



# Death Scene Investigation Procedural Guide

*Michael S. Maloney*

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"*Death Scene Investigation: Procedural Guide* is the answer to a long recognized dilemma: how to have every death investigated by an experienced death investigator."

— Tom Bevel, author of *Practical Crime Scene Analysis and Reconstruction* and *Bloodstain Pattern Analysis with an Introduction to Crime Scene Reconstruction, Third Edition*

Those tasked with investigating death scenes come from a variety of backgrounds and varying levels of experience. **Death Scene Investigation: Procedural Guide** gives the less experienced investigator the procedures for almost any death scene imaginable while providing the seasoned investigator a ready reference for deaths occurring even under the most unusual of circumstances. It details the precise steps that need to be taken when processing and analyzing a death scene to ensure vital evidence is not lost and "red flags" are not missed.

Using a bulleted format for quick and easy access, the book provides hands-on, concise instruction in a style friendly to a range of professionals. Topics discussed in this practical manual include:

- **Initial response and scene evaluation.** This section includes a death investigation decision tree to lead investigators to a preliminary cause of death. The section is broken down into natural, accidental, suicidal, and homicidal deaths. It also explores the role of the medical examiner and autopsy protocol.
- **Recovery of human remains from open field, aquatic, and buried sites.** This section also discusses estimating the time of death.
- **Wound dynamics and mechanisms of injury.** Manners of death include asphyxiation; sharp force, blunt force, and chopping injuries; handgun, rifle, and shotgun wounds; and explosive, thermal, and electrical injuries.
- **Special death scene investigations.** Discussions include child and infant death, sex-related death, and death scenes with multiple victims.
- **Death scene management.** This section covers documentation, sketching, photography and videography, special observations, and search procedures.
- **Death scene evidence processing.** Topics include bloodstain patterns, shooting scenes, and entomological, biological, trace, friction ridge, and impression evidence.

An appendix contains precautions for handling bloodborne pathogens and 15 innovative worksheets for field use are available for download. Death scene responders who master the techniques in this volume will expedite solving the circumstances of the death and the closing of the case.

Michael S. Maloney was interviewed in Volume 13 of Anil Aggrawal's Internet Journal of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology.

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