

Preserving Evidence at Trauma Scenes

Guidance for EMTs, Nurses & Physicians
Presented by a Retired Police Detective &
Administrator

I have nothing to disclose

Presentation Objectives

- Understand the basics of evidence preservation
- Learn what helps police investigations
- Avoid common evidence mistakes
- Balance patient care with scene awareness

Your Role at the Scene

Patient care always comes first.

Medical personnel are often the first professionals to encounter important evidence.

What Counts as Evidence?

- Clothing
- Blood and biological material
- Weapons or fragments
- Statements and observations
- Photographs and documentation

Scene Awareness

- Observe before moving items
- Note unusual conditions
- Avoid unnecessary contamination
- Preserve scene integrity

Chain of Custody Basics

- Document who handled items
- Keep evidence secure
- Transfer items carefully
- Maintain accountability

Assault Investigations

- Preserve torn or bloody clothing
- Avoid cutting through damage when possible
- Separate patient belongings
- Document spontaneous statements

Gunshot Trauma

- Preserve clothing separately
- Be aware of gunshot residue
- Protect hands if requested
- Avoid unnecessary cleaning

Stabbing Incidents

- Preserve damaged clothing
- Document wound locations carefully
- Avoid discarding removed material

Motor Vehicle Crashes

- Document occupant positions
- Preserve restraints and seatbelts
- Note airbag deployment
- Observe impairment indicators

Hospital Considerations

- Secure patient property
- Maintain documentation
- Coordinate with law enforcement
- Follow hospital policy

Documentation Matters

- Use exact quotes when possible
- Record timelines accurately
- Avoid assumptions
- Objective observations are critical

Common Mistakes

- Throwing away clothing
- Mixing belongings
- Incomplete documentation
- Cleaning items too early

Practical Advice

- When in doubt, preserve it
- Ask before discarding
- Communicate with investigators
- Small details matter

Key Takeaways

- Patient care comes first
- Evidence preservation matters
- Documentation is critical
- Teamwork improves outcomes

Questions & Discussion

Thank you for your service and professionalism.

Hospital & Police Partnerships

Hospital & Police Partnership

Working Together for Prevention, Preparedness & Community Safety

Presentation Overview

Violence Prevention

- Injury prevention partnerships
- Violence prevention collaboration
- Overdose prevention initiatives
- Coordinated response during community shootings

Why Partnerships Matter

Overdose Prevention

Hospitals and police departments often serve the same vulnerable populations.

Strong relationships improve prevention, communication and emergency response.

Injury Prevention

Emergency Response Coordination

- Traffic safety initiatives
- Fall prevention outreach
- Community education programs
- Sharing trends and injury data

Violence Prevention

Hospital & Police Partnership

- Youth outreach programs
- Domestic violence coordination
- High-risk intervention programs
- Community trust building

Overdose Prevention

Violence Prevention

- Narcan initiatives
- Post-overdose follow-up
- Mental health partnerships
- Data sharing on overdose trends

Emergency Department Collaboration

Overdose Prevention

- Clear communication channels
- Understanding each agency's role
- Evidence preservation awareness
- Coordinated patient and family support

Community Shooting Response

Emergency Response Coordination

- Hospital surge planning
- Police-hospital communication
- Security coordination
- Family reunification planning
- Media and public information coordination

Building Strong Relationships

Hospital & Police Partnership

- Regular meetings
- Joint training exercises
- Shared community goals
- Trust and transparency

Key Takeaways

Violence Prevention

- Partnerships improve public safety
- Prevention requires collaboration
- Communication saves lives
- Preparation improves outcomes

Questions & Discussion

Overdose Prevention

Thank you for your commitment to public safety and patient care.

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