



<u>Policy Title</u>	Forensic Investigation Unit Attendance
<u>CCMT Sponsor</u>	ACC Specialist Operations
<u>Department/Area</u>	Crime Support
<u>Section/Sector</u>	Forensic Investigation Unit

1.0 Rationale

1.1

This policy is set to maximise forensic science opportunities in accordance with the prevailing force priorities whilst balancing the demands of major and volume crime. The policy aims to achieve a balance between the investigational requirements and the potential for forensic yield at the scene.

2.0 Intention

2.1

The intention of this policy is to:

- Support the Forensic Strategy and set out Force policy and procedures applicable to:
 - The types of crime that Scenes of Crime (SOC) can be expected to attend
 - The appropriate level of SOC response to that crime.
- Ensure a consistent approach to the use of Scenes of Crime and Volume Crime Scene Examiners across the force.
- Make investigators and support staff aware of the probability of SOC attendance at a particular crime scene
- Maximise the potential for recovery of forensic evidence at crime scenes

3.0 General Principles

3.1 Crime Scenes

Any crime scene has the potential to yield forensic evidence. Investigators should always be encouraged to consider the use of Scenes of Crime. There may be cases where an emerging crime pattern, a suspect, or local

community concerns provide compelling reasons for SOC attendance at crime scenes not normally visited. If in doubt the advice of a Scenes of Crime Officer or Senior should be sought, they are able to assess the potential and impact of forensic evidence. Also see `Sources of Evidence` at Appendix B.

3.2

In all cases the Generic Risk Assessments for Scenes of Crime and Lone working must be applied prior to and when attending a scene.

3.3

The following are crimes that regularly warrant Scenes of Crime attendance:

- *Major and serious crime*
Normally a crime in which an HQ Senior Investigating Officer or Senior Area Detective has been appointed.
- *Violent Crime*
Defined in two categories at Appendix A, para 5.7
- *Burglary*
Dwelling, vehicles stolen from burglary and some prioritised non-dwelling.
- *Vehicle Crime*
Recovered stolen vehicles, vehicles used in crime and property recovered from vehicles. Prioritised theft from motor vehicle, vehicle interference and criminal damage to vehicles.
- *Fires*
Fatality, serious injury, high value or arson.

3.4

The Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) Thematic Inspection `Under The Microscope` identified that screening policies in respect of forensic investigation do not appear to work. It raised concerns that use of such policies meant that opportunities to tackle volume crime were being lost. We recognise these concerns but are unable to attend 100% of crime and have embarked on a strategy to improve our attendance at volume crime scenes. This includes:

- New performance targets
- Increased staff
- Improved training in forensic awareness at all levels
- Basic screening and forensic advice at Police Enquiry Centres
- The use of an IT case management system to measure performance at all levels in SOC.
- Focus on performance through departmental meetings

4.0 Challenges & Representations

4.1

Any person directly affected by this policy may make representations in relation to this document and / or any decision in consequence of it to:

Detective Chief Superintendent Crime Support
Thames Valley Police Headquarters
Kidlington
Oxon. OX5 2NX

5.0 Guidance, Procedures & Tactics

5.1

Guidelines for prioritisation of work within the department have been devised and can be found in Appendix C.

5.2

Attendance by Scenes of Crime at any priority crime or series crime is managed through the National Intelligence Model (NIM). Attendance by the SSM at Level 2 Tasking meetings and by Areas Senior SOCO at Level 1 Tasking/Crime Series meetings enable to appropriate direction of resources under the HQ management.

5.3

All submitted work will be completed in the most timely and efficient manner but the priorities ensure that the more urgent and serious cases can be processed accordingly.

The levels of priority are a guide and there may be some movement between the priority levels according to the details of the offence and the Force priorities at any one time. The priorities apply to both submissions and attendance - see Forensic Investigation Unit Submissions protocol.

Major Crime
Violent Crime
Burglary
Vehicle Crime
Fires
Documentation of Decisions and Decision Making Process
Non-attendance at Crime Scenes

See Appendix A

6.0 Communication

6.1 Links to Police National Legal Database Other

DNA Policy
Forensic Investigation Unit Strategy
Tripartite Agreement TVP/CPS/FSP.

PED Policy
Forensic Investigation Unit Submission protocol.

6.2 Communications Strategy

This policy is intended for:

Crime Managers Meetings
PECS/Control Room meeting
Force Intranet
FIU Management/Departmental Meetings
Forensic Awareness Training all levels, Area and TAD
Performance Group
SOC staff

This policy will be published on the Policy Management Unit Intranet site and is a publicly available document via the Thames Valley Police website.

7.0 Compliance and Certification

7.1 Human Rights Certification

(i) Legal Basis

The legal basis for this document is derived from the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Criminal Procedure and Investigations act 1996.

(ii) Human Rights Articles Engaged

It is acknowledged that this policy has the potential to engage the following Articles:

- Article 2 Right to Life
- Article 8 Right to Respect for Private and Family life
- First Protocol, Article 1 Protection of Property

In the event that an article of the convention is engaged, then the legitimacy for the engagement is usually provided within the text of the Articles.

- Article 2 (Right to Life) - The Police Service has a positive obligation under Article 2 which may include forensic investigation to try and identify an offender, which should assist in taking preventative operational measures to protect an individual whose life is at risk from the criminal acts another individual.
- Article 8 (Right to Respect for Private and Family Life) provides the following legitimate aims:
 - National security
 - Public safety
 - The economic well being of the country
 - Prevention of disorder or crime
 - The protection of health or morals

- Protection of the rights and freedoms of others

First Protocol, Article 1 (Protection of Property) - The police service has a positive obligation to ensure people can enjoy their property. By investigating acquisitive crimes, we create the opportunity to detect the crime and recover the property. However regard must be had to the fair balance that has to be struck between the competing interests of the individual and of the community as a whole

(iii) Prohibition of Discrimination

By engaging any of the aforementioned Articles, there is the potential to engage Article 14 of the Convention. The enjoyment of the Rights and Freedoms set forth in the European Convention of Human Rights shall be secured without discrimination on any grounds, such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status. Actions taken as a consequence of this policy will be applied fairly and impartially, having due regard to natural justice and human rights.

7.2 Diversity Impact Assessment

This policy requires a Diversity Impact Assessment.

7.3 Data Protection

All personal data processed in compliance with this policy will be managed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

7.4 Freedom of Information Act

This document is publicly available via the Thames Valley Police website, however the appendices are exempt under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Section 31, as they include police tactics and would compromise the operational effectiveness of our staff.

7.5 Protective Markings

This policy has been assessed against the requirements of the Government Protected Marking Scheme and is a NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED policy.

7.6 Health & Safety at Work

Generic and Dynamic Risk Assessments are undertaken as a matter of course by attending SOCO managers and all Seniors SOCO are trained in risk assessment. Each scene attended is unique and hence will present its own element of risk, therefore there is a requirement for this to be carried out proactively.

8.0 Monitoring and Review

8.1 Links to Best Value/PPAF/Priorities/Performance Indicators

This policy adheres to the attendance targets and philosophy laid out in the Best Value Review of Scientific Support 2001.

This policy directly impacts the force priorities for the reduction and the investigation of crime. By facilitating timely attendance we increase the potential for an early forensic identification. This reduces investigation time and provides the potential for an early interruption to the crime cycle.

The Forensic Performance indicators include the measurement of scene attendance. These figures are collated quarterly by the Home Office and are reviewed by the Police Standards Unit as part of the Police Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF) at all crimes.

Scene Attendance at priority crimes is measured monthly within the Performance Group Framework.

8.2 Review Process

A full review will be carried out every 2 years by the policy author and will examine:

- Changes in legislation
- Court rulings – Domestic, European and Human Rights
- Examples of good practice from other Forces or other organisations
- Changes in Home Office Circulars
- Developments with ACPO Policy Unit
- Representations made by individuals and relevant organisations