicide Bureau have an extended ETA, the contact person should request deployment of the crime scene barrier. Only after obtaining the concurrence of the Homicide Bureau lieutenant should the crime scene barrier be erected.

The unit should request deployment of the barrier via desk personnel (preferably via the MDT/MDC system). Desk personnel will assign an uninvolved unit to respond to the station, or barrier storage location, to pick-up the crime scene barrier for deployment.

Placement of the barrier shall be done so as not to interfere with any potential evidence (i.e., do not place the support post over the flow of bodily fluid). All reasonable efforts shall be made to ensure that the crime scene is maintained intact pending the arrival of Homicide Bureau detectives.

The crime scene barrier shall remain in place, unless otherwise directed by Homicide Bureau detectives to have it removed. Upon conclusion of the investigation and recovery of the body by the Coroner's Office, the crime scene barrier shall be returned to the original storage location. In the event the crime scene barrier becomes contaminated while at a crime scene, it shall be cleaned prior to storage.

Decontamination of the crime scene barrier shall be done as follows: If the barrier comes into contact with any biological evidence at the scene, they shall be cleaned with a 20% bleach solution (household chlorine bleach will suffice). There are also cleaners available from forensic supply companies that can be purchased for use.

Cites/References

FOD 93-7	Handling of a Crime Scene Involving a Person Dead and an Unruly or Hostile Crowd
Newsletter #80	Homicide Scene Preservation
Newsletter #94	Crime Scene Secondary Perimeter Containment