CONCEPT

Crime Scene Management: Scene Security, Evidence Recovery and Chain of Custody



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Introduction:

Crime scene management decides whether physical evidence survives to court. Cases fail when cordons are set too small, scene logs have gaps, items are packed in the wrong container or a transfer between custodians goes unrecorded. Investigators and scene staff must secure, record, search and recover in the right order, then prove continuity for every exhibit. This Core Concept course builds that practice through a staged mock scene simulation, from first attendance to courtroom testimony. Participants produce a Crime Scene Management Plan and Exhibit Continuity Log for their own unit.

Course Objectives:

- Carry out first-responder duties at a scene, including preserving life, identifying the scene boundary and opening a scene attendance log
- Assess a scene and set inner and outer cordons, common approach paths and access controls that limit contamination
- Record a scene through notes, photography and measured sketches that another examiner can follow and reproduce
- Select and run a search method suited to the scene, then recover, package and label physical, trace and biological items to protect their integrity
- Maintain an unbroken chain of custody from recovery through storage, laboratory submission and return, and coordinate scene work with forensic laboratories and partner agencies
- Write a scene statement and present scene evidence under questioning, using a Crime Scene Management Plan and Exhibit Continuity Log

Target Audience:

- Police investigators responsible for attending scenes and building the evidential case file
- Crime scene officers responsible for recording scenes and recovering exhibits
- Security and loss investigators responsible for protecting incident sites until handover
- Forensic liaison staff responsible for laboratory submissions and exhibit tracking
- Exhibits and property store staff responsible for evidence storage, movement and disposal records

Course Outline:

Day 1: Scene Roles, First Response and Initial Assessment

- Crime Scene Management Lifecycle from First Attendance to Court
- First Officer Attending Checklist: Life, Scene, Witnesses and Suspects
- Roles of Scene Manager, Scene Examiner, Exhibits Officer and Investigator
- Initial Scene Assessment and Scene Boundary Decision Record
- Scene Attendance Log Opening and Entry and Exit Control

Day 2: Evidence Principles, Cordons and Scene Documentation

- Locard's Exchange Principle Applied to Transfer and Trace Evidence
- Inner and Outer Cordons and the Common Approach Path Plan
- Contemporaneous Scene Notes and Pocket Notebook Standards
- Scene Photography Sequence: Overall, Mid-Range and Close-Up with Scale
- Measured Scene Sketch Using Baseline and Triangulation Methods

Day 3: Search, Recovery, Packaging and Chain of Custody

- Search Patterns: Line, Grid, Spiral, Zone and Strip Methods
- Physical, Trace and Biological Item Recognition at Overview Level
- Packaging Selection: Paper, Rigid Containers, Tamper-Evident Seals and Drying
- Exhibit Labelling, Individual Reference Numbers and Continuity Statements
- Digital Devices at the Scene: Isolation, Power State Recording and Handover

Day 4: Contamination Control, Laboratories and Complex Scenes

- Contamination Risk Controls: Protective Clothing, Scene Zoning and Elimination Samples
- Evidence Integrity Failures: Broken Seals, Unrecorded Transfers and Storage Lapses
- Forensic Laboratory Submission Form and Examination Request Priorities
- Major-Incident Scene Management: Multiple Scenes, Rendezvous Points and Handover
- Multi-Agency Scene Coordination and Shared Exhibit Protocols

Day 5: Scene Simulation, Court Preparation and the Scene Plan

- Staged Mock Scene Simulation: Attendance, Cordon and Recording Under Time Pressure
- Exhibit Recovery and Continuity Audit of the Simulated Scene
- Scene Examiner Statement Writing and Exhibit Schedule Preparation
- Courtroom Testimony Rehearsal: Examination and Cross-Examination on Continuity
- Crime Scene Management Plan and Exhibit Continuity Log Drafting

Skills You Will Gain:

- Scene Preservation
- Cordon Planning
- Scene Photography and Sketching
- Systematic Scene Search
- Exhibit Packaging and Labelling
- Evidence Continuity Control
- Forensic Laboratory Liaison
- Courtroom Evidence Presentation

Why Attend This Course:

- Return with a Crime Scene Management Plan and Exhibit Continuity Log adapted to the scenes your unit attends
- Rehearse scene attendance, recording and recovery on a timed mock scene before facing the pressure of a live incident
- Close the continuity gaps that most often lead defence teams to challenge exhibits
- Compare scene practice with investigators and security professionals from policing, transport, energy, retail and public facilities

Conclusion:

Physical evidence carries weight only when the scene was protected, recorded and searched in order and each exhibit can be traced from recovery to the witness box. The one week move from first response and scene roles, through cordons, documentation and search, to packaging, continuity, laboratory work and complex multi-agency scenes. The final day runs a timed mock scene and courtroom rehearsal and closes with a Crime Scene Management Plan and Exhibit Continuity Log ready for use at work.