PENNSYLVANIA CORONERS DEATH INVESTIGATION SUGGESTED GUIDELINES

Arriving at the Scene

Upon arrival at the scene, and prior to entering the scene, the investigator should:
A. Identify the lead investigator at the scene and present identification.
B. Identify other essential officials at the scene (e.g., law enforcement, fire, EMS, social/child protective services) and explain the investigator's role in the investigation.
C. Identify and document the identity of the first essential official(s) to the scene (first "professional" arrival at the scene for investigative follow-up) to ascertain if any artifacts or contamination may have been introduced to the death scene.
D. Determine the scene safety and security (prior to entry).

Rationale: Introductions at the scene help to establish a collaborative investigative effort. It is necessary to carry identification in the event of questioned authority. It is essential to establish scene safety and security prior to entry.

1. Exercise Scene Safety and Security

Upon arrival at the scene, the investigator should:
A. Assess and/or establish physical boundaries.
B. Identify incident command.
C. Secure vehicle and park as safely as possible.
D. Use personal protective safety devices (physical, biohazard safety).
E. Arrange for removal of animals or secure (if present and possible).
F. Obtain clearance/authorization to enter scene from the individual responsible for scene safety and security (e.g., fire marshal, disaster coordinator).
G. While exercising scene safety and security, protect the integrity of the scene and evidence to the extent possible from contamination or loss by people, animals and elements. **Note:** Due to potential scene hazards (e.g., crowd control, collapsing structures, poisonous gases, traffic), the body may have to be removed before scene investigation can be continued.

Rationale: Environmental and physical threats to the investigator must be removed in order to conduct a scene investigation safely. Protective devices/equipment must be used by investigative staff to prevent injury. The investigator must endeavor to protect the evidence against contamination or loss.

2. Participate in Scene Briefing (With Attending Agency Representatives)

Scene investigators must recognize the varying jurisdictional and statutory responsibilities that apply to individual agency representatives (e.g., law enforcement, fire, EMT, judicial/ legal). Determining each agency's investigative responsibility at the scene is essential in planning the scope and depth of each scene investigation and official release of information to the public. The investigator shall identify specific responsibilities, share appropriate preliminary information and establish investigative goals of each agency present at the scene.

When participating in scene briefing, the investigator should:

A. Locate the staging area (entry point to scene, command post, etc.).

B. Document the scene location (address, mile marker, building name, latitude and longitude coordinates) consistent with other agencies.

C. Determine nature and scope of investigation by obtaining preliminary investigative details (e.g., suspicious versus non-suspicious death, multiple scenes).

D. Confirm that initial accounts of incident are obtained from the first witness(es).

Rationale: Scene briefing allows for initial and factual information exchange. This includes scene location, time factors, initial witness information, agency responsibilities and investigative strategy.
Note: Since current global positioning system (GPS) devices may have error, it is important to establish the location using other reference points (permanent landmarks) and distance/bearing from landmarks whenever GPS is used.

3. Conduct Scene "Walk Through"

Upon arrival at the scene, the investigator should:

A. Reassess scene boundaries and adjust as appropriate.

B. Establish a path of entry and exit to include scene log.

C. Identify visible physical and fragile evidence.

D. Document and photograph fragile evidence immediately and collect if appropriate.

E. Locate and view the decedent.

Rationale: The initial scene "walk through" is essential to minimize scene disturbance and to prevent the loss and contamination of physical and fragile evidence.

4. Establish Chain of Custody

Throughout the investigation, those responsible for preserving the chain of custody should:

A. Document location of the scene and time of arrival of the death investigator at the scene.

B. Determine custodian(s) of evidence, determine which agency(ies) is/are responsible for collection of specific types of evidence, and determine evidence collection priority for fragile/fleeting evidence.

C. Identify, document, secure and preserve evidence with proper containers, labels and preservatives.

D. Document the collection of evidence by recording its location at the scene, time of collection, and time and location of disposition, and by whom.

E. Develop personnel lists and documentation of times of arrival and departure of personnel.

Rationale: It is essential to maintain a proper chain of custody for evidence. Through proper documentation, collection and preservation, the integrity of the evidence can be assured. A properly maintained chain of custody and prompt transfer will reduce the likelihood of a challenge to the integrity of the evidence.

5. Follow Laws (Related to the Collection of Evidence

Identify coroner statutes and office standard operating procedures.

Rationale: Following laws will ensure a complete and proper investigation in compliance with state and local laws, admissibility in court, and adherence to office policies and protocols.

Documenting and Evaluating the Scene

1. Photograph Scene

Upon arrival at the scene, and prior to moving the body or evidence, the investigator should:
A. Remove all nonessential personnel from the scene.
B. Obtain an overall orientation photograph of the scene to spatially locate the specific scene to the surrounding area. Photograph the scene from a distance, mid-range and close-up.
C. Photograph specific areas of the scene to provide more detailed views of specific areas within the larger scene.
D. Photograph the scene from different angles to provide various perspectives that may uncover additional evidence.
E. Obtain photographs with scales to document specific evidence.
F. Obtain photographs even if the body or other evidence has been moved. **Note:** If evidence has been moved prior to photography, it should be noted in the report, but the body or other evidence should not be reintroduced into the scene in order to take photographs.

Rationale: Photography allows for the best permanent documentation of the death scene. It is essential that accurate scene photographs are available for other investigators, agencies and authorities to recreate the scene. Photographs are a permanent record of the terminal event and retain evidentiary value and authenticity. It is essential that the investigator obtain accurate photographs before releasing the scene.

2. Develop Descriptive Documentation of the Scene

After photographic documentation of the scene and prior to removal of the body or other evidence, the investigator should:
A. Diagram/describe in writing items of evidence and their relationship to the body with necessary measurements.

B. Describe and document, with necessary measurements, blood and body fluid evidence, including volume, patterns, spatters and other characteristics.
C. Describe scene environments, including odors, lights, temperatures and other fragile evidence. **Note:** If scene conditions have changed or evidence has been moved prior to written documentation, it should be noted in the report.

Rationale: Written scene documentation is essential to correlate with photographic evidence, refresh recollections, record observations and to re-create the scene for police, forensic(s), and judicial and civil agencies with a legitimate interest.

3. Establish Probable Location of Injury or Illness

The investigator shall obtain detailed information regarding any and all probable locations associated with the individual's death. The investigator should:
A. Document the location where death was confirmed.
B. Determine the location from which the decedent was transported and how the body was transported to the scene.
C. Identify and record discrepancies between the body and the scene (e.g., rigor mortis, livor mortis and body temperature).
D. Check the body, clothing and scene for consistency/inconsistency of trace evidence and indicate the location where artifacts are found.
E. Check for drag marks (on body and ground).
F. Establish post-injury activity.
G. Obtain dispatch (e.g., police, ambulance) record(s).
H. Interview family members and associates as needed.

Rationale: Due to post-injury survival, advances in emergency medical services, multiple modes of transportation, the availability of specialized care, or criminal activity, a body may be moved from the actual location of illness/ injury to a remote site. It is imperative that the investigator attempt to determine any and all locations where the decedent has previously been and the mode of transport from these sites.

4. Collect, Inventory and Safeguard Property and Evidence

The investigator shall ensure that all property and evidence are collected, inventoried, safe-guarded and released as required by law. After personal property and evidence have been identified at the scene, the investigator (with a witness) should:
A. Inventory, collect and safeguard illicit drugs and paraphernalia at the scene and office.
B. Inventory, collect and safeguard prescription medication at the scene and office.
C. Inventory, collect and safeguard over-the-counter medications at the scene and office.
D. Inventory, collect and safeguard money at the scene and office.
E. Inventory, collect and safeguard personal valuables/property at the scene and office.
F. Record any identifying markings on the illegal or illicit drugs or drug paraphernalia.
G. Record any attempts at resuscitation performed on the deceased and the means used.

Rationale: Personal property and evidence are important items at a death investigation. Evidence must be safeguarded to ensure its availability if needed for future evaluation and litigation. Personal property must be safeguarded to ensure its eventual distribution to appropriate agencies or individuals and to reduce the likelihood that the investigator will be accused of stealing property. The inventory should include the name of the person to whom the medication was prescribed, the prescription number, the

pharmacy, the name of the prescriber, dosage, date filled, amount of medication remaining and any instructions for the administration of the drug.

5. Interview Witness(es) at the Scene

The investigator's report shall include the source of information, including specific statements and information provided by the witness. Upon arriving at the scene, the investigator should:
A. Collect all available identifying data on witness(es) (e.g., full name, address, date of birth, contact information).
B. Establish the witness's relationship/ association to the deceased.
C. Establish the basis of the witness's knowledge (how does the witness have knowledge of the death?).
D. Obtain information from each witness individually or as appropriate.
E. Note discrepancies from the scene briefing (challenge, explain, verify statements).
F. Record and retain statements as needed.

Rationale: The investigator's final report must document the witness's identity and must include a summary of the witness's statements, corroboration with other witnesses and the circumstances of discovery of the death. This documentation must exist as a permanent record to establish a chain of events.

6. Photograph the Body

Upon arrival at the scene, and prior to moving the body or evidence, the investigator should:
A. Photograph the body and immediate scene (including the decedent as initially found).
B. Photograph the decedent's face (never clean face, do not change condition).
C. Take additional photographs after removal of objects/items that interfere with photographic documentation of the decedent (e.g., body removed from car).
D. Photograph the decedent with and without measurements (as appropriate).
E. Photograph the surface beneath the body (after the body has been removed, as appropriate).
F**.** Photograph the body from a distance, mid-range and close-up.
Note: Take multiple photographs if possible.

Rationale: The photographic documentation of the body at the scene provides for documentation of the body position, identity and appearance. The details of the body at the scene provide investigators with pertinent information of the terminal events.

7. Conduct External Body Examination (Superficial)

After arrival at the scene and prior to moving the decedent, the investigator should, without removing the decedent's clothing:
A. Photograph the scene, including the decedent as initially found and the surface beneath the body after the body has been removed.
B. Photograph the decedent with and without measurements (as appropriate), including a photograph of the decedent's face.

C. Document the decedent's position with and without measurements (as appropriate).
D. Document the decedent's physical characteristics.
E. Document the presence, absence and condition of clothing and personal effects.
F. Document the presence or absence of any items/objects that may be relevant.
G. Document the presence or absence of marks, scars and tattoos.
H. Document the presence or absence of injury/trauma, petechiae, etc.
I. Document the presence of treatment or resuscitative efforts.
J. Based on the findings, determine the need for further evaluation/assistance of forensic specialists or technologies (e.g., pathologists, odontologists, alternate light sources). **Note:** If necessary, take additional photographs after removal of objects/items that interfere with photographic documentation of the decedent.

Rationale: Thorough evaluation and documentation (photographic and written) of the deceased at the scene are essential to determine the depth and direction the investigation will take.

8. Preserve Evidence (on Body)

In addition to all of the physical evidence visible on the body, blood and other body fluids present must be photographed and documented prior to collection and transport. Fragile evidence (which can be easily contaminated, lost or altered) must also be collected and preserved to maintain chain of custody and to assist in determination of cause, manner and circumstances of death. Once evidence on the body is recognized, the investigator should:
A. Photograph the evidence.
B. Document blood/body fluid on the body (e.g., froth/purge, substances from orifices), location and pattern before transporting.
C. Secure decedent's hands and feet in unused paper bags (as determined by the scene).
D. Identify and collect trace evidence before transporting the body (e.g., blood, hair, fibers).
E. Arrange for the collection and transport of evidence at the scene (when necessary).
F. Ensure the proper collection of blood and body fluids for subsequent analysis (if the body will be released from the scene to an outside agency without an autopsy).

Rationale: It is essential that evidence be collected, preserved, transported and documented in an orderly and proper fashion to ensure the chain of custody and admissibility in a legal action. The preservation and documentation of the evidence on the body must be initiated by the investigator at the scene to prevent alterations or contamination. In some instances, identification of trace evidence may require alternative methods (e.g., alternate light source, presumptive testing).

9. Establish Decedent Identification

The investigator shall engage in a diligent effort to establish/confirm the decedent's identity. To establish identity, the investigator should document use of the following methods:

A. Direct visual or photographic identification of the decedent if visually recognizable (when authorized, a face may be cleaned to allow for identification after the initial photographic documentation is completed).
B. Scientific methods such as fingerprints and dental, radiographic and DNA comparisons.
C. Circumstantial methods such as (but not restricted to) personal effects, circumstances, physical characteristics, tattoos and anthropologic data. Use available technologies to assist in decedent identification (e.g., www.namus.gov, National Crime Information Center).

Rationale: There are several methods available that can be used to properly identify deceased persons. In some cases, the investigator should employ more than one method to confirm the identity of decedents. An autopsy along with authenticated in-dwelling medical devices may also be used to confirm identification. This is essential to be able to notify the next of kin and for investigative, judicial, family and vital records issues.

10. Document Post-Mortem Changes

Upon arrival at the scene and prior to moving the body, the investigator should note the presence of each of the following in his/her report:
A. Livor (e.g., color, location, blanchability, Tardieu spots) consistent/inconsistent with position of the body.
B. Rigor (e.g., stage/intensity, location on the body, broken, inconsistent with the scene).
C. Degree of decomposition (e.g., putrefaction, adipocere, mummification, skeletonization, as appropriate).
D. Insect and animal activity.
E. Scene temperature (document method used and time estimated).
F. Description of body temperature (e.g., warm, cold, frozen) or measurement of body temperature (document method used and time of measurement).

Rationale: Documentation of post-mortem changes in every report is essential to determine an accurate cause and manner of death, provide information as to the time of death, corroborate witness statements, and indicate that the body may have been moved after death.

11. Participate in Scene Debriefing

The scene debriefing helps investigators from all participating agencies to establish post-scene responsibilities by sharing data regarding particular scene findings. Complete processing of the scene may require an extended period of time beyond the initial scene investigation. This should be communicated between agencies beyond the initial scene, and investigators from different agencies need to stay in communication with each other throughout the entire time.

12. Determine Notification Procedures (Next of Kin or Interested and Authorized Individuals)

The investigator is responsible for ensuring that the next of kin or interested and authorized individuals are identified, located and notified in a timely manner. The time and method of

notification should be documented. Failure to locate the next of kin or interested and authorized individuals and efforts to do so should be a matter of record. This ensures that every reasonable effort has been made to contact the family or interested and authorized individuals. When possible, notification should be performed in person.

13. Ensure Security of Remains

The investigator shall supervise and ensure the proper identification, inventory, and security of evidence/property and its packaging and removal from the scene. Prior to leaving the scene, the investigator should:
A. Ensure that the body is protected from further trauma or contamination (if not, document) and unauthorized removal of therapeutic and resuscitative equipment.
B. Inventory and secure property, clothing and personal effects that are on the body (remove in a controlled environment with a witness present).
C. Identify property and clothing to be retained as evidence (in a controlled environment).
D. Recover biological samples before releasing the remains.
E. Place identification on the body and body bag.
F. Ensure/supervise the placement of the body into the bag and secure it.
G. Ensure/supervise the removal of the body from the scene.
H. Secure transportation.

Rationale: Ensuring the security of the remains facilitates proper identification of the remains, maintains a proper chain of custody, and safeguards property and evidence.

Establishing and Recording Decedent Profile Information

1. Document the Discovery History

For an investigator to correctly document the discovery history, he/she should:
A. Establish and record person(s) who discovered the body and when.
B. Document the circumstances surrounding the discovery (who, what, where, when, how).

Rationale: The investigator must produce clear, concise, documented information concerning who discovered the body, what the circumstances of discovery were, where the discovery occurred, when the discovery was made and how the discovery was made.

2. Determine Terminal Episode History

The investigator shall document known circumstances and medical intervention preceding death. In order for the investigator to determine terminal episode history, he/she should:
A. Document when, where, how and by whom the decedent was last known to be alive.
B. Document the incidents prior to the death.
C. Document complaints/symptoms prior to the death.
D. Document and review complete EMS records.

E. Obtain relevant medical and pharmacy records.
F. Obtain relevant antemortem specimens.

Rationale: Obtaining records of preterminal circumstances and medical history distinguishes medical treatment from trauma. The history, relevant antemortem specimens, and electronic data collected and/or transmitted may assist the medical examiner/coroner in determining cause and manner of death.

3. Document Decedent Medical History

Through interviews and review of the written records, the investigator should:
A. Document medical history, including medications obtained and taken, alcohol and drug use, and family medical history, including alternative practices.
B. Document information from treating physicians and/or hospitals to confirm history and treatment.
C. Document physical characteristics and traits (e.g., left-/right-handedness, missing appendages, tattoos, implanted/indwelling devices, etc.).

Rationale: Obtaining a thorough medical history focuses the investigation, aids in disposition of the case, and helps determine the need for a post-mortem examination or other laboratory tests or studies. Potential sources of medical information should include but are not limited to nursing homes, hospice agencies, intermediate care, and assisted living facilities. Electronic media can be a valuable source of information for obtaining a decedent's medical history.

4. Document Decedent Mental Health History

The investigator should attempt to:
A. Document the decedent's mental health history, including behavioral issues, hospitalizations and medications.
B. Document the history of suicidal ideations, gestures and/or attempts.
C. Document mental health professionals (e.g., psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors) who treated the decedent.
D. Document family mental health history.
E. Obtain relevant records.

Rationale: Knowledge of the mental health history allows the investigator to properly evaluate the decedent's state of mind and contributes to the determination of cause, manner and circumstances of death.

5. Document Social History

When collecting relevant social history information, the investigator should:
A. Document marital/domestic history.
B. Document family history (similar deaths, significant dates).
C. Document sexual history.
D. Document employment history.
E. Document financial history.
F. Document daily routines, habits, activities, hobbies and unusual behavioral patterns.
G. Document Internet activity (e.g., social media sites).
H. Document relationships, friends, caregivers and associates.
I. Document religious, ethnic or other pertinent information (e.g., religious objection to autopsy).
J. Document educational background.
K. Document criminal history and obtain relevant records.

Rationale: Information from sources familiar with the decedent pertaining to the decedent's social history assists in the determination of cause, manner and circumstances of death. Special attention may be required in dependent populations (e.g., infants, special needs and the elderly).

Completing the Scene Investigation

1. Maintain Jurisdiction Over the Body

When maintaining jurisdiction over the body, the investigator should: A. Arrange for, and document, secure transportation of the body to a medical or autopsy facility for further examination or storage. B. Coordinate and document procedures to be performed when the body is received at the facility.

Rationale: By providing documented secure transportation of the body from the scene to an authorized receiving facility, the investigator maintains jurisdiction and protects chain of custody of the body.

2. Release Jurisdiction of the Body

Prior to releasing jurisdiction of the body to an authorized receiving agent or funeral director, it is necessary to ensure the Information necessary to complete the death certificate including demographic information and the date, time and location of death has been obtained.

3. Perform Exit Procedures

Completion of the scene investigation ensures that important evidence has been collected and the scene has been processed. In addition, a systematic review of the scene ensures that artifacts or equipment are not inadvertently left behind and any dangerous materials or conditions have been reported and documented.

4. Assist the Family or Authorized Individual(s)

The investigator provides the family or authorized individual(s) with a timetable so they can arrange for final disposition and provides information on available community and professional resources that may assist the family. The investigator shall offer the decedent's family or authorized individual(s) information regarding available community and professional resources. When the investigator is assisting the family or authorized individual(s), it is important to:
A. Inform them if an autopsy is required.
B. Inform them of available support services (e.g., victim assistance, police, social services, death scene cleanup).
C. Inform them of appropriate agencies to contact with questions (e.g., medical examiner/coroner offices, law enforcement, SIDS support group, etc.).
D. Ensure that the family or authorized individual(s) is not left alone with the body (if circumstances warrant).

E. Inform them of the approximate body release timetable.

F. Inform them of the information release timetable (e.g., toxicology, autopsy results, as required).

G. Inform them of available reports, including cost, if any.

H. Inform them that they might be contacted regarding organ and tissue donation.

I. Inform them that they may receive inquiries from the media (this will be case dependent).

Rationale: Interaction with the family or authorized individual(s) allows the investigator to assist and direct them to appropriate resources. It is essential that families or authorized individual(s) be given a timetable of events so that they can make necessary arrangements. In addition, the investigator needs to communicate what information will be available and an approximate timeline for its release.

INVESTIGATIVE TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

1. Alternate light source.
2. Barrier sheeting or tent (to shield body/area from public view).
3. Biohazard plastic trash bags.
4. Blood collection tubes.
5. Body bags with locks and sterile sheets.
6. Body identification tags.
7. Business cards with fax and e-mail address.
8. Camera equipment.
9. Clean body cover (sheet/ drape).
10. Communication equipment.
11. Crime scene tape.
12. Departmental scene forms.
13. Disposable protective suit.
14. Evidence identification markers.
15. Evidence seal/tape.
16. Face and eye protection.
17. First aid kit.
18. Flashlight.
19. Hair cover.
20. Hand tools (e.g., bolt cutter, hammer, metal detector, paint brushes, pocketknife, rope, shovel, etc.).
21. Investigative notebooks.

22 Latent print kit.

23. Latex gloves.
24. Maps, compass and/or GPS.
25. Masks.
26. Measurement instruments.
27. Official identification.
28. Packaging material (e.g., clean unused paper bags, envelopes, metal cans, tape, rubber bands, etc.).
29. Personal supplies (e.g., insect spray, sunscreen, hat, raincoat, umbrella, boots for wet conditions and construction sites, etc.).

30. Photo identifier (e.g., header frame, placards).
31. Phone lists and contact information.
32. Portable lighting.
33. Recording device.
34. Reenactment doll(s).
35. Resource material (e.g., death scene cleanup, grief support, organ procurement, etc.)
36. Scene safety equipment (e.g., biological/chemical/ industrial/disaster/fire, hardhat, reflective vest, steel bottom boots, etc.).
37. Sharps container.
38. Shoe/boot covers.
39. Specimen containers.
40. Thermometer (ambient and body temperature).
41. Trace evidence recovery equipment (e.g., blades, cotton-tipped swabs, disposable syringe, forceps, gunshot residue and hand lens (magnifying glass), large gauge needles, presumptive blood test kit, scalpel handle, tweezers, etc.).
42. Watch.
43. Waterless hand wash/ disinfectant.
44. Writing instruments.

INVESTIGATION WORKSHEET

Coroner's General Death Investigation Protocol

CORONER:_____
DATE:_____ DAY:_____ TIME:_____ AM/PM
NOTIFIED BY:_____
DEPT:_____PHONE:_____
REPORT#_____TIME CALL RECEIVED_____AM/PM
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA:
DECEDENT'S NAME:_____
AGE:_____DOB:____/____/____ RACE: _____ SEX: _____
ADDRESS:_____
CITY:_____ STATE:_____ ZIP:_____
MARITAL STATUS:_____ HOME PHONE:_____
EMPLOYER:_____
POSITION:_____
IDENTIFIED BY WHAT MEANS:_____
BY (NAME):_____
PHONE:_____
ADDRESS:_____
CITY:_____ STATE:_____ ZIP:_____
TIME:_____AM/PM DATE:_____
LOCATION:_____
NEXT OF KIN:_____
RELATIONSHIP:_____
NOTIFIED AT:_____AM/PM DATE:_____
PHONE:_____
ADDRESS:_____
CITY:_____ STATE:_____ ZIP:_____
PRONOUNCEMENT OF DEATH:
TIME:_____AM/PM DATE:_____
BY:_____
LOCATION:_____
SCENE INFORMATION:
CORONER'S ARRIVAL TIME_____AM/PM DATE:_____
DISTANCE TO SCENE:_____
LOCATION (ADDRESS):_____
GENERAL AREA DESCRIPTION_____
_____
_____
_____
OFFICERS/OFFICIALS AT SCENE (name, rank): DEPARTMENT:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

WEATHER CONDITIONS:

DAWN:_____ DAYLIGHT:_____ DUSK:_____ NIGHT:_____
CLEAR:_____ OVERCAST:_____ RAIN:_____ SNOW:_____ SLEET:_____
TEMPERATURE: OUTSIDE:_____ INSIDE:_____
(If inside a dwelling or business; was the AC or FURNACE operating?) YES:_____ NO:_____
LOCATION OF DECEDENT AT SCENE:
EXACT LOCATION (Example: On floor next to kitchen sink on North wall):_____
_____
_____
_____
BODY POSITION (DIRECTION): HEAD:_____ FEET:_____
LYING: FACE DOWN:_____ FACE UP_____LEFT SIDE:_____ RIGHT SIDE:_____
OTHER:_____
SURFACE TYPE DECEDENT'S BODY LYING ON:_____
_____
_____
EXAMINATION OF THE DECEDENT'S BODY:
BODY TEMPERATURE(If taken):_____ TIME TAKEN:_____AM/PM
If a body temperature was not taken, how did the body feel as compared to the environment when touched:
Warm__Cool__Cold__
WAS LIVOR MORTIS PRESENT: YES:_____ NO:_____
IF YES, AREA OF THE BODY:_____
WAS RIGOR MORTIS PRESENT: YES:_____NO:_____
IF YES, AREA OF THE BODY:_____
IS BODY FRESH? YES:_____NO:_____ BEGINNING TO BREAKDOWN: YES:_____NO:_____
BODY DECOMPOSED: YES:_____ NO:_____
INSECTS PRESENT: YES_____ NO:_____ (Describe time and body location where insect samples were taken for analysis. Collect multiple samples of the various insects (and insect stages) present and place in a 75-80% alcohol solution. Insure the samples are properly labeled.)
TIME:_____AM/PM LOCATION ON BODY:_____
TIME:_____AM/PM LOCATION ON BODY:_____
TIME:_____AM/PM LOCATION ON BODY:_____
THE ENTIRE BODY SHOULD BE INSPECTED (*DO NOT REMOVE ANY CLOTHING TO DO THIS.*) ; TO CHECK FOR BODY INJURIES OR ANYTHING UNUSUAL. THIS IS TO DIFFERENTIATE FROM ANY INJURIES/DAMAGE THAT MAY OCCUR IN TRANSPORTING THE BODY FROM THE SCENE TO THE MORGUE OR PLACE WHERE AUTOPSY WILL BE PERFORMED.
HEAD:_____
FACE:_____
NECK:_____
CHEST:_____
BACK:_____
BUTTOCK/PELVIS REGION:_____
UPPER EXTREMITIES:_____
FINGERTIP TO AXILLA LENGTH (If applicable in S/I GSWs):_____
HANDS:_____
LOWER EXTREMITIES:_____
_____
FEET:_____
OTHER:(Be sure to note if any of decedent's clothing was removed, or altered, by medical personnel to include EMTs at the scene.) _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
CAUTION: **REMEMBER DO NOT ALLOW ANY CLOTHING TO BE REMOVED *(UNLESS IT IS PART OF A LIFE SAVING PROCEDURE)* OR ANY CRIMINALISTICS PROCEDURES (*e.g.*; GUNSHOT RESIDUE TESTING) TO BE DONE PRIOR TO THE BODY BEING EXAMINED BY A PATHOLOGIST.**
SPECIFIC MARKS OF VIOLENCE ON THE BODY:
1. LOCATION ON BODY:_____
SIZE : MEASURED:_____ ESTIMATE:_____

SHAPE:_____
DESCRIBE CLOTHING (If any.) INVOLVED:_____
_____
2. LOCATION ON BODY:_____
SIZE : MEASURED:_____ ESTIMATE:_____
SHAPE:_____
DESCRIBE CLOTHING (If any.) INVOLVED:_____
_____
3. LOCATION ON BODY:_____
SIZE : MEASURED:_____ ESTIMATE:_____
SHAPE:_____
DESCRIBE CLOTHING (If any.) INVOLVED:_____
4. LOCATION ON BODY:_____
SIZE : MEASURED:_____ ESTIMATE:_____
SHAPE:_____
DESCRIBE CLOTHING (If any.) INVOLVED:_____
_____
HANDS: ANY INJURY:_____ BROKEN NAILS: YES:_____NO:_____
REMARKS:_____
_____
_____
FEET: ANY INJURY:_____ BLOOD: YES:_____NO:_____
REMARKS:_____
_____
_____

NOTE: **WHEN NECESSARY, HANDS AND FEET SHOULD BE PLACED IN PAPER BAGS FOR EVIDENCE PRESERVATION.** ***EACH HAND AND FOOT SHOULD BE BAGGED SEPARATELY*****. YOU MAY ALSO PLACE THE HEAD IN A PAPER BAG IF IT IS SERIOUSLY DAMAGED (SUCH AS A GUNSHOT WOUND). THE ENTIRE BODY SHOULD BE WRAPPED IN A CLEAN SHEET OR BODY BAG TO PRESERVE TRACE EVIDENCE THAT CAN BE RETRIEVED BY THE PATHOLOGIST DURING THE AUTOPSY.**
CAUTION: **NEVER USE PLASTIC BAGS TO WRAP HANDS, FEET OR THE BODY AS IT CAN CREATE MOISTURE PROBLEMS WHICH MAY CONTAMINATE OR DESTROY POTENTIAL EVIDENCE.**
SCENE ENVIRONMENT:

_____
DESCRIBE ANY DISARRAY:_____
_____
_____
_____
IF A BUILDING/DWELLING: WAS LOCATION SECURE: YES:_____NO:_____
DESCRIBE LOCKS ON DOORS/WINDOWS:_____
_____
_____
ANY WEAPONS THAT MIGHT HAVE CAUSED INJURY/DEATH:YES:_____NO:_____
DESCRIBE WEAPONS AND INDICATE LOCATION FOUND:_____
_____
OTHER OBSERVATIONS:_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

IF BLOOD FOUND AT THE SCENE:
BENEATH WHAT BODY AREA:_____
SURFACE WHERE BLOOD FOUND(concrete, carpet,ground):_____
QUANTITY OF BLOOD(SIZE OF STAIN):_____
CONDITION OF BLOOD/BLOODSTAINS:WET:____DAMP:_____DRIED:_____POOLED:____OTHER:_____
OTHER OBSERVATIONS OF THE SCENE:
_____
_____
_____

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPH ALL BLOOD/BLOODSTAINS FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE USE IN RECREATING THE EVENT OR FOR USE AT A CRIMINAL PROCEEDING. BE SURE TO PLACE A MEASURING DEVICE AND LOCATION NOTE IN THE PHOTOGRAPH. ALSO, INCLUDE THIS DATA IN YOUR SKETCH OF THE SCENE.

DECEDENT'S PERSONAL EFFECTS:
CLOTHING:_____
_____
_____
WAS CLOTHING IN DISARRAY?
YES:_____NO:_____DESCRIBE:_____
_____
_____
JEWELRY -
GIVEN TO FAMILY AT SCENE:_____
TAKEN BY POLICE:_____
LEFT ON BODY AND TRANSPORTED TO MORGUE:_____
IF NONE OF THE ABOVE: (Explain jewelry location):_____
_____
DESCRIBE VALUABLES FOUND ON BODY ***(IN DETAIL)*** INCLUDING CREDIT CARD NUMBERS, CHECK NUMBERS, CASH, COINS:_____
_____
_____
_____
JEWELRY AND VALUABLES GIVEN TO RELATIVE AT SCENE: ***(IDENTIFY PERSON RECEIVING VALUABLES)***
NAME:_____ RELATIONSHIP TO DECEDENT?:_____
ADDRESS:_____TELEPHONE:_____
DATE:_____ TIME:_____AM/PM
LOCATION:_____
WITNESSED BY:_____
PRESENCE OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS AT SCENE:
WHERE DRUGS/ALCOHOL FOUND AT THE SCENE?:YES_____NO:_____
IF YES: WHAT KIND OF ALCOHOL/DRUGS? ***(DESCRIBE ALL DRUGS/ALCOHOL FOUND AT SCENE)***:
_____
_____
_____
_____
IF POSSIBLE SELF-INFLICTED INJURY:
ANY NOTES/LETTERS FOUND AT THE SCENE: YES:_____NO:_____
DATED: YES:_____NO:_____ DATE ON NOTE/LETTER(S):_____
LOCATION FOUND:_____
_____
_____
MEDICAL TREATMENT AT THE SCENE:
ANY RESUSCITATION ATTEMPTS?: YES_____NO:_____
IF SO, DESCRIBE RESUSCITATION PROCEDURES (***IN DETAIL):***_____
_____
_____
(NOTE: This can be extremely important to the pathologist in separating post-mortem trauma from the ante-mortem trauma related to the death event.)
CAUTION: IF OXYGEN GIVEN TO A FIRE/ARSON VICTIM, DETERMINE THE LENGTH OF TIME ADMINISTERED. THIS MAY EFFECT THE DECEDENT'S POST-MORTEM CARBON MONOXIDE LEVEL.
_____
_____
MORGUE CONVEYANCE:
NOTE: Be sure body is properly tagged. If indicated, place in secure packaging prior to transport.
TIME CALLED:_____AM/PM SCENE ARRIVAL TIME:_____AM/PM
CONVEYANCE:_____
CONVEYANCE ATTENDANTS:_____
JEWELRY OR VALUABLES LEFT ON BODY BEING TRANSPORTED TO MORGUE:YES:_____NO:_____
IF YES, DESCRIBE JEWELRY:_____
_____
_____
ARRIVAL TIME AT MORGUE:_____AM/PM
DO JEWELRY AND VALUABLE ITEMS RECEIVED BY MORGUE PERSONNEL AGREE WITH THOSE LEFT ON BODY WHEN IT LEFT SCENE?: YES:_____NO:_____
NOTE: IF THERE IS A DISCREPANCY IN THE JEWELRY THAT LEFT THE SCENE AND THAT RECEIVED AT THE

MORGUE IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY APPROPRIATE PERSONNEL TO CORRECT THE PROBLEM..
INVESTIGATOR'S OBSERVATIONS: ***(Note any observations made that are not covered by this protocol.)***:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

NOTES: