GUIDING TIPS FOR CRIME INVESTIGATION

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1. FIRST INFORMATION REPORT (FIR)
   - Not to register FIR on the basis of facts, rather, writing on the basis of conventional stories when oral statements are given by the victims or eyewitnesses. The Courts disbelieve such stories and do not trust the investigation and the cases fail in the Court of Law.
   - To show scene of crime elsewhere than actual place of incident which is not verified by the physical / circumstantial evidence. The cases fail in the Court of Law because of this problem.
   - Sometimes, the details of body wears and injuries mentioned in the police inquest report do not match with the postmortem report. This creates doubt and the benefit of doubt goes to the accused. The portrait parle of the victim or deceased mentioned in the FIR alongwith height of the deceased are also sometimes different than postmortem report, it also creates doubt in the mind of the Court.
   - At the time of drafting the FIR, not to incorporate the correct ingredients of section of IPC mentioned in the FIR, and to mention individual’s role in crime separately, it does not state clearly what specific offence is made out.
   - If the FIR is written before visiting the scene of crime, it should be mentioned in FIR as it makes the situation more clear in the Court of Law.

2. SCENE OF CRIME

   Preservation
   - Scene of Crime is not preserved properly (Anybody can fabricate or destroy evidence which should be avoided).
   - Scene of crime is not examined undelayed. (As the time passes on the probability of physical evidence being destroyed increases).
   - The physical evidences are destroyed un-intentionally and inadvertently by the hands and feet of the investigating officer while walking at the scene of crime (walk and handle different articles carefully so that appropriate physical evidence could be located and preserved.)

   Examination
   - Rubber gloves are not worn at the time of scene of crime examination (the expert and investigating officer can leave their finger prints and biological evidence on different articles).
Lifting
- Fingerprints, footprints, tyre marks and tool marks are not lifted from the scene of crime or when lifted proper procedure is not followed, by doing so we loose important evidence which can give a lead in deciding the case by the court of law.
- Empty cartridges and fingerprints lifted from scene of crime are not sent to Forensic Science Laboratory and Finger print Bureau for preservation in safe custody before the arrest of the accused(s). (This creates doubt in the mind of the Court as such evidence can be padded after the arrest of the accused).

Packing
- FIR numbers is not mentioned on all relevant documents and articles at the time of registering the case and packing of articles. (Later on it creates confusion which documents and articles pertain to which case).

Sketching
- ‘Naksha-mauka (sketch of scene of crime) is not prepared properly. (It should depict clear picture of the scene of crime).
- Location of nearby landmarks and directions are not mentioned in the map/sketch. (It does not permit correlation of events and evidence).
- Map may be notional but distance between articles be mentioned on the map. (It presents clear picture of articles).
- Sketch of the scene of crime is not prepared after mentioning direction at the scene. (Such sketch map does not give information about directions at the scene).

Photography and Videography
- Photography and Videography must be done. (It preserves the scene in situ).
- Photographs of the scene of crime, the victim of crime and injuries are not taken after placing measuring scale. FIR number is not mentioned in the photographs. (Size of articles and injuries cannot be estimated from photographs and the photographs cannot be co-related with the case).

3. MISTAKES USUALLY COMMITTED BY THE INVESTIGATING OFFICERS WHILE LIFTING, PACKING, PRESERVATION AND FORWARDING EXHIBITS TO THE LABORATORY FOR EXAMINATION.

Packing
- Packing of the exhibits should be in such a way that the evidences are not damaged. (Consult packing instructions for every evidence).
- All the remnants should be collected properly and packed items wise separately. (Avoids confusion).
- Not to mention details of exhibits contained in the parcels on the wrapper (It does not indicates what is contained in the sealed parcel).

**Sealing**

- The seals affixed on the parcel are not legible (creates doubt of tempering with the exhibits).
- Sample seal is not sometimes legible. (Creates doubt in the mind of FSL and the court).
- Sample seal is not sent attested by the investigating officer. (Required for authenticity).
- The details of exhibits mentioned on the cover of the parcel sometimes get destroyed due to leakage of the fluids from the parcel. (Creates doubt, leak proof containers should be used).

**Forwarding**

- Road Certificate is not sent along with the exhibits. (It is a necessity for the court to prove the chain of custody of the exhibits).
- The details of parcels mentioned in the road certificate do not match with the docket being sent. (Case will not be accepted for examination by FSL under these circumstances).
- Authorisation certificate for examination from a gazette officer is not sent along with the parcels. (Case would not be accepted by FSL).
- The exhibits are not sent immediately after recovery for examination in the laboratory. (Biological samples get purified and become unfit for examination and give inclusive results).

**Questionnaire**

- Questions for asking opinion must be specific and clear. (Suo-motoreport cannot be given by FSL and FPB)

**(a) Biological Evidence**

(i) **Blood and other Biological fluids and stained exhibits.**

- Lifting the exhibits with naked hands without wearing gloves and to mix biological evidence of the I.O. himself/herself. (Wear Gloves).
- To pack the exhibits / garments etc. without drying. (It destroys the evidence dry the exhibits).
- Not to preserve the biological exhibits (blood, semen, saliva & vaginal secretion) on FTA cards. (Creates problems in DNA
- To lift insufficient samples for examination. (Send atleast 10 hair, 1x1 inch blood stain or 20 nano gm DNA).

(ii) Hair
- Not to pack mixed hair in brown paper, white hair in coloured paper and black hair in white paper envelope. (Hair can be lost).
- Not to pack atleast 10 hair samples from the suspect / accused. (Below 10 hair insufficient sample).
- Not to send pulled hair with roots for examination. (Cellular DNA / Nuclear DNA analysis cannot be done).

(iii) Bones
- Bones are not sent after getting them cleaned from the Doctor. (Fungus grows on un-cleaned bones and destroys the evidence).
- Preservation of proper bones like Humerus, Femur or Tibia for DNA examination is not done. (Leads to inconclusive results).
- IOs do not pack and forward burnt bones after wrapping in cotton wool in a hard box. (Such bones are fragile and can break further).

(iv) Plants remnants (Stems, Seeds and Leaves, etc.)
- Not taking sufficient samples for examination. (2x2 inch wood pieces, 5 seeds and 5 leaves should at least be sent).
- IOs do not pack every sample separately so that they do not break further. (This can destroy that evidence).
- IOs do not protect plant samples from moisture. (The fungal growth deteriorates the samples due to moisture).

(v) Blood Stained Weapons
- While sending weapons like Gun, Club, Dagger, Hacksaw, Sword, etc. not to protect blood stains and hair etc., should be protected after wrapping in white paper with the help of a thread. (The stain can get destroyed due to rubbing without paper wrapping).

(b) Chemical Evidences

(i) Viscera
- Doctors do not preserve viscera in normal saline instead preserving the same in Hydrochloric Acid, Nitric Acid and
Sulphuric Acid or Formalin solution. This leave viscera unfit for examination.
- IOs do not send viscera immediately for examination. Viscera putrefies and becomes unfit for examination. There can also be self generation of alcohol in putrefied viscera.
- Sufficient samples of viscera for examination is not taken. (Take at least 50 gms of viscera and 5 ml of blood and urine sample each).
- IOs do not send blood and urine samples for detection of Alcohol along with viscera. (Alcohol detection from putrefied viscera in the absence of blood and urine samples can give misleading results).
- To send leaking jars of viscera for examination. (Causes inconvenience to the person carrying it and is also nuisance to the public in transport).
- In poison cases must send vomit and stomach wash for examination. (It leads to detection of poison in some cases).
- IOs do not lift fingerprints from the poison and alcohol containers lying at the scene of crime. (If lifted can guide whether victim handled the same or somebody else).

(ii) Phenolphthalein Sample
- In the cases of catching red handed in bribery cases the hand wash and pocket wash samples are taken in tap water which is mostly chlorinated. The pink colour of Phenolphthalein gets decolourised in these samples before sending the same to the laboratory for examination. It is advisable that the hand wash pocket wash samples of Phenolphthalein should be taken in distilled water or water from hand pump. (It creates doubt to witnesses as they tell the Court that the water was not pink and the case ends in the acquittal.

(iii) Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances
- The samples is taken in insufficient quantity for examination. (Send at least 1 to 2 gms of the sample). The correct weight of NDPS substance is not mentioned in the docket. (Leads to disowning of samples in the court and hence acquittals).
- Homogenous representative samples are not sent. (Which is a necessity as per Supreme Court orders).
- Spot Test Kits are not utilized fully due to lack of operational knowledge. (Samples are not identified at the spot).
- The search of the suspect / accused is not carried out as per provisions of NDPS Act and the Investigating Officer does not offer his own search before hand to the suspect / accused. If at all search is carried out as per provisions, the
requisite documents are not placed on the case file which forfeit the purpose of the search in the Court of Law. (Leads to acquittals).

- Exhibits are not sent for examination to Forensic Science Laboratory within 24 hours as per the provisions of NDPS Act. (Leads to acquittals).

- NCB Forms are not filled in triplicate and sent to Forensic Science Laboratory alongwith the documents. (Necessity of the procedure).

- Sometimes sample seal used in sealing the parcel is not affixed on the NCB Forms. (Cases shall not be accepted by FSL). The number of seals affixed on the parcel is not indicated in the documents being sent. (Creates doubt and leads to acquittals). Affixed seal and sample of seal are sometimes not legible. (Gets the benefit of doubt to the accused). When two type of seals are used in sealing and re-sealing of the parcels the same should be mentioned. (It creates doubt).

(iv) Other Cases of Chemical Examination

- In excise cases for the examination of alcohol, random samples, are not sent instead, the whole of the lot is sent in the Laboratory for examination. (Increase workload on the FSL).

- Samples of the poisonous gases are not taken in balloons. The remnant of petroleum products present in the burnt debris are not packed in airtight containers. The volatile substance further evaporates till examination and the positive results are not obtained due to faulty packing.

- In the case of poisoning due to gases blood samples are not sent for examination to the Laboratory. (A vital evidence is lost).

- The acids and alkalis are not contained and sent in glass and plastic bottles as required. (Leads to accident while transporting).

(c) Physics, Ballistic and Explosive Evidence

(i) Physics Evidences

- IOs do not preserve and send tool and tool marks for examination and comparison (Loose vital evidence).
- IOS do not send homogenous representative samples of cement, concrete, mortar and other building material samples for examination. (Required for judicious examination).
- IOs do not send footprints, tyre marks, plaster casts properly packed. These exhibits break down on the way due faulty packing. ( Loose vital evidence).
- In stolen vehicles cases vehicles are immediately not sent to Forensic Science Laboratory for the restoration of engine and chassis numbers. (This causes damage to public property as the vehicles become wreckage).
- To preserve paint pieces collected from scene of crime in a paint box.  (Contaminates the sample as paint from paint box gets mixed up with the sample).

(ii) Firearms  
- IOs do not send bullets, pallets, wads and empty cartridges recovered from the scene of crime to the Forensic Science Laboratory for preserving in safe custody before the recovery of the firearm. (Creates doubt of padding).
- IOs do not empty firearms before sending to Laboratory. (It can cause accidental firing).
- To not to pack firearms completely in a cotton bag. (Exhibit can be tempered with).
- To not to pack bullets and empty cartridges in cardboard boxes after wrapping the same in cotton wool. (Additional marks can be caused).
- To send blood stained bullets and pallets to the Laboratory for examination after getting them washed. (Blood evidence is lost).
- Recovery memo is not got signed by two independent witnesses while taking exhibits in custody. (Evidence has no value in the Court of Law).

(iii) Explosives  
- Not to travel in public transport along with live explosives/IED. Same should be brought after diffusing.
- To take IED without diffusing from point of detection to the Laboratory for examination. (Can cause accidental explosion).
- IOs do not pack explosive as per SOP for carrying them to the Laboratory. (Can cause accident).
- IOs do not take swabs of the gun shot residues from hands of the deceased and the suspected person for examination. (This if done can link the firm arm with the firing person).

(d) Paper and Electronic Documents
(i) **Paper Documents**

- Sample signature / writings are not taken in sufficient number for comparison. (Should be at least five sheets).
- Admitted signatures / writing are not sent for examination and comparison. (Leads to inconclusive results).
- Sample writings are not taken before authorised witness / authorised officer. (The court do not admit the reports).
- IOs do not take samples on the same type of paper and with the same type of pen / writing instrument which has been used in the questioned writing. (Causes more natural variations).
- IOs do not mark separately questioned and sample writings. (Creates confusion at the time of examination).
- To write down something else on the questioned and sample documents. (Leads to confusion).
- IOs do not preserve burnt documents / currency notes by spray of cellulose acetate / cellulose nitrate solution before sending them to Laboratory. (Such exhibits are fragile and further break into pieces).
- To not send print of same typewriter / printer which has been used in the preparation of suspected document for comparison. (Leads to inconclusive results.)

(ii) **Electronic Documents**

- After taking computer, hard disc, pen drive, CDs, DVDs, Floppies, magnetic tape, DPU, etc. in custody from the scene of crime, the police should not operate them, otherwise the ‘Hash value’ of these document would change. The evidence which would be obtained from these electronic documents would become suspected in the eyes of the Court. So, running of such documents after recovery should strictly be prohibited.
- IOs do not send empty hard disc for preparing a copy of the document. (Causes delay in examination).
- To let electronic document fall from height (this can destroy the data).
- To place electronic document near a beat source at high temperature or near a magnet (the data can be destroyed if done so).
(e) **Fingerprints, Footprints, Shoeprints and Tyre Marks**

- Use good light source to locate the prints. (Dim light source can’t help locating prints).
- Must photograph the prints. You can’t have second chance to preserve them if destroyed while lifting.
- If such prints / marks are in dust make the use of DLK (Dust mark Electrostatic Lifting Kit) which lifts the prints with all details.
- Completely dry the plaster casts to avoid breaking in transportation.
- Use fine grainless fingerprint powders. (Grain containing powders will destroy the prints).
- Never use wet powders. (Dry them before use).
- Never pray Fingerprint Powder on a wet surface. (The source must be dried before applying powder else the print will be destroyed).

**NOTE:**

1. For packing and forwarding instructions see BPR & D Training Manual for Police Officers, 1998, written by Dr. M.B. Rao or the instructions prepared by your own lab or metropolitan police Forensic Science Laboratory London be consulted.
2. If the investigating Officer do not commit the above stated mistakes, the crime investigation can certainly be done more effectively and efficiently.