

City of Johns Creek Police Department

<i>Subject:</i> Investigative Operations - Preliminary Investigations	<i>Number:</i> 02-34
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PURPOSE:

The success or failure of a criminal investigation depends upon the thoroughness and the immediacy of the preliminary investigation. What the officer does or fails to do in this phase of the investigation will determine whether the perpetrator is identified and apprehended or goes undetected. The facts and evidence obtained are instrumental in solving the case. The following procedures are intended to assist officers and detectives in conducting investigations.

POLICY (02-34):

Officers officially assigned to perform the preliminary or other investigation of an alleged crime or other incidents are responsible for completing the investigation as directed. This shall include, but is not necessarily limited to, securing statements and other information which will aid in the successful completion of the investigation and locating, collecting and preserving physical evidence material to the case.

PROCEDURES:

Arrival at the Scene (02-34-01)

[REDACTED]

A crime scene log shall be completed.

The officer should consult with the Shift Supervisor to determine if a detective should be called out to the scene. If a detective is called out, he/she will be in charge of the scene. If a serious crime has been committed, the CID Lieutenant or his/her designee should be informed as soon as possible. Such crimes include, but are not limited to:

1. All death investigations (except traffic related fatalities)
2. Assault and battery
3. Kidnapping
4. Cruelty to children

5. Rape and other sex offenses, including child molestations
6. Robbery

If the crime is of a minor nature and no follow-up investigation is necessary, the case will be handled by the Uniform Patrol Division and no detective will be called.

Scene of a Serious Injury (02-34-02)

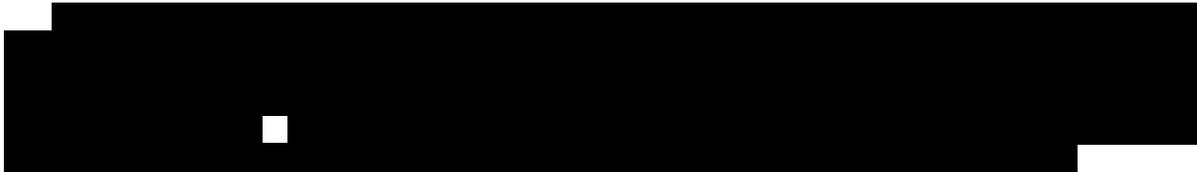
The first officer on the scene will call for medical assistance. Once the victim has been transported to a medical facility, the officer will follow standard crime scene procedures and responsibilities of first responding officer(s).

Scene of a Natural Death (02-34-03)

If the officer believes the victim died of natural causes, the shift supervisor shall contact the on-call investigator and he/she will determine if a response is necessary, the notification and response shall be documented in the incident report. The Medical Examiner will have the authority to release the body in the event of a natural death. If the Medical Examiner rules that the death is not natural or is suspicious, the officer will follow the procedures for a violent or suspicious death.

Violent or Suspicious Death (02-34-04)

Upon arrival, the officer will request the medical technician to stand by and will detain all witnesses. The Shift Supervisor will notify Communications, and request that a detective and the Medical Examiner be sent to the scene.



Upon completion of the crime scene search and investigation, the detective will release the body to the Medical Examiner with a request for an autopsy if deemed appropriate, or for appropriate disposition of the body. The Medical Examiner also has the authority to release the body and decide, with input from the detective, if an autopsy is appropriate.

Preliminary Investigation – First Officer On-Scene (02-34-05)

The first officer arriving at the scene of a crime or other police incident is responsible for the following actions as they may apply to the situation:

1. Administer first aid and summon additional assistance if needed.
2. Protect and preserve the scene; observe and record all conditions, events, and remarks.
3. Determine if an offense has been committed, and if so, the exact nature of the offense.
4. Identify any suspect(s) and effect an arrest if possible, either at the scene or through immediate pursuit.
5. If the suspect has left the scene, obtain a description if possible and furnish other units with the description, method, and direction of flight of wanted person(s) or vehicle(s).
6. Detain all witnesses and record their names and addresses.

Crime Scene Search (02-34-06)

A methodical search of the crime scene should be conducted using a search plan. Any evidence should be photographed and sketched before handling, if necessary.

Officers should assure the integrity of physical evidence by avoiding touching, handling or stepping on anything until the entire scene has been analyzed. Officers should keep in mind that nothing is too small or too insignificant to have investigative value. Articles which are foreign to the scene, (e.g., equipment, supplies, coffee cups, etc.) must not appear in any crime scene photographs. The scene must be depicted exactly as it was found.

When possible, all vehicles related to the incident should be processed at the scene. If it becomes necessary to remove vehicles before processing, they should be impounded, with the assurance that they will be protected.

Crime scene processing must continue until it is completed. The CSI or officer in charge of the scene will ensure all evidence is collected in accordance with agency policy. Once a crime scene is abandoned, if only for a short time, it is often impossible to gain possession of the premises again. No portion of a major crime scene will be released without the approval of the CID Lieutenant and/or appropriate supervisor.

Conducting Preliminary Investigations (02-34-07)

The scope of a preliminary investigation may be very restricted or it may constitute the entire investigation of the crime. The preliminary investigation should be continued to the point that it would not be jeopardized by a delay. Upon arriving at the crime scene, the officer or detective should determine if there are any suspects and/or witnesses to the crime. The officer should also observe and document all conditions, events and remarks when first arriving on scene. At this point, the officer conducting the preliminary investigation should:

1. [REDACTED] Attempt to locate and identify additional witnesses.
2. Interview victims and/or complainants. Any revisions to descriptions should be broadcast as soon as possible.
3. Interrogate any suspects. If possible, tape the interview for evidence.
4. Ensure the scene is processed for evidence. All evidence must be documented, photographed and, if necessary, submitted to the crime laboratory and property room. The crime scene shall be photographed and a crime scene sketch prepared in warranted cases.
5. The incident and any actions taken by the investigating officer shall be reported fully and accurately in an incident or supplement report. The report will include all known facts and all evidence gathered.

42.2.1
42.2.2