

**POLICY
405**

**EFFECTIVE
DATE
6-5-13**

**Eugene
Police Department**



405 Preliminary Investigations

405.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Our first response to a report that a crime has been committed is to conduct a preliminary investigation. We do this to collect evidence which establishes that the crime occurred, to identify the person(s) responsible, and to arrest and convict them. The assigned police officer or CSO will be responsible for the investigation unless the crime is major, or that officer does not possess the technical skills to do the necessary investigation. More detailed information on certain types of investigations is contained in other general orders in this series.

405.2 GENERAL GUIDELINES

- (a) Seek corroborating physical and other evidence.
- (b) Never rely on just one source of information.
- (c) Determine whether the lapse in time between the offense and notification seems reasonable.
- (d) Consider discrepancies in the victim's statements or between statements given by the victim and witnesses.
- (e) Gather information which will be useful in locating the suspect(s).

405.3 RESPONSE TO THE SCENE

- (a) As you respond to the scene:
 - 1. Prepare mentally
 - 2. Look for suspicious people or vehicles leaving the scene.
- (b) Upon arrival at the scene:
 - 1. Make a quick survey to determine who is present, the location of objects, and what seems to have occurred.
 - 2. Determine if anyone is injured and, if so, render first aid and seek medical assistance. If there is a need to provide medical assistance, try to photograph and/or mark the position of the victim prior to the victim being moved.
 - 3. Identify and protect the crime scene.
 - 4. Identify the victim, all witnesses, all suspects (including vehicles), and all stolen or damaged property. You will also need to, as much as you can,

determine the time, location, and sequence of the events constituting the crime.

5. The victim (who is often the complainant) is normally the first person to be interviewed.
6. Try to establish a rapport with all those present, especially the victim.

405.4 DEALING WITH VICTIMS

- (a) Remember that victims are often in shock: their personal space, or their person, has been violated. Remain calm; be sympathetic, supportive, and try to understand the victim.
- (b) Before you ask specific questions, get a general description of what happened. This enables the victim to calm down, and gives you an overall understanding of events.
- (c) Remain neutral; do not inject moral or social criticism.
- (d) After you establish rapport, ask questions about the specifics of the crime.
- (e) Advise the victim of appropriate victim's assistance options.

405.5 LOCATING WITNESSES

- (a) Witnesses are usually the most important source of information about a crime since they are generally not as emotionally impacted as victims may be. Locate and interview as many witnesses as possible.
- (b) Talk to persons who are on the scene upon arrival.
- (c) Ask witnesses who else might have seen what happened.
- (d) Determine locations which are logical places for witnesses to be at the time of the crime.
- (e) Thoroughly search the area surrounding the crime location to identify people who may have seen the crime occur.
- (f) Report witnesses' names, addresses, and telephone numbers, as well as a statement of what they saw, heard, or know about the incident.
- (g) Document locations where witnesses have been unsuccessfully sought to aid follow-up investigators.

405.6 SUSPECTS

- (a) Once witnesses, victims, and other people with knowledge of the crime have been identified, contact known suspects. If the suspect cannot be immediately located, broadcast suspect name(s) or description(s).
- (b) Learn if the suspect can be identified in the future, and if so, by whom.

(c) If the victim or witness knows where a suspect can be located, even though the name of the suspect is unknown, attempt to locate and identify the suspect.

(d) If the victim or witness saw a suspect who can later be identified, obtain a more detailed description.

(e) When an identification is only tentative, use any of the following to establish identity:

1. Detailed physical description
2. Composite or artist's drawing
3. Line-up identifications (in-person or photographic)
4. More data

405.7 SUSPECT VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION

(a) You may identify suspect vehicles from:

1. Witnesses
2. Physical evidence found at the crime scene
3. Police reports (e.g., stolen vehicle, accident)
4. Computer files

(b) Obtain the following information:

1. Type of vehicle (e.g., automobile, bicycle, motorcycle)
2. License plate number and state of issue (even if partial)
3. Year, make, model, and body style
4. Color(s)
5. Distinctive markings (e.g., signs, decals, bumper stickers, damage)

(c) Immediately broadcast any suspect vehicle description.

405.8 IDENTIFYING MODUS OPERANDI (MO)

(a) This section is also a guide to the kind of information you will need to collect. It may help you solve only this crime, or it may help others connect this crime with other crimes.

(b) Look for a pattern of activities or a specific trademark which may identify a suspect or group of suspects.

(c) You must determine:

1. How the criminal(s) worked.
2. Type of crime, including the degree of the offense.
3. Time the crime was committed.

(d) If a person was the victim:

1. Activity at the time
2. Location at the time
3. Occupation
4. Age
5. Type of residence (when applicable)

(e) If a business was the victim:

1. Location
2. Type of business
3. Potential for inside information
4. What was the point of entry in a burglary, and how was the entry made (tools, force)?
5. What types of items were taken? not taken?
6. How was the victim approached in a robbery or crime of violence?
7. What were the actions of the suspect prior to, during, and immediately after the incident?
8. Were there any accomplices?
9. Was a weapon used and, if so, what type?
10. How was property demanded from the victim?
11. Any unusual actions of the suspect?

405.9 IDENTIFICATION OF PROPERTY

(a) Stolen property can be a silent witness to the commission of a crime and help identify the suspect.

(b) Ask for and record complete property descriptions. In addition to make, model, and serial number, include the following:

1. Dents, scratches, marks, or missing pieces?
2. Has it been repaired?
3. Is there a bill of sale or owner's manual available which may list the serial number?
4. Is there a photograph of the stolen item?
5. Is there anyone else who would be better able to describe the item?
6. Is the item marked with any personal identification number? If so, what is the number and where is it marked?

(c) When recording stolen property, include credit cards, ATM cards, and check-cashing guarantee cards.

(d) If there is a likelihood of additional stolen property (or additional descriptive information becoming available), leave a Victim's Supplemental Report Form with the victim, with instructions to mail, fax, or bring it to Police Headquarters for inclusion with the original report package. (If the victim is able to provide information on *serialized* property, that information should be phoned to the Desk Officer for more timely data entry.)

405.10 SECURITY AND PROTECTION OF THE CRIME SCENE

(a) For those incidents requiring it, initial responding officers should establish and maintain crime scene security (after aid is rendered to victims) until otherwise directed by a supervisor.

(b) Take all reasonable precautions to protect yourself from contamination from hazardous materials (including body fluids). You may need protective clothing: disposable gloves, shoe covers, face masks or coveralls.

(c) Preserve any observed physical evidence by posting additional personnel as needed and protecting such evidence as footprints, tire marks, instruments of the crime, or stains.

405.11 CRIME SCENE SEARCH

(a) The nature of the crime will determine the amount of time spent on a crime scene search.

(b) If possible, locate points of entry and exit used by the suspect.

(c) Dust for fingerprints at the points of entry and exit, and in any other location which could be an integral part of the crime scene.

(d) Search the area for evidence that could be associated with the offense, such as:

1. Implements used
2. Stolen property which has been dropped, hidden, or abandoned
3. Suspect's personal effects
4. Suspect's footprints

(e) Remember there is much in the way of evidence which may be discovered at or around a scene which, by itself, seems insignificant, but when added to other facts, could help solve the case.

(f) Make accurate records of the crime scene and locations where evidence was seized.

(g) Unless there is a justifiable reason for not doing so, take photographs at all felony crime scenes.

405.12 PREPARING THE INCIDENT REPORT

(a) Refer to *Report System Manual* for complete instructions on incident and preliminary investigation reports.

(b) The primary officer is responsible for preparing the original incident report unless that function is reassigned by a supervisor or the assigned investigator.

405.13 PERSONAL INVESTIGATIVE NOTES

a. If you take personal investigative notes, use them to write your report. Your report should include a complete and accurate representation of the contents of those notes.

b. Personal investigative notes, whether hand written or electronic, are public records under ORS 192.005(5). OAR 166-2000100(50) requires that officer notes be retained for a minimum of two (2) years.

c. Whether captured on a personal phone or City-owned device, pictures, video and audio recordings that are not part of an investigatory file or managed by the Coban ICV system must also be retained for a minimum of two (2) years.

PETE M. KERNS
Chief of Police