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**Forensic Evidence and Technical Services Command**  
**Crime Scene Services Branch**  
**POLICY**

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**NSW Police Force**

**Crime Scene Services Branch**  
**Major Crime and Incidents**  
**Policy**

**Effective as of February 2021**

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**OFFICIAL: Sensitive****1.0 DEFINITIONS**

<b>TERM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
<b>AFSAB Accredited Expert</b>	Staff member accredited by NIFS as having attained expertise in Crime Scene Methodology
<b>Command Notification for Crimes and Incidents</b>	CSSB Command will be notified by way of situation report (SITREP) of all homicides, serious sexual assault, counter terrorism (CT) incidents, shooting incidents, politically motivated incidents, any other incident attracting high media attention
<b>Crime Scene Officer CSO</b>	Unsworn officer attached to the Crime Scene Services Branch undergoing or possessing appropriate forensic science qualifications and skills. E.g. Advanced Diploma of Forensic Investigation or Graduate Certificate in Crime Scene Investigation or Degree / Higher Degree in Forensic Science or equivalent. Performs the same role as a Forensic Investigator (sworn police officer).
<b>Commander CSSB</b>	Superintendent
<b>Crime Scene Allocator – CSSB</b>	A Sergeant or Acting Sergeant working within the Sydney Metropolitan Zones, providing support to crime scene staff and coordination of forensic resources at scenes of major crime and incidents
<b>DOFM</b>	Department of Forensic Medicine
<b>FEAC</b>	Forensic Evidence Advisory Committee
<b>Fingerprint Operations</b>	Part of the Identification Services Branch. The section is comprised of Forensic Fingerprint Investigators who are located at Police Headquarters, Parramatta. They may be deployed to scenes of major crime
<b>Forensic Case Officer</b>	A Senior Forensic Investigator (with a minimum of 3 years' experience and are currently in Phase 3 of the Forensic Investigator Training Program and working towards AFSAB)
<b>Forensic Investigator</b>	Police officer attached to the Crime Scene Services Branch undergoing or possessing appropriate forensic science qualifications and skills, E.g. Advanced Diploma of Forensic Investigation or Graduate Certificate in Crime Scene Investigation or Degree / Higher Degree in Forensic Science or equivalent.
<b>Forensic Case Manager</b>	An AFSAB expert allocated overall management of a major crime investigation
<b>Forensic Supervisor</b>	Sergeant or Senior Crime Scene Officer
<b>Identification Services Branch FETSC ISB</b>	Comprises of Fingerprint Operations, Forensic Ballistics Investigation Section, Weapons and Ordinance Disposal Unit, Forensic Imaging Section, Engineering Investigation Section and Criminal Records Section
<b>NSW FASS</b>	NSW Forensic and Analytical Science Service
<b>Senior Investigator</b>	Police officer in charge of investigation from a PAC/PD or the State Crime Command

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<b>TERM</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
<b>MCAP</b>	Major Crime Assessment Panel – Chaired by Commander, CSSB. Committee membership – CSSB Inspectors and invited subject matter experts
<b>Coordinator</b>	CSSB Senior Sergeant

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### **2.0 POLICY POSITION**

This policy sets out how forensic evidence will be managed for:

- Homicides, historic unsolved homicides, suspicious and unusual deaths, critical incidents, aggravated or unknown offender sexual assaults, high risk missing persons, extortion, abduction, terrorism, post-blast analysis, disaster victim identification, chemical biological radiological or other high-profile incidents.

This policy primarily describes the roles and responsibilities of the Crime Scene Services Branch in relation to the types of cases mentioned above. The policy describes how:

CSSB will respond to major crime and incident scenes:

- Allocate forensic resources State-wide, and
- Manage the investigation under the CSSB Forensic Case Management framework to ensure a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis of all forensic evidence.

### **3.0 SCOPE**

This policy applies to all staff within the CSSB.

### **4.0 OBJECTIVES**

This policy is designed to:

- Ensure a timely response with improved capacity to deploy qualified forensic practitioners. These personnel will use the latest techniques and technologies to recover forensic evidence at serious crimes State-wide.
- Improve the quality and timeliness of forensic evidence analysis for both investigative purposes and ultimately, the Courts (including Coroner).

Demonstrate to victims of crime, their relatives and the broader community, that the NSW Police Force is committed to solving crime in NSW using forensic techniques.

### **5.0 CONTEXT**

Forensic science is one of the most valuable tools that police can use to solve and reduce crime. Many high-profile murder and sexual assault cases have been solved with forensic evidence gathered from the crime scene. Forensic evidence such as DNA and fingerprints identify persons and provides critical leads in the investigation. Criminals routinely leave fingerprints, DNA or other forensic evidence behind at crime scenes that will provide vital investigative leads for police to resolve investigations.

The sensitivity of techniques to find and analyse forensic evidence is continually improving. Trace evidence is potentially abundant at each and every major crime and incident scene and it is vitally important that adequate resources are assigned, initially to the scene, and that detailed follow-up occurs to ensure the evidence has been thoroughly analysed and considered.

Forensic evidence can assist investigators to pursue various leads and/or eliminate suspects. Given the complexity and lengthy nature of the investigations mentioned under "Policy Position" it is important that forensic results are given appropriate attention during all phases of the investigation. This policy details a Review cycle (see 6.5 Review Cycle).

### **6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **6.1 Overall Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for compliance with this policy rests with the Commander, Crime Scene Services Branch.

Responsibility for day to day operational compliance is delegated to the Inspectors and Coordinators.

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### 6.2 Initial Notification of crime/incident

#### 6.2.1 Forensic Investigators / Crime Scene Officer / Crime Scene Allocator

In most situations the Crime Scene Allocator will contact the Forensic Investigator / Crime Scene Officer to attend crime and incident scenes. The Crime Scene Allocator will notify the Coordinator of the crime and incident scene if it requires Command notification and tag the incident in CAD as FTC Significant and/or FTC AFSAB. Forensic Investigators / Crime Scene Officers must immediately notify the Crime Scene Allocator of major crime and incident scenes requiring notification.

#### 6.2.2 Coordinator Assesses Resource Needs

The Coordinator upon initial notification of a major crime or incident will liaise with the Forensic Supervisor / Forensic Investigator / Crime Scene Officer to identify issues and tasks requiring support and identify any additional forensic resources that may require deployment.

The Coordinator will ensure that the forensic investigation of major crime or incidents is managed and investigated by:

#### 6.2.3 Forensic Case Manager

The Forensic Case Manager is a Forensic Supervisor / Forensic Investigator / Crime Scene Officer who holds Australasian Forensic Science Assessment Body (AFSAB) expertise in the Methodology of Crime Scene Investigation. The Forensic Case Manager will be deployed to the scene and will take overall responsibility and ownership of the investigation.

#### 6.2.4 Forensic Case Officer

A Senior Forensic Investigator / Crime Scene Officer (with a minimum of 3 years' experience and are currently in Phase 3 of the Forensic Investigator Training Program and working towards AFSAB) will be deployed to the scene to assist the Forensic Case Manager. The Forensic Case Officer may be allocated the investigation, however, will work under the guidance and supervision of the Forensic Case Manager for the duration of case.

#### 6.2.5 Inspector Notification

The Coordinator will notify the relevant Inspector of the response to the major crime or incident. The Inspector will assess the response and arrange any necessary additional resources.

#### 6.2.6 Commander CSSB

The Inspector will notify the Commander CSSB of the response to the major crime or incident.

#### 6.2.7 Forensic Support Team

The Coordinator may assemble a Forensic Support Team which comprises of specialists from the FETSC (CSSB and ISB) and the forensic community (e.g. FASS and DOFM)

#### 6.2.8 Transport Arrangements for Forensic Support Team

The Coordinator will identify the most appropriate means of transporting the Forensic Support Team to the scene of the incident. The Forensic Support Team may either travel by road or fly. Air travel during or after office hours can be booked via the current contractor.

### 6.3 At Scene Duties

#### 6.3.1 Attendance and Management

The Coordinator / Inspector may attend and manage the scene. This officer will supervise the forensic response (including CSSB and ISB) and ensure these resources are

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coordinated and there is effective liaison between the FETSC units. Subject to the complexity of the matter, an officer nominated by the Commander CSSB may assume control of the operation.

Where scene duties carry over between multiple Forensic Case Manager's due to the duration of the scene examination, prior to the conclusion of the scene examination a formal handover determination will be made by the Coordinator or the Inspector. The Coordinator/Inspector will review the scene examination duties, Forensic Case Officer's location/team and formally allocate the Forensic Case Manager role to one individual. This determination will be documented in the SITREP prior to submission and circulation.

### 6.4 Post Scene Examination and Analysis

#### 6.4.1 Scene Examination Concludes

When the scene examination has concluded, the Forensic Case Manager or Forensic Case Officer will provide a verbal briefing to the Senior Investigator as to the results of the examination. A determination will then be made regarding whether the scene should be retained under police guard until the conclusion of any autopsies or where required clean-up procedures may be instigated. If the scene is not required to be retained and no clean-up is required following chemical enhancement procedures, the scene will be handed over to the Senior Investigator or their representative.

#### 6.4.2 Welfare for Forensic Personnel

The Coordinator / Inspector will also ensure that systems are in place for the psychological debrief of Forensic staff in their line of authority at the earliest opportunity after their attendance at the scene using either the Employee Assistance Program or Police Psychologists. With staff outside this line of authority, notification will be made to the relevant Inspector to arrange the welfare debrief. The Coordinator may also take any other actions considered necessary to support staff in accordance with corporate welfare management policy. The Inspector will maintain records of the incident and welfare debriefings in the Incident and Support Database.

#### 6.4.3 Priority of Exhibit Analysis

CSSB Inspectors can authorise priority analysis of samples at FASS, recovered fingerprints by Fingerprint Operations or exhibits by the relevant crime scene section / fingerprint laboratory. A request for priority analysis can be submitted by Investigating Officers through the BluePortal system or initiated by CSSB staff using the CSSB Major Crime Situation Report. Prior to authorisation these requests will be assessed against the needs of the investigation and any forensic analysis results on hand. All reasonable efforts will be made to provide biometric identifications using available evidence within the first 48 hours of the incident.

#### 6.4.4 Operational Quality Control

Inspectors / Coordinators will monitor the quality of forensic investigations and may,

- liaise with all forensic staff and investigators concerning the forensic service delivery and the direction of the investigation,
- ensure that tasks (especially high priority examinations) are completed,
- ensure that the review cycle (See 6.5) is completed,
- ensure that all subsequent forensic analysis is thorough and meticulous.

### 6.5 Major Crime Review Cycle

Inspectors / Coordinators are responsible for ensuring reviews are conducted in accordance with the following details:

#### 6.5.1 Stage One – CSSB Major Crime Situation Report

The review cycle for forensic investigations commences with the submission of a CSSB Major Crime Situation Report. This is to be forwarded to CSSB Command via #CSSBSITREP at the earliest opportunity. Any samples / exhibits / or recovered

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fingerprints that can be rapidly analysed to identify an unknown suspect / victim or link them to a location, person, or object should be included in this report, and will be considered for prioritisation by the or relevant Inspector or Commander CSSB. The details of the nominated Forensic Case Officer and the Forensic Case Manager will be documented in the CSSB Major Crime Situation Report.

### 6.5.2 Stage Two – CSSB Case creation

On the submission of the CSSB Major Crime Situation Report the relevant Inspector will review the report and determine if a case is to be created. Once the Inspector determines a case is to be created the Inspector will notify (in writing) the Forensic Case Officer, Forensic Case Manager and Coordinator that the investigation has been made into a case. The Inspector will then nominate a date the first Major Crime Status Report is due (within 21 days from the date of the incident). The Inspector also notifies the CSSB Executive Assistant who will update the Major Crime Case Management spreadsheet and set due dates for the first Major Crime Status Report and Major Crime Review.

### 6.5.3 Stage three – Major Crime Review

A formal Major Crime Review (MCR) of the investigation will be held within 7 days of the incident. The facilitation of the MCR is the responsibility of the Forensic Case Manager. The Forensic Case Officer, Forensic Case Manager and the Coordinator must attend the MCR in addition to other relevant FETSC officers, Senior Investigator, external experts i.e. DOFM Forensic Pathologists, FASS staff or any other relevant experts considered necessary by CSSB staff or the Senior Investigator. The results of the scene, autopsy, exhibit examinations and exhibit analysis prioritisation will be discussed along with the future forensic strategy of the investigation with the Senior Investigator.

### 6.5.4 Stage four – Major Crime Status Report

Once the MCR has been held, the Forensic Case Officer has until the nominated date (21 days after the incident) to prepare the first Major Crime Status Report. The Major Crime Status Report is to be reviewed by the Forensic Case Manager who will provide recommendations regarding the future forensic strategy. The Forensic Case Manager will forward the Major Crime Status Report to the Coordinator who will review and provide a recommendation regarding the status classification and comment on the forensic strategy which may include; scheduling subsequent MCR's, undertaking further forensic tasks associated with the investigation or to prepare a final Major Crime Status report. The Coordinator will then forward the Major Crime Status Report to the Senior Investigator and the relevant Inspector. The Inspector will review the Major Crime Status Report and review/approve the forensic strategy.

### 6.5.5 Stage five – Ongoing Major Crime Reviews and status reporting

Where ongoing reviews have been recommended the Inspector will formally notify (in writing) the Forensic Case Officer, Forensic Case Manager and Coordinator. The Inspector will also notify the Executive Assistant who will update the Major Crime Case Management spreadsheet. The CSSB Executive Assistant will maintain the Major Crime Case Management spreadsheet of the nominated due dates and all records.

### 6.5.6 Stage six – Final Major Crime Status Report

Once all forensic examinations have been completed, a person has been charged or all available forensic opportunities have been exhausted the Forensic Case Officer is to complete a final Major Crime Status Report. Once the report has been reviewed by the Forensic Case Manager, Coordinator and Inspector the matter will be referred to the Major Crime Assessment Panel.

### 6.5.7 Stage seven – Major Crime Assessment Panel

The Major Crime Assessment Panel (MCAP) sits monthly to review "in progress" and finalised major crime investigations. Final Major Crime Status Reports are submitted to the MCAP membership one week prior the scheduled meeting for review and determination if subject matter experts are required to attend or provide advice to the

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panel. During the MCAP meeting the Inspectors will provide a briefing to the Chair on current investigations and all final Major Crime Status Reports will be reviewed. The MCAP panel members will make recommendations regarding further action and/or confirm case's status.

MCAP recommendations will be updated on the Major Crime Status Report and returned to the Forensic Case Officer, Forensic Case Manager and Coordinator for actions/notifications.

Case status:

- A case will remain "Open" whilst it is unsolved and/or there are outstanding forensic examinations or opportunities to pursue.
- A case will be "Suspended" when all POI's have been charged and there are no outstanding forensic processes apart from the crime scene statement
- A case will be "Closed" when the statement has been completed.
- A case will be "Finalised" when the matter has been finalised at court.
- A case will be "Referred" when all forensic examinations and opportunities have been exhausted and the case remains unsolved. The case will be formally referred to the Forensic Evidence Advisory Committee (FEAC).

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