OPERATIONS ORDER NO. 1  February 23, 2016

SUBJECT:    DEPLOYMENT AND USE OF THE CRIME SCENE CANOPY—ESTABLISHED; AND, CRIME SCENE CANOPY TRACKING LOG—ACTIVATED

PURPOSE:    The purpose of this Order is to establish the protocol for the use, care, and deployment of the Crime Scene Canopy. This Order also activates the attached Crime Scene Canopy Tracking Log (Canopy Log).

BACKGROUND: The sight of a death investigation in our communities elicits emotion and outrage, which can have a lasting impact on individuals who view the decedent. The manner in which law enforcement handles the scene of a death investigation can produce trust and calm within the community, or it can incite anger and create conflict between responding officers and the community. The goal of this Order is to ensure we treat each decedent with respect, minimize the harmful impact to the community and preserve vital evidence.

The remains of a decedent at a death investigation scene is critical evidence. The Department recognizes the importance of preserving this evidence and has implemented guidelines to ensure proper crime scene management. In addition to existing Department policies and relevant procedures, each geographic Area and traffic division has been issued a canopy to be deployed at the scene of a death investigation to protect the public from viewing the decedent and to facilitate the on-scene investigation by detective personnel and the coroner.

PROCEDURE:

1. OFFICER’S RESPONSIBILITIES. In all cases where the decedent is in public view, the Crime Scene Canopy shall be deployed. Officers deploying the Crime Scene Canopy shall ensure to:

   - Construct/open and up-right the canopy a safe distance away from the immediate surroundings of the decedent;
   - Prior to canopy placement, cover the canopy feet with disposable gloves or snug-fitting plastic bags to protect the canopy and the scene from contamination;
   - Use the canopy side panels based on the location, terrain and the proximity of the public’s view/access to the decedent;
   - Affix the side panels approximately six inches off the ground to avoid contamination of the canopy;
   - Position the canopy over the decedent and in a manner that would not allow it to come in contact with the decedent’s body, disturb evidence, or otherwise contaminate the crime scene;
   - Control and restrict access to the immediate area of the canopy per the direction of the senior detective or supervisor at scene;

   Note: The field supervisor or senior detective supervisor at scene shall ensure that the names and serial numbers of all personnel who accessed the Crime Scene Canopy area are documented in the Sergeant’s Daily Report, Form 15.48.00, or the Chronological Record, Form 3.11.06. In addition, if evidence is inadvertently moved or disturbed, this shall also be
documented.

- Do not move or deconstruct the canopy without the on-scene senior detective or supervisor’s authorization; and,
- Should the need for multiple canopies arise, a nearby Area or division should be contacted for loan of their canopy.

**Note:** The canopy should only be used for its intended purpose at death investigations and not for any other functions.

**II. WATCH COMMANDER’S RESPONSIBILITIES.** Upon notification that a death has occurred, the watch commander shall inquire if the decedent is in public view and, if needed, cause the Crime Scene Canopy to be deployed. The on-scene supervisor or the primary responding unit shall ensure that the canopy is deployed as outlined in this Order.

The watch commander shall document the reason for deployment or non-deployment of the Crime Scene Canopy on the Watch Commander’s Daily Report, Form 15.80.00, along with the name and serial number of the officer who deployed the canopy. Any loan in or out of a canopy from an Area/division shall also be documented.

**III. CRIME SCENE CANOPY TRACKING LOG.** The Canopy Log shall be used to track the deployment of each canopy and must be completed on every occasion that the canopy is deployed. When deployed at the scene of a death investigation, the Canopy Log shall be completed by the on-scene patrol supervisor or primary unit. The Canopy Log shall be stored and remain in the built-in storage pocket, which is located on the outer part of the black canopy bag. Once the Canopy Log page is completed, it shall be retained by the Area/division homicide coordinator indefinitely.

**Note:** Special emphasis must be placed on thorough and accurate completion of the Canopy Log. The information contained on the Canopy Log is crucial for any subsequent judicial or administrative proceedings wherein issues of crime scene contamination could be raised.

**IV. DECONTAMINATION AND CARE OF THE CANOPY.** Each geographic Area and traffic division shall maintain and store their issued Crime Scene Canopy in a place and manner where it can be easily accessed for deployment. After the decedent has been removed by the coroner, the supervising investigator or senior officer shall ensure the canopy has been decontaminated by removing the disposable protective covers. The responding investigator or incident commander shall sign the Canopy Log, and ensure that the following information is documented in the Chronological Record, Form 03.11.06:

- Date and time the canopy was deployed;
- Time the decedent was removed from the scene; and,
- In the event that the canopy is contaminated, the name of the contracted crime scene clean-up service that sanitized the canopy, or if the canopy was decontaminated and/or sanitized other than by a contract service, the manner in which the canopy was cleaned before it was repackaged and stored.
The on-scene supervisor or primary responding unit shall ensure that the canopy is properly repackaged with the canopy frame placed in the black storage bag and the canopy sides placed in the white carry bag. The canopy shall be transported from the scene and stored at the place designated by the Area/division or patrol commanding officer or designee.

V. DAMAGED AND REPLACEMENT CANOPY. Damage to the canopy shall be documented on an Employee’s Report, Form 15.07.00. A copy of the report shall be forwarded to the commanding officer. A canopy that becomes worn and/or damaged to the extent where it cannot be deployed shall be replaced as soon as practicable.

AUDIT RESPONSIBILITY: The Commanding Officer, Audit Division, shall review this directive and determine whether an audit or inspection shall be conducted in accordance with Department Manual Section 0/080.30.

Should you have questions regarding this matter, please contact the Evaluation and Administration Section, Office of Operations, at (213) 486-6050.

JORGE A. VILLEGAS, Assistant Chief
Director, Office of Operations

Attachment

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<tr>
<th>Date/Time Deployed</th>
<th>Person Deploying Name/Serial No.</th>
<th>Location/Purpose Deployed</th>
<th>Material/Method Used to Cover Canopy Feet</th>
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