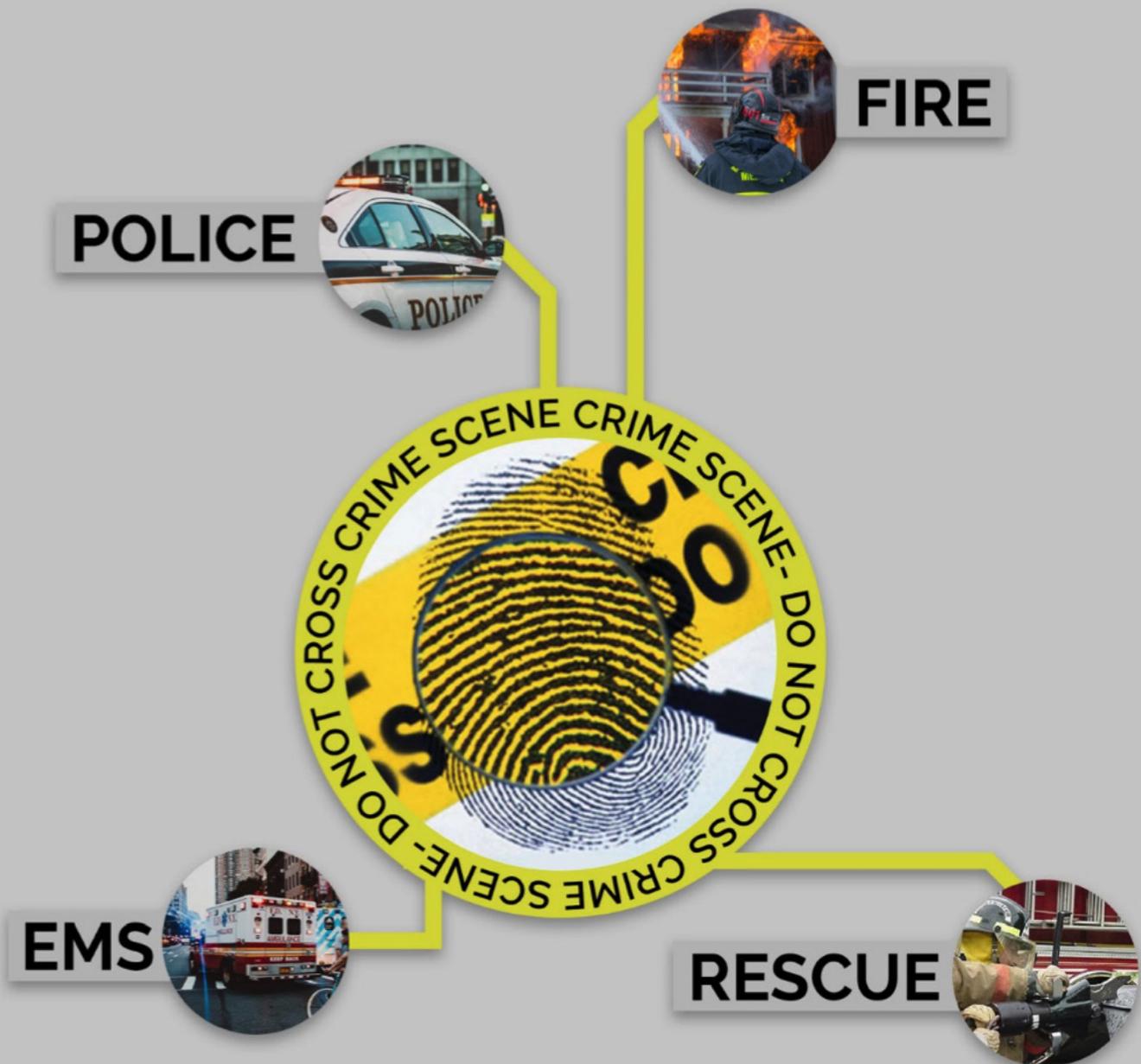


Crime Scene Response

Security, Safety, and Preservation

Overview of the Roles of First Responders at Crimes Scenes and Practical Applications for Improved Collaboration and Coordination



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Andrew Vallee | September 2018

The Crime Scene

The initial response to a violent crime scene can be hectic and overwhelming. The various public safety professionals involved whether patrol officer, detective, firefighter or EMT are all tasked with rapidly responding to provide aid to those in need and secure the scene all while preserving evidence. A swift, coordinated response is key to ensuring that critical evidence and information is not tampered with or overlooked. It is important to understand the individual responsibilities of each responding professional and how they come together in support of one common mission – supporting the victim and ultimately the investigation of the crime.

This quick reference guide and crime scene report template provides an overview of the roles of first responders at crime scenes and practical applications for improving collaboration and coordination.

First Responder Roles

The responsibilities of law enforcement, fire, and EMS are usually very different and unique. This can often create challenges at the crime scene.

- Law enforcement personnel are focused on public safety and investigating crimes.
- Fire personnel are focused on fire suppression and rescue efforts.
- EMS personnel are focused on patient care and safety.

While roles and priorities may vary, all three professionals play a critical role in crime scene management. Each person regardless of discipline must work to understand and respect the individual goals of each. For example, fire and EMS

personnel can assist law enforcement in the identification, documentation and preservation of evidence. First responders are often first to arrive on-scene and possess knowledge through on scene observations and communication with the victims or witnesses which may aid in the investigation of a crime and case resolution. Failure to share information may unintentionally subject the victim to future harm, lead to evidence contamination, and disrupt the investigation.

Considerations

A collaborative relationship between law enforcement, fire, and EMS is necessary to promote successful outcomes. Below are considerations for both law enforcement and first responders to promote information sharing.

- Be aware of your surroundings and make mental notes of what you see, hear, smell, or feel. Document your notes and observations for later reporting to responding law enforcement.
- Be aware of others that may be responding to and impact your crime scene such as coroners and medical examiners. Develop policies for information sharing and coordination with all partners.
- Relay critical information to the on-scene law enforcement officer regarding statements related to weapons, suspects, victims/witnesses, and additional safety concerns.
- Relay information related to any potential evidence that may have been opened or moved while providing aid to victims/witnesses.
- Complete a crime scene report in addition to the run/incident report and share that report with the responding law enforcement agency as soon as possible.

Conclusion

In conclusion, cooperation and coordination in advance of crime scene response can significantly improve outcomes. Information sharing and cross-training, where appropriate, between law enforcement agencies and first responders can help to mitigate any challenges and support successful outcomes. The attached template report can be used by all responding agencies to support their shared goals of responding to the scene and securing critical evidence.

About the Author

Andrew Vallee is the CEO of CellComm, LLC. Andrew specializes in law enforcement training, technology, consultation. As a Special Agent with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI), he is assigned to the Technical Services Unit and specializes in digital forensics, cellular network analysis, WiFi analysis, and various other technology related disciplines. Prior to joining the TBI, Special Agent Vallee worked as a Detective with the Metro Nashville Police Department. He has worked in law enforcement for 18 years and has been a law enforcement instructor for over 12 years. He is currently appointed to the Scientific Working Group on Digital Evidence (SWGDE) and is a member of the American Academy of Forensic Science - Digital and Multimedia Section.

Police, Fire, and EMS Crime Scene Report

Police Case #:

This report is designed to provide essential details to police investigators regarding your actions at the crime scene. Please answer all of the questions as completely and accurately as possible. If an item is not applicable, please mark it as "n/a".
 This report should be completed by each member of the first response teams that entered the crime scene.

Name of Official Completing Report:		ID Number:	
Department Name:			
Shift and Regular Days Off:		Engine/Medic #:	
Station Location/Address:		Telephone #:	
Fire/EMS Incident or Run Number:		Incident Date:	

Arrival on the Scene

Upon arrival, did you observe any unusual persons or activities?	
Did you hear any noises or sounds that are out of the ordinary?	
Where was this crime scene located (outdoors, indoors, etc.)?	
Where did you park the emergency vehicles?	

Entering and Exiting the Crime Scene

Did you observe any forced entry upon your arrival?			
How did you gain entry (front door, window, etc.)?			
Was your point of entry closed or locked?		Was forced entry required?	YES NO
If forced entry was required, how was it accomplished (foot, pry bar, etc.)?			
List the path you took from the point of entry until leaving (exp: front door, foyer, hall, bedroom, hall, foyer, exited front door):			

Inside the Crime Scene

What type of shoes/boots were you wearing (fire boots, tennis shoes, etc.)?			
If known, what brand of shoe/boot?		What size shoe/boot?	
Did you wear gloves the entire time in the scene?	Yes No	Type of gloves worn:	Latex Leather Other
Was anything touched without gloves on?	Yes No	If so, what:	
List any items that were moved or altered:			
List any trash or equipment that was left on scene:			
If applicable, who was transported from scene?			
Where was the victim transported to?			
Were any personal items removed from the victim?		If so, what:	
If applicable, by what means and what time was death determined:			

Report Continues on Reverse



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