



CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



Major Case Investigations

Eff. Date 02/03/2025

Violent Crime Unit (VCU) Major Cases

INITIAL CONTACT/ASSIGNMENTS

Upon receiving any of the following calls for service, the nearest available officer and supervisor will be dispatched to the scene and/or victim's location:

1. Homicide or attempted homicide
2. Any death that is not attended by a physician
3. Any serious injury and/or condition where there is reason to suspect the injury/condition was caused by the act or omission of another or the cause is unknown
4. Any death or serious injury involving a motor vehicle (MV) where there is intent to injure or kill (MV accidents, however negligent, will be investigated in accordance with the Investigation of Motor Vehicle Crashes Involving Serious Injury or Death procedure)
5. Any weapons violation believed to have just occurred or in progress

The supervisor at the scene shall ensure that the Officer in Charge (OIC) is notified and advised of the circumstances surrounding the incident as soon as practicable.

When a major case, typically a homicide (or attempted homicide that might require a Command Post (CP)) has occurred, the OIC or field supervisor should:

- If normal VCU working hours, contact the VCU Detective Sergeant directly.
- If outside normal VCU working hours, the Lieutenant of Investigative-Services should be called per current practice.

If the Lieutenant of Investigative Services determines the case will likely fall within the scope of VCU responsibility, the VCU Detective Sergeants should be contacted. If the Lieutenant of Investigative Services is unavailable, one of the off-duty VCU Detective Sergeants should be contacted. If Investigative Services Lieutenant or Sergeants are unavailable, the Investigative Services Captain should be contacted. If it is unclear whether the incident should be investigated by VCU or by another specialty unit, the Investigative Services Captain and the Captain of the district where the incident occurred should be contacted to discuss the circumstances and determine the appropriate assignment.

The Officer in Charge will ensure the notifications are made to the following per current protocol:

- Madison Police Department (MPD) Chief
- Assistant Chiefs
- District Command staff

If the determination is made that the incident is a major case requiring a command post, the VCU will have overall responsibility for managing the incident and the command post. Generally, a command post should be established—and an incident considered a major case—if it is a serious offense requiring significant coordination of investigative resources. The District Captain, Assistant Chief of Investigative and Specialized Services, and Assistant Chief of Operations should be contacted as soon as reasonable.

The need for a Command Post in other types of crimes where the VCU is the primary investigating unit is possible and that decision can be made on a case specific basis by unit supervisors.

The decision to establish a Command Post should be made after consulting with a Detective Sergeant of the Violent Crime Unit, or with the Investigative Services Lieutenant. If neither of these are available, the Investigative Services Captain should be contacted.

The Investigative Services Lieutenant is responsible for determining what resources are needed and for ensuring that those resources are contacted. The Investigative Services Lieutenant and VCU Detective

Sergeant will be responsible for designating a lead detective. The Investigative Lieutenant should consider utilizing detectives from other specialized units, such as the Persons Crimes Unit to supplement VCU detectives.

COMMAND POST

A command post will be set up to direct the overall operation of the investigation. The Investigative Services Lieutenant will select the location of the command post based on the needs of the case (typically the appropriate district station). The CP will be run out of this district, ideally for the first 24-48 hours (as the investigation dictates); then, if it is necessary for the CP to continue operations after this time, the CP will be transferred to the Central District Incident Command Room.

While the needs of cases vary, it is recommended that the command post be staffed as follows (in an effort to maintain consistency within Command Posts):

- Investigative Lieutenant (overall incident commander); if the Investigative Services Lieutenant is unavailable, this position should be filled by another Investigative Commander (such as a Detective Lieutenant)
- VCU Detective Sergeant
- Criminal Intelligence Section (CIS) Personnel
- Logistics Officer (if needed)
- Command Post Assistant or Investigative Support Officer (if needed)

Back up to the following personnel should be as follows:

- Investigative Services should be relieved by another designated Detective Lieutenant
- VCU Detective Sergeant should be relieved by the other VCU Detective Sergeant or the Burglary/Property Crime or Special Victims Unit Detective Sergeant
- If the other Detective Sergeants are not available, this role can be filled by the Detective Lieutenant if it is determined necessary

RESPONSIBILITIES

Investigative Captain

- Make appropriate notifications, as needed:
 - Chiefs
 - District Command
 - District Attorney's (DA's) office (if appropriate and in all homicide cases)
- Ensure Investigative Lieutenant has necessary resources
- Keep Chief and Assistant Chiefs apprised of investigation
- Communicate with MPD Finance Section staff for Association of Madison Police Supervisors (AMPS) overtime implications

Investigative Lieutenant and Detective Sergeant

- Overall management of the case
- Identify Lead and Scene Detectives
- Make investigative assignments:
 - Designate lead detective
 - Designate lieutenant (if needed/available) and detective to oversee each scene
 - Coordinate investigative response to hospitals (if appropriate)
 - Designate detective to serve as liaison to victim families
 - Coordinate MPD detectives presence at autopsy (if appropriate)
 - Identify and coordinate other investigative tasks, as needed
- Communicate and coordinate efforts with the designated scene supervisor

- Communicate and coordinate efforts with CIS Supervisor
- Communicate and coordinate efforts with Case Lead Detective
- Communicate with the OIC
- Communicate with Command Staff
- Designate case as “Extraordinary” for TeleStaff/payroll purposes, if appropriate
- Communicate with MPD Finance Section staff for case number cost accounting
- Facilitate the release of information to MPD personnel through briefing and other police agencies
- Collaborate with the Public Information Officer (PIO), case detective, Investigative Captain, and District Captain on case press releases
- Communicate with District Attorney staff and case detective
- Review reports for investigative leads
- Management of personnel (assignments, monitoring hours worked, etc.)
- Managing overtime and arranging relief for Investigative personnel
- Evaluate need for support staff, such as Gang and Neighborhood Crime Abatement Team (GNCAT), Neighborhood Resource Officers (NRO)/Neighborhood Police Officers (NPO), additional detectives, etc.
- Notify Property Room staff and evaluate needs, if applicable
- Create and prioritize a task list of work to be done
- Organize and lead briefings and debriefings of case investigators
- Organize and coordinate case information
- Ensure phone calls made to the command post are answered and information recorded
- Evaluate need for a detective to be assigned to family members (victim, suspect, witness, etc.)
- Arrange for special equipment or needs of the investigation
- Oversee report completion and process (see below)
- Brief incoming commander when being relieved
- Make sure command post log is maintained
- Manage the “to do list”

Lead Detective

- Provide input to case lieutenant on investigation, assignments, etc.
- The lead detective should have an opportunity early in the investigation to view the crime scene
- The lead detective should have an opportunity to view critical evidence prior to it being secured/packaged
- Participate and provide direction during evidence processing discussions between command post, Forensic Services Unit (FSU) lab personnel, and on-scene forensic and investigative personnel
- Coordinate needs with Property Room staff, if applicable
- Generally, remain in command post to maintain overall perspective on case and investigation
- Lead detective may assist in significant investigative tasks (suspect interview), if appropriate
- Co-lead or backup lead should generally assist with investigation and not remain in command post, unless relieving lead detective
- Review all incoming information by participating in briefings and de-briefings of investigative staff
- Review incoming reports for investigative leads
- Monitor Task lists/tips and prioritize for assignment
- Coordinate questions used in canvassing
- Monitor and provide input on information released to the media/public
- Assist case lieutenant in briefing the District Attorney
- Work closely with assigned Assistant District Attorney

District Command Staff

- Provide assistance to Investigative Detective Lieutenant, as needed
- Work with Investigative Captain to make necessary notifications

- Maintain familiarity with case and investigation
- Assist with notifications (Management Team, Alders, etc.), if needed
- Assist in the press releases
- Ensure that MPD Peer Support has been notified of the incident
- Plan any necessary patrol debriefings
- Coordinate with VCU on the sharing of information internally

CIS Personnel

Upon request from the Violent Crime Unit, CIS will respond directly to the Command Post as soon as possible. CIS will immediately provide one CIS Supervisor (if needed) and one CIS Officer in the Command Post for the first 72 hours. If special circumstances are present, VCU Commanders can extend CIS assignment beyond the 72 hours.

The CIS Supervisor and/or Officer will:

- Communicate with and assist the Investigative Lieutenant
- Evaluate and ensure that adequate CIS resources are called-in (i.e. additional CIS Officers/Investigative Support Officer)
- Ensure that the Electronic Log Sheet is set-up for assigned staff to make log entries
- Establish and post the "CIS Requests To Do List" to best determine CIS request priorities

Non-VCU Major Cases

INITIAL CONTACT/ASSIGNMENTS

When a major case has occurred and it has been determined the Violent Crime Unit will not be primary investigating unit, the OIC or field supervisor should initially make contact with the Detective Lieutenant from the investigative focus of the type of incident occurred, if the incident occurs during normal working hours. During off-hours, the on-call Detective Lieutenant should be contacted. If the determination is made that the incident is a major case requiring a command post, the Detective Lieutenant from the investigative focus of the type of incident occurred should be contacted; this Detective Lieutenant will have overall responsibility for managing the incident. Generally, a command post should be established – and an incident considered a major case – if it is a serious offense requiring significant coordination of investigative resources. The District Captain of the district where the incident occurred and the Assistant Chief of Operations should be contacted as soon as reasonable. Factors to be considered when determining whether an incident should be considered a major case and whether a command post should be established include the following:

- Is the offense a homicide, attempted homicide, in-custody death, Officer-Involved critical incident, serious serial crime, or any other serious crime?
- Did the incident result in a severe level of injury (death, great bodily harm, hospitalization)?
- Is there a danger to the community?
- Are there a large number of suspects/contacts involved?
- Does the incident/investigation involve multiple jurisdictions?
- Are there multiple tasks to be prioritized and immediately assigned that, if not addressed quickly, would harm the investigation or would result in danger to individuals or the community?
- Are there a significant number of investigative personnel involved in the investigation requiring immediate briefing and assignment?
- Is there a Commander available to run the Command Post?

The absence of some or all of these factors does not negate the need for a Command Post in other circumstances, but commanders will want to consider which additional resources would be needed for less serious cases.

If the Detective Lieutenant from the specialty unit investigating the incident is not available, a Detective Lieutenant from another Unit should be contacted as indicated (if no Detective Lieutenants are available, other command staff should be contacted):

- Persons Crimes backs up VCU and vice versa
- FJ/SC East backs up FJ/SC West and vice versa

The Detective Lieutenant is responsible for determining what resources are needed, for ensuring that those resources are contacted, and for designating a lead detective. Generally, detectives should be contacted/assigned in this order:

- Detective from assigned specialty related to incident
- Detective with skills/experience related to incident
- Detective from assigned specialty related to incident
- Detective with skills/experience related to incident

These should be viewed as guidelines; they may be deviated from if circumstances warrant, but the tasks still need to be completed.

COMMAND POST

A command post will be set up to direct the overall operation of the investigation. The case Lieutenant will select the location of the command post based on the needs of the case (typically the district station of district where the incident occurred).

The case Lieutenant will generally be the Detective Lieutenant assigned to the relevant specialty unit investigating the crime, or, in that Detective Lieutenant's absence, the back-up Detective Lieutenant. While the needs of cases vary, it is recommended that the command post be staffed as follows:

- Case Detective Lieutenant (overall incident commander)
- Case Lead Detective
- CIS Personnel
- Logistics Officer (if needed)
- Command Post Assistant or Investigative Support Officer (if needed)

RESPONSIBILITIES

Case Detective Lieutenant or Case Commander

- Overall management of the case
- Identify Case and Scene Detectives
- Make investigative assignments:
 - Designate lead detective and co-lead (if appropriate)
 - Designate lieutenant (if needed/available) and detective to oversee each scene
 - Coordinate investigative response to hospitals (if appropriate)
 - Designate detective to serve as liaison to victim families
 - Coordinate MPD detectives presence at autopsy (if appropriate)
 - Identify and coordinate other investigative tasks, as needed
- Communicate and coordinate efforts with the designated scene supervisor, if needed/available
- Communicate and coordinate efforts with CIS Supervisor
- Communicate and coordinate efforts with Case Lead Detective
- Communicate with the OIC
- Communicate with Command Staff
- Make appropriate notifications, as needed:
 - Chiefs
 - District Command
 - DA's office (if appropriate and in all homicide cases)

- Communicate with MPD Finance Section staff for case number cost accounting
- Designate case as “Extraordinary” for TeleStaff/payroll purposes, if appropriate
- Facilitate the release of information to MPD personnel through briefing and to other police agencies
- Collaborate with the PIO, case detective, and District Captain on case press releases
- Communicate with District Attorney’s office staff with case detective
- Review reports for investigative leads
- Management of personnel (assignments, monitoring hours worked, etc.)
- Managing overtime and arranging relief for staff
- Evaluate need for support staff
- Notify Property Room staff and evaluate needs, if applicable
- Create and prioritize a task list of work to be done
- Organize and lead briefings and debriefings of case investigators
- Organize and coordinate case information
- Ensure phone calls made to the command post are answered and information recorded
- Evaluate need for a detective to be assigned to family members (victim, suspect, witness, etc.)
- Arrange for special equipment or needs of the investigation
- Ensure that a timeline is started and kept up to date
- Oversee report completion and process (see below)
- Brief incoming commander when being relieved
- Keep Chief and Assistant Chiefs apprised of investigation
- Make sure command post log is maintained
- Manage the “to do list”

Lead Detective

- Provide input to case lieutenant on investigation, assignments, etc.
- The lead detective should have an opportunity early in the investigation to view the crime scene
- The lead detective should have an opportunity to view critical evidence prior to it being secured/packaged
- Participate and provide direction during evidence processing discussions between CP, FSU lab personnel, and on-scene forensic and investigative personnel
- Coordinate needs with Property Room staff, if applicable
- Generally, remain in command post to maintain overall perspective on case and investigation
- Lead detective may assist in significant investigative tasks (suspect interview), if appropriate
- Co-lead or backup lead should generally assist with investigation and not remain in command post, unless relieving lead detective
- Review all incoming information by participating in briefings and de-briefings of investigative staff
- Review incoming reports for investigative leads
- Monitor Task lists/tips and prioritize for assignment
- Coordinate questions used in canvassing
- Monitor and provide input on information released to the media/public
- Assist case lieutenant in briefing the District Attorney
- Work closely with assigned Assistant District Attorney

District Command Staff

- Provide assistance to Case Detective Lieutenant, as needed
- Maintain familiarity with case and investigation
- Assist with notifications (Management Team, Alders, etc.), if needed
- Assist with coordination of internal information sharing
- Ensure that MPD Peer Support has been notified of the incident
- Notify MPD Finance Section of Major Case
- Assist in the press releases

CIS Personnel

Upon request from the specialty unit investigating the incident, CIS will respond directly to the Command Post as soon as possible. CIS will immediately provide one CIS Supervisor (if needed) and one CIS Officer in the Command Post for the first 72 hours. If special circumstances are present, District Commanders can request to extend CIS assignment beyond the 72 hours through the Investigative Services Captain or Lieutenant.

The CIS Supervisor and/or Officer will:

- Communicate with and assist the Case Detective Lieutenant.
- Evaluate and ensure that adequate CIS resources are called in (e.g., additional CIS Officers/ Investigative Support Officer).
- Ensure that the Electronic Log Sheet is set up for assigned staff to make log entries.
- Establish and post the "CIS Requests To Do List" to best determine CIS request priorities.
- Generate and Search Available Intelligence venues.
- Communicate and obtain information from outside resources.

Logistics Officer

Coordinate and process requests for additional resources, support, materials for the incident. Review the incident action plan and estimate needs for the next operational period.

Command Post Assistant

While it is recognized that this position is not required in all cases, the workload of some cases is so significant that additional help may be needed in the command post. This position is staffed at the discretion of the case Detective Lieutenant. If staffed, this position will be expected to assist and support the needs of the case Detective Lieutenant and the CIS Supervisor as requested. This position could be staffed by investigative support personnel, CIS personnel, or another commander.

Crime Scene

Once a crime scene has been identified and secured, it must be protected from contamination; therefore, the number of personnel allowed in the crime scene must be limited and strictly controlled. Access to the crime scene is limited to personnel needed to effectively process the scene, as determined by the designated scene supervisor. In most instances this includes only FSU personnel, scene and/or lead detective, and those directly assisting them.

Note: Coordination with the FSU Sergeant and Investigators should be done prior to entering scene as videotaping of the crime scene should be done prior to anyone entering.

Designated Crime Scene Supervisor

- If utilized, typically the designated crime scene supervisor role is filled by the district operations Lieutenant
- Overall responsibility for the management, security, and processing of the crime scene
 - Respond directly to scene
 - Relieve patrol sergeant of overall scene responsibility
- Assign perimeter security positions
 - Maintain inner and outer perimeter
 - Ensure that scene is properly secured
 - Ensure that an officer is assigned to maintain log of who enters/exits scene
- Coordinate assignment of detectives at scene with case detective lieutenant
- If necessary, request mobile command post response vehicle (CV-1)
- Verify that legal authority exists to perform complete search/processing of scene

- Work with the FSU Sergeant to coordinate the investigative efforts of detectives and investigators
- Control access to the scene to reduce contamination
- Management of personnel (assignments, monitoring hours worked, etc.)
- Managing overtime and arranging relief for staff
- Evaluate resource needs:
 - Additional personnel
 - Special equipment
- Coordinate area canvass after consultation with the Command Post
- Establish staging area for media:
 - In absence of PIO, serve as point of contact for media
 - Coordinate any media releases with command post
- Ensure crime scene log is maintained
- Coordinate responsibility of scene with FSU Sergeant or other supervisor
- After scene stabilizes and assignments are given, respond to the Command Post
- Assist the Case Lieutenant, as needed

FSU Sergeant

- If utilized, has overall responsibility for directing the collection and processing of evidence
- Communicate and work with the designated Crime Scene supervisor to coordinate the efforts of investigators and Detectives
- Work with designated Crime Scene supervisor to determine which evidence investigators will collect and which evidence detectives will collect
- Determine the need for outside agency assistance with processing scene/evidence
- FSU Sergeant may request the County Crime Scene Vehicle through the Dane County Sheriff's Office (DCSO) OIC, if needed
- Ensure Lead Investigator has been selected as the representative for the FSU
- Make sure Lead Investigator briefs CP staff at completion of scene processing
- As conclusion of incident, a formal After Incident Review will take place incorporating the FSU personnel and the detective(s) of the affected district

Crime Scene Detective

- Respond directly to scene
- Conduct work as assigned by the designated Crime Scene supervisor or by Command Post personnel
- Works with investigators, as assigned, identify evidence at the scene
- Search the scene for evidence in accordance with proper authority and procedure
- Search for clues and evidence to establish the elements of a crime and identification of suspects
- Report to and discuss findings with the designated Crime Scene supervisor and/or Command Post personnel
- Relay case information to Investigators

Investigators

- Lead Investigator will make contact with the Scene Detective to start information flow to the CP
- Lead Investigator will coordinate processing efforts for multiple scenes utilizing investigator pool on hand
- Lead Investigator will gather information from all other active scenes and communicate those efforts to the CP
- Process the scene and collect evidence under direction of the FSU Sergeant or designated Crime Scene supervisor
- The body bag seal will be photographed when it is placed on the bag at the scene

- Video and photograph scene; create a crime scene diagram
- Work with Crime Scene Detectives to identify evidence and process the scene
- At conclusion of processing, Lead Investigator will go to CP and give final scene de-briefing on FSU collection efforts and to coordinate future operations

Canvass Personnel

- Conduct canvass as directed by designated scene supervisor to locate witnesses or evidence
- Utilize MPD [Neighborhood Canvass](#) form and questions as guideline for canvass
- Screen contacts for persons requiring more detailed interviews
- Document vehicle plates and descriptions from area (department's plate reader vehicle)
- Names on mailboxes
- Share basic information about incident with community members (as approved by Scene supervisor /Command Post) to calm fears and solicit information
- Share canvass results with scene supervisor and Command Post and complete report

Other Scene Personnel

- Perform tasks as assigned by Scene Lieutenant
- Complete report documenting actions

Use of CV-1

- The designated scene supervisor is in charge of CV-1
- CV-1 is a resource for personnel at the scene; it is not a substitute for the main command post
- Entry to CV-1 is limited to those who have a specific need for access
- Make request through the 911 Center for delivery to scene. Request MPD designee to operate at scene and return after use

Hospital Assignment

- Supervisor should respond if possible
- Detective or officer must stay with victim until released by the Command Post (includes going into surgery, wearing proper hospital attire)
- Limit number of people in exam room or with victim
- Obtain names of Madison Fire Department (MFD) personnel treating/transporting victim
- Obtain names of hospital emergency room (ER) personnel treating victim
- If possible, an investigator who has not been to crime scene shall assist in processing victim, clothing, and evidence. Swabs, photographs, and evidence collection shall be coordinated through the investigator assigned to the hospital
- Collect evidence (bedding, clothing, etc.), as needed
- Obtain consent for release of medical information from victim, if possible
- Check in with command post prior to leaving hospital
- Hospital Investigator will link up with Dane County Medical Examiner personnel to ensure body recovery goes according to protocol and to ensure an autopsy time has been identified. This information will be passed on to the Lead Investigator and CP by the Hospital Investigator.

TeleStaff/Payroll/Personnel Management

- Incidents that should be considered a TeleStaff Extraordinary Event:
 - All homicides
 - All officer involved shootings
 - All fatality or critical injury traffic crashes

- All full-team SWAT activations
 - Other events likely to generate 30 or more hours of total overtime (including follow-up)
- If incident qualifies, notify MPD Payroll personnel by sending an email to the PD Payroll email group. Notification must include date of incident, time of incident, location of incident, case number, and brief explanation of incident (e.g. shots fired, attempted homicide, house explosion, etc.). Payroll notification should occur as soon as possible (preferably the date of the incident), but must take place prior to the close of payroll for the incident.
- All employees working the event need to be notified that overtime entries should be OT Extraordinary.
- Personnel management includes the following considerations:
 - Manage overall overtime
 - After an employee(s) has worked 10 continuous hours, a supervisor should start to work on a transition plan for the employee(s), so the employee(s) does not work more than 12 continuous hours. If a supervisor deems it necessary to hold an employee(s) in excess of 12 continuous hours, the supervisor should evaluate the following:
 - How vital a role in the investigation does the employee have?
 - Is there a compelling reason the employee needs to work extended hours?
 - Does the employee show signs of fatigue?
 - Can the employee reasonably be relieved without adversely impacting the investigation?
 - Relieve the employee(s) as soon as possible.

Autopsy Protocol

The Medical Examiner's (ME) Office will schedule an autopsy for all homicides, questionable deaths, and unexplained deaths, unless the District Attorney's office has been consulted and agrees an autopsy is not necessary.

The scheduling and coordination of autopsies is the responsibility of the Medical Examiner's Office, giving due consideration to availability of the Medical Examiner, the ME's office resources, as well as the resources of the Madison Police Department (MPD).

When the body is removed from the scene, the Medical Examiner will place the body on a clean sheet. In criminal cases, the sheet will be collected as evidence at the conclusion of the autopsy.

At the autopsy, the seal shall be photographed before and after being cut and the attending detective/investigator will document the time/date of this process in a report. The body bag seal does not have to be collected and stored as evidence after being removed. The body bag shall be examined for trace evidence during the autopsy and will not be destroyed without consulting with the District Attorney's office. The following will usually be collected:

- Fingerprints (MPD Investigator)
- Fingernail scrapings (occasionally)
- Fingernail clippings or swabs of fingernails, if nails are too short
- Blood (even if transfused) needed for deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) testing and toxicology
- DNA stain cards
- Clothing and personal effects of the deceased
- Photographs (MPD Investigator)
 - Photograph entire body with injuries prior to removing clothes and/or washing
 - Photograph entire body with injuries after body washing
 - Photograph entire body after removing clothing
 - Photographs of case appropriate internal evidence
 - Photographs of the body and autopsy should be reviewed by case detective prior to body being released

The following items should be considered for collection if case appropriate:

- Head hair, facial hair, body hair, pubic hair
- Skeletal X-rays (generally taken with infants if there is suggestion of abuse, occasionally taken with children)
- Body swabs
- Nasal swabs
- Sexual Assault kit

Detectives should consult with investigator on special procedures or techniques and make arrangements for appropriate equipment. Coordination with the ME's office should take place prior to the autopsy.

Sexual Assault exams are conducted by the Medical Examiner. Sexual Assault exams should generally be requested in domestic homicides or in cases believed to involve sexual assaults.

Determining what should be collected during the autopsy is a collaborative effort between the Medical Examiner, investigator, and detective. The Medical Examiner will usually collect the following:

- Blood, Urine, Vitreous: all necessary for toxicology
- Liver, Kidney, Bile, Spleen: toxicology in special circumstances
- Stomach contents: toxicology, pill fragments, investigative needs, timing information
- Lung, Liver, Fat: inhalation deaths
- Brain toxicology
- Other samples, as needed

The primary responsibility of the Dane County Morgue is for storage of samples obtained from an autopsy.

Evidence will be shipped by the Medical Examiner's office personnel to an appropriate laboratory for analysis. All refrigerated and freezer evidence resulting from an autopsy will be stored at the Dane County Morgue unless specifically signed out to MPD for testing by the Wisconsin State Crime Lab (WSCL) at the request of the District Attorney.

The role of the investigator is to assist in collecting evidence at the autopsy. Immediately after the autopsy, the investigator will secure evidence collected. If there is need for further analysis by the Forensic Services Unit, FSU will take responsibility for that item. For autopsies on homicide victims, two investigators will attend and collect/secure evidence, as needed.

The detective present at the autopsy is responsible for documenting the preliminary findings regarding cause of death, as reported by the Medical Examiner. This documentation should be succinct and within the ability of the detective. The detective shall consult with the ME for appropriate details.

A search warrant can be based on the preliminary findings of the autopsy. However, detectives should be mindful of the need to carefully document and clarify the Medical Examiner's findings to prevent a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of a Medical Examiner's statement.

When the cause of death is pending toxicology, personnel at the appropriate laboratory will initially test specimen samples as requested by the Medical Examiner. The District Attorney may request secondary tests conducted by the WSCL. The samples will be obtained from the Medical Examiner's office and transported to the WSCL by the case detective. Those requests may be appropriate when investigating an unexplained death, gunshot wounds, or drug overdoses. When submitting requests, the case detective will need to specify the reasons and tests needed. The results will be provided to the specific detective who submitted the request and to the Medical Examiner's Office.

The Medical Examiner's Office collects blood to send to personnel at the appropriate laboratory on most deaths. The Medical Examiner's Office may request a presumptive test as well if the death is a suspected drug overdose.

In all drug overdose or suspected drug overdose cases, the Medical Examiner will collect blood to be analyzed by an appropriate laboratory for analysis. If there is a probability that criminal charges will be filed or if there is a questionable death, the detective, at the request of the District Attorney, will transport the specimen to the WSCL as soon as possible. If there are no criminal charges or suspect identified, then the detective can wait until the results of the Medical Examiner's test is made available.

If death occurs at a hospital or medical facility, the District Attorney's Office can obtain a subpoena for the facility's medical information and documentation of the deceased, if necessary.

Release of information regarding cause and manner of death in homicides, questionable deaths, and unexplained deaths, shall be made by the Medical Examiner's Office after consulting with the District Attorney and case detective. Media requests to MPD for that information should be referred to the Medical Examiner's Office.

Organ Donation – The investigating law enforcement agency and the District Attorney must be consulted before authorizing the harvest of organs. Bone and tissue harvesting will only be done after the autopsy. Organs will be harvested in a hospital operating room.

The Medical Examiner will not release the body of the deceased before consulting with the case detective and District Attorney's Office.

Most autopsies should have no more than one detective and one investigator (homicides shall have two investigators present). The only exception is for newly promoted detectives or investigators to attend for training purposes. The Medical Examiner's Office should be notified of additional attendees prior to the autopsy.

Detective reports documenting an autopsy should be written so non-medical personnel can understand the terms used and include:

- A list of all evidence taken by the detective
- Preliminary information from the medical examiner on the cause and manner of death
- Who was present during the autopsy
- Identification of the body
- Information pertinent to the investigation
- Anatomical diagrams, if needed
- Brief documentation of injuries, but should not conflict with the Medical Examiner (limited detail, non-technical)

Investigator reports documenting an autopsy should include:

- Time autopsy started and ended
- Body Bag seal number and time it was cut
- Who was present
- Items collected and who it was received from
- A list of all evidence taken

Information Sharing

Effective and timely information sharing is a critical component to the management of any major case.

EXTERNAL

- In most instances, the PIO should be called in and should serve as the media's contact for information
- If the PIO is not available, one person should be responsible for all media releases and contact to ensure that consistent and accurate information is released

- All information releases must be coordinated through and approved by the Command Post Lieutenant
- A media staging area should be established, typically somewhere in the vicinity of the crime scene
- District command staff should coordinate door-to-door information sharing with community members when appropriate
- Long-term external information sharing should be coordinated between the PIO and District Command Staff

INTERNAL

- A commander should be designated to oversee information sharing internally and with other law enforcement agencies; if no other commanders are available, this responsibility initially rests with the Command Post Lieutenant; once the designated scene supervisor clears the scene and responds to the Command Post, responsibility passes to that lieutenant
- An evaluation of internal information sharing should be ongoing during the investigation; information appropriate for release should be shared through briefings, email, etc.
- Information should be shared with other law enforcement agencies, as needed, to support the investigation or for safety reasons; CIS personnel should generally be responsible for sharing information as approved by the Case Lieutenant
- The Lead Investigator or an FSU representative with full knowledge of the active case will maintain contact with the case detective throughout the duration of the open case; this will include through a potential trial
- The Lead Investigator will ensure that the case detective receives a full work up matrix of all items collected for the case; the matrix will break down priority levels for evidence submission to the WSCL office
- If necessary, the Lead Investigator can be present and assist the case detective in submitting evidence to the WSCL office
- The Lead Investigator will work with the case detective ensuring all materials will be present upon a jury trial

Lead/Tip Management

It is important that any large volume of community member lead or 'tip' information be managed properly from the onset of an investigation. Equally important is the simplicity of the system utilized to collect and store that information.

- The Case Lieutenant should assign someone in the Command Post to take responsibility for collecting and logging incoming tips/leads; this will typically be a CIS officer initially. Once CIS support is no longer available, the lieutenant should designate a detective to assume this responsibility
- All incoming tips should pass through the person designated to manage tips/leads; tips/leads should be maintained in a log-book or electronic database, which should include the date the information is received, the caller's name, their telephone number, and the content of the tip
- Each lead should be reduced to a common form for data entry and uniformity and the 'original' format (e-mail, telephone message, officer's report) should be retained and attached to the common form; the information should be cataloged under the major case number associated with the event
- Each tip should be assigned for follow up/review and the actions taken should be documented in a report as well as in the log-book/database

Reporting Procedures

- The decision to lock cases in the Law Enforcement Records Management System (LERMS) will be made by the District or Unit Commander with notification to the Captain (though the OIC may initially

designate that a major case be temporarily locked pending this decision). The following personnel should be notified that a case should be locked:

- Case Process Supervisor
 - Records Manager if Case Process Supervisor is unavailable
 - Records Supervisor if Case Process Supervisor is unavailable
-
- Reports will be added to LERMS as they come in with security as to who has access. Default access for locked cases includes Chiefs, Captains, and Lieutenants; others may be specified as appropriate by a Commander (case Detectives, etc.). Access may be limited further if needed (sensitive cases, etc.)
 - Cases appropriate for consideration to be locked:
 - Homicides
 - Cases involving Officers or other high-profile individuals as suspects
 - Other high-profile cases (officer involved critical incidents, etc.)
 - OIC, Lead Detective Lieutenant, and Case Process Supervisor decide if Police Report Typists (PRTs) need to be called in; the Case Process Supervisor will decide who and when if PRT support is needed
 - Command Staff in the Investigative CP will be responsible for notifying on-scene patrol personnel to respond to the Investigative CP upon clearing the scene. Once at the CP, field personnel will be asked to brief the CP or designated team leader on actions taken at the scene (verbal summary of action and information about the case)
 - The case Detective Lieutenant or VCU supervisor will review all reports in a Major Case in LERMS
 - The case Detective Lieutenant, the lead Detective, and the District Attorney assigned (if applicable) may have the option to receive a draft version of hard copies of the numbered reports as they are updated
 - Detectives and investigators should follow their normal protocol in reviewing and correcting reports for uploading to LERMS and major case reports should be a priority
 - All major case documents should be scanned into LERMS
 - Any investigative work created by specialized software (timelines, phone analysis, etc.) should be scanned into LERMS (if possible). The officer/detective creating the work should complete a supplemental report outlining the process and software utilized.
 - Supporting documents (timelines, bulletins, etc.) should also be saved in LERMS under "Case Activity"
 - Lead Detective is designated as in charge of the reports and begin to number reports and attachments in LERMS
 - Numbered reports can be referred via the e-Referral process to the DA's office whenever possible depending on the size of the case and updated via e-Referral periodically depending on need. If too large, the case can be put on a CD or DVD and delivered to Intake staff at the DA's office. Reports need to be in the DA's office PROTECT program and not just given directly to the assigned Deputy District Attorney (DDA) or Assistant District Attorney (ADA). Property and contact information can be extracted directly from LERMS as a tool to be given to the DA's office as well. Hard copies of reports will be considered draft or working copies and original reports will be housed in LERMS

Long-Term Case Management

If a detective changes assignment (e.g., changes investigative specialty, goes to Task Force, or another detective assigned position) and still has an assigned caseload, the general rule is the caseload will follow that detective to their new assignment. Detectives should work with their current supervisors prior to changing assignments on what cases are still active and will need additional follow-up. Other inactive cases should be closed out appropriately. If a Detective lieutenant changes assignment, the general rule is that supervisory responsibility for a major case will remain in the district where it occurred. Detectives should still confer with their previous supervisor on additional work done on those caseloads for record-keeping purposes.

If a situation arises where the detective is unable to continue with their caseload in their new assignment or there are other extraordinary circumstances, those instances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with

discussions to occur between the newly assigned supervisor and the supervisor assigned to the district where the case originated.

Locked cases should be part of regular case review with Detectives/Lieutenants. The duration of time a case is locked is case specific, but should be limited when appropriate. Homicide cases should generally not remain locked beyond discovery when the reports have been turned over to the defense. Cases locked due to officer or high-profile subject involvement may remain locked longer or permanently. Locked cases should be reviewed quarterly to see if they could be unlocked.

Deviation from this SOP

It is understood that every major case is different and that some of the items/positions/actions will not be needed for every case. For example, if the commander does not see a need for CV-1, they commander does not have to use it; or a commander may decide not to canvass the area, but will still be responsible for contacting community members in another way. Deviating from this SOP does not relieve one of the responsibilities outlined by the SOP.

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(Revised: 04/23/2015, 09/15/2017, 12/06/2017, 08/02/2018, 09/20/2018, 01/03/2022, 01/31/2023, 02/03/2025)

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