

LOOKING FOR CLUES

There are many different kinds of crimes and many different kinds of crime scenes. For a robbery, the crime scene might be a bank. For a mugging, the crime scene might be a dark alley. For a hit-and-run accident, the crime scene might be a busy street. A crime scene can be small, like the backseat of a car. Or it can be huge, like a bombed building.

Sizing Up the Crime Scene

Most cases begin with a call to 911. The 911 operator alerts nearby patrol cars. Soon, police in uniform arrive. If the victim needs help, they provide it. Sometimes they see a clear suspect. If so, they may make a quick arrest. They also keep people away from the crime scene until the CSI team arrives.

The main job of the CSI team is to “process” the crime scene. One investigator says the first thing she likes to do is make a “mental picture” of the scene. If there is a body, where is it? Any bloodstains? Fingerprint smudges? Evidence of a struggle? Are any people present besides the police? How do they look? How are they behaving?



Taking photos is an important part of “processing” a crime scene. The photos can later be used as evidence at a trial.