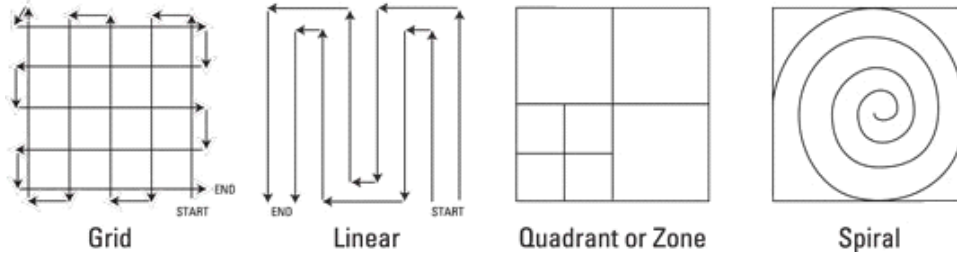


Processing the Scene

Tuesday, 23 May 2017 1:22 PM

Processing the scene involves a systematic search, followed by appropriate collection or development of the evidence. A lot of evidence will be latent (invisible until developed) or trace (small and easily overlooked).

Searching Methods:



Strip method

- Best used for large open areas as it is quick and simple
- Can even be performed by a single investigator in a limited area such as a room
- Typically for outdoor scenes
- Searchers stay in line with each other and take parallel paths through the scene

Spiral method

- Effective in a small area
- Searcher begins at the centre or the perimeter and moves in a spiral path
- Typically used indoors
- If starting at the centre of the scene, must insure evidence will not be trampled

Grid method

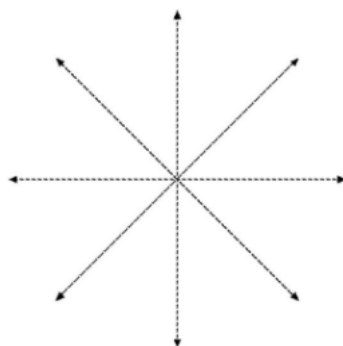
- Best procedure to cover a large area
- Searchers move parallel to each other and cover the same area twice

Zone method

- Area to be searched is divided into squares or sectors
- A searcher is assigned to each zone or set of sub-zones
- Effective for indoor locations
- Good technique for when the evidence is likely to be small and scattered widely, e.g. post-blast bomb scene

Wheel method

- Used for complex indoor scenes where there are obstructions in the way of other search methods
- Cons - possibility of ruining evidence when gathering at the centre, increasing distance between searchers as they move away from the centre



The best place for obtaining physical evidence are nearest to where the critical act occurred (primary crime scene). Other important areas to look are:

- Point of forced entry
- Route of escape
- Suspect - clothing, hands, body, hair etc.
- The location where a weapon is or may be located
- Suspect/victim's residence
- Vehicle used in crime
- Assault location
- Location body was moved from

Search Materials

- Lighting kits
- Magnification system
- Measuring devices
- Metal detectors
- Luminescent sprays
- Markers – numbers, letters

Materials for collection of evidence

- Gloves – procedure in NSW is to wear two layers to prevent DNA contamination
- Contamination barriers – shoe covers, hair nets
- Sterile swabs with collection tubes (DNA evidence)
- Gel lifters
- Adhesive tapes
- Vacuum cleaner (for fibres)
- Scalpel
- Syringes for liquids
- Labels, markers
- Dental stone and casting kit for 3D impressions
- Latent print lifting devices
- Reagents for revealing fingerprints
- Material for taking fingerprints (ink, roller, cards etc.)
- Plastic document folders for collecting sheets
- Polyethylene and paper bags
- Envelopes
- Glass and plastic containers

Packaging material

Choice of packaging material will depend on:

- Quickness of collection
- Fragility of evidence
- Biological evidence present/absent
- Packaging must be airtight for fire samples, wet biological samples and drugs
- It doesn't need to be airtight for evidence such as paint or glass

Basic rule: one sample = one package

When there are many types of evidence present, the most fragile have the highest priority:

1. Shoe prints
2. Blood stains/biological trace
3. Flammable liquids and fire debris
4. Other trace evidence – fibres, paint, glass – in that order
5. Macro items

Basic rule: each sample must be labelled

Basic rule: 1 sample = 1 ID number

Labelling

Sequential numbers for evidence, e.g.:

Case: X

- Jumper = X.1
 - On the jumper, fibres = X.1.1
 - On the fibres, blood = X.1.1.1
- Trousers = X.2

The labelling of the evidence package must include the following:

- Case number
- Sample number
- Date, time
- Collection positions
- Name of collector
- Sample description
- Signature on the package, across the seal

Evidence must be packaged in a way that any tampering is obvious, e.g. with tamper-evident tape or heat sealing plastic bags.

A chain of custody must be maintained to prove that the evidence collected at the scene is the same evidence presented in court.