

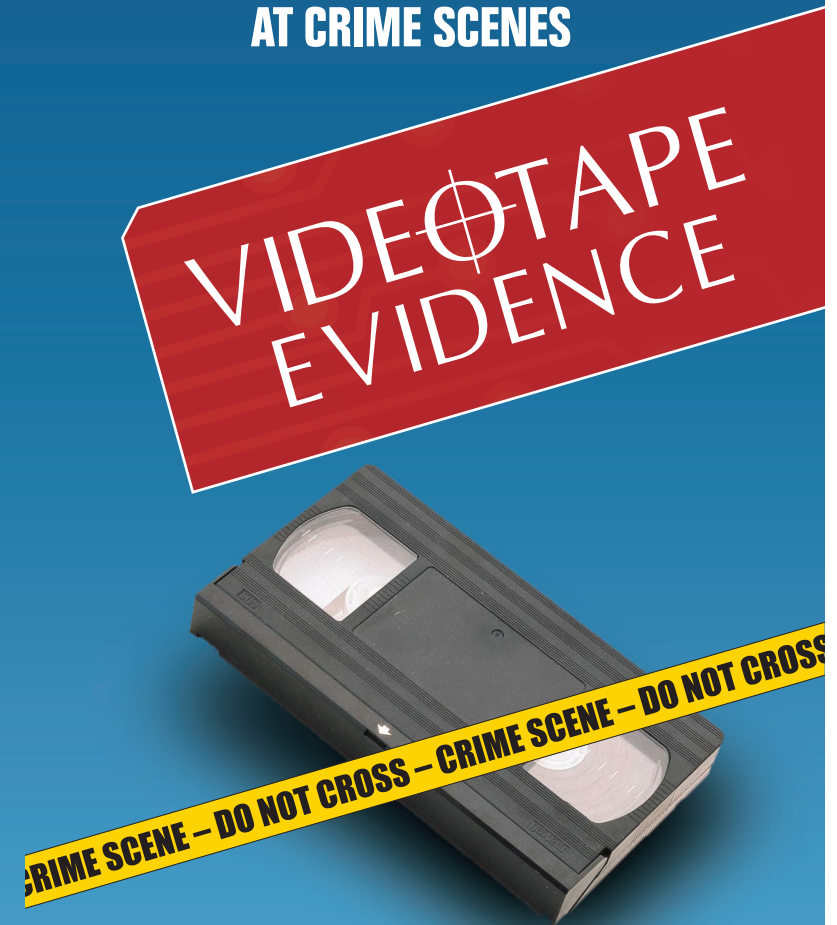


COLLECTING VIDEOTAPE EVIDENCE AT CRIME SCENES

Forensic Video Analysts are specially trained to process videotape and digital recorder images using sophisticated equipment for evidentiary purposes. By following these best practices, investigators can safely locate and preserve this evidence for examination by a Forensic Video Analyst.

For more information, contact your Local RCFL.
Visit www.rcfl.gov for a full listing of locations.

RCFL National Program Office
703.985.3677
Email: npo@rcfl.gov



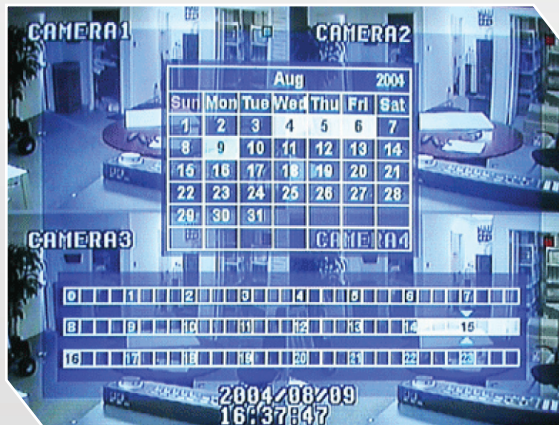
**Best Practices for
Law Enforcement**

ON-SCENE BEST PRACTICES

Because videotape evidence is highly valuable in a court of law, law enforcement personnel should follow these best practices to safely obtain and preserve this data—

1 CONDUCT A SEARCH FOR CAMERAS

Determine the existence of videotape evidence by searching for cameras with a view of the crime scene and paths of approach and departure. Note the location of other camera locations—they may contain pertinent video evidence



2 SEEK ASSISTANCE

If at a retail establishment, enlist the support of a knowledgeable employee who can properly operate the VCR or video system

3 STOP THE RECORDING

Locate and stop the recording of the videotape—but don't eject the tape until you have documented the following—

- Actual time the tape was stopped
- Time displayed on the recorder when it was stopped—it may be different than the actual time
- Number of cameras attached to the VCR or recording system.

Case/Report # _____

Actual Date/Time: _____

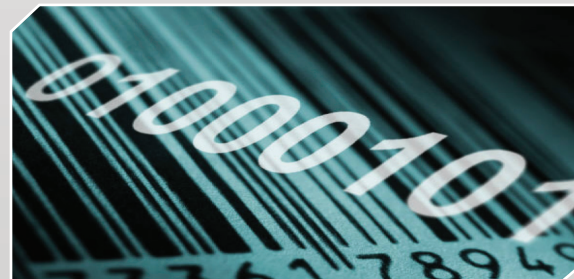
Number of Cameras: _____

Recorder Information: _____

Other System Information: _____

4 DOCUMENT YOUR FINDINGS

Write down the manufacturer, model, mode and setting of the recorder along with other equipment attached to the system



TIP

NEVER PUT THE TAPE IN THE VCR TO REVIEW IT. MOST SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS ARE SET TO AUTOMATICALLY RECORD UPON INSERTING A TAPE—THIS WILL ALTER YOUR EVIDENCE.



5 EJECT THE VIDEOTAPE

Break the write protect tab immediately upon removing the cassette from the VCR. This prevents an accidental erasure of the tape

6 SECURE THE VIDEOTAPE

Place the cassette in a plastic case or padded container to protect the evidence. Videotape is fragile and may be altered by water, heat, light, electric fields and extreme cold.

TIP

NEVER PAUSE THE TAPE IN A VCR—THIS DESTROYS EVIDENCE.