


# PINE BLUFF POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL

	<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER 300</b>
	<b>MAJOR CRIME SCENES</b>	<b>ISSUE DATE 02/19/2008</b>
	<b>CHAPTER: INVESTIGATIONS</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE 02/19/2008</b>
	<b>ISSUED By:</b> Chief of Police John E. Howell	<b>TOTAL PAGES 4</b>

## I. PURPOSE

The actions taken by patrol and investigative officers at crime scenes often determine the course and success of a criminal investigation. Initial responding officers play the lead role by protecting the crime scene, rendering emergency services and initiating the investigation. Thus, it is the purpose of this policy to provide officers with guidelines for responding to and dealing effectively with the operational demands at the crime scenes.

## II. POLICY

It is the policy of this Department that all officers understand and follow applicable procedures established herein to effectively protect, collect and preserve evidence of a crime and conduct initial investigative and other essential tasks at major crime scenes.

## III. PROCEDURES

### A. INITIAL RESPONSE

1. Initial responding officers shall initiate the preliminary investigation and perform tasks as designated below until otherwise directed by a superior officer, detective or other officer specifically assigned to criminal investigations.
2. In transit to crime scenes, officers shall be cognizant of suspects/vehicles that may be in flight.
3. Upon arrival, verify that a crime has been committed and relay essential information to communications.
4. Administer first aid and/or summon emergency medical assistance if required and take those steps necessary to protect victims or others.

5. Arrest the perpetrator if at the scene. A decision to leave the crime scene to arrest or pursue the perpetrator should be made based on weighing the immediate needs of victims and others against the safety of the public if the perpetrator were allowed to escape.
6. Provide communications with such information as:
  - a. Nature of the crime committed;
  - b. Description of the perpetrator and mode/direction of flight;
  - c. Description of any vehicle used by the offender and any accomplices;
  - d. Use of firearms or other deadly weapons; and
  - e. Any support required at the crime scene.
7. Identify any witnesses to the crime, secure their identities and request that they remain present at the crime scene until they can be interviewed.
  - a. Where reasonably possible, obtain the identities on any other persons who were present upon arrival at the crime scene.
  - b. Note the license tags of vehicles parked near or continually driving past the crime scene and be aware of suspicious persons on hand at or near the crime scene.
8. Provide superior officers and any other investigative personnel arriving on the scene with complete information on the offense and the measures taken thus far by officers and others.

**B. PRESERVATION OF THE CRIME SCENE**

1. Responding officers shall enter crime scenes only for purposes of aiding victims or bystanders in need of immediate assistance, apprehending perpetrators or securing the area. Other entries shall be permitted only under direction of a supervisor.
2. Officers making initial entries for the above purposes shall, where feasible, avoid touching, walking upon, moving objects or otherwise altering or contaminating the crime scene.
3. Define the boundaries of the crime scene to include all areas that may reasonably be searched for evidence. As necessary, considering the nature and seriousness of the crime, officers should:
  - a. Request backup assistance to restrict access to the crime scene and control any on-lookers;



**D. INTERVIEWING WITNESSES**

Witnesses at the crime scene shall be identified and preliminary interviews conducted as soon as possible. As soon as possible, the neighborhood surrounding the crime scene should be canvassed in order to identify additional witnesses or others who may have some knowledge of the crime. The purpose and scope of these interviews is to gather as much basic information as possible about the crime at the earliest point possible in order to identify the perpetrator and establish the basis for the follow-up investigation.

**E. CRIME SCENE REPORTING**

1. Officers conducting the preliminary and follow-up investigations shall complete appropriate reports in accordance with agency policy. At a minimum, reports shall include.
  - a. Date and time of arrival at the scene;
  - b. Any relevant weather or situational conditions at the scene to include the status of the crime scene upon arrival (e.g., fire, crowds, and initial observations);
  - c. How the crime was discovered and reported and the relationship of reporting individuals to victims or others if appropriate;
  - d. Identity of other officers or emergency personnel present upon arrival and those who responded to the crime scene thereafter;
  - e. Physical evidence discovered and officers responsible for collection (special note should be made of any valuables collected at the scene, such as currency or jewelry);
  - f. Name, address and telephone number, or other appropriate identification of witnesses to the crime;
  - g. Results of interviews with victims and witnesses to include in particular the identity or best possible description of suspects, method of operation, means of escape and any other pertinent identifying information;
  - h. Diagrams, sketches, photographs video tape or other similar information made at the scene or the identity of officers or civilians who made such recordings; and
  - i. Recommendations for further investigation such as the names of witnesses or others who may be able to provide additional information.