

IAI Crime Scene Analyst Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. What factors should be documented when taking notes on the condition of the crime scene?**
 - A. Types of clothing worn by witnesses**
 - B. Weather conditions and time indicators**
 - C. Conversation snippets from bystanders**
 - D. Names of potential suspects**
- 2. What element is crucial to find when investigating the scene of a homicide?**
 - A. The last known whereabouts of the suspect**
 - B. The weapon used in the murder**
 - C. Potential witnesses**
 - D. Previous offenses of the victim**
- 3. Which chemical is best for locating fingerprints on the sticky side of tape?**
 - A. Superglue**
 - B. Gentian violet**
 - C. Acetone**
 - D. Alphabet soup**
- 4. Which crime involves taking someone's property without their consent, often through digital means?**
 - A. Trespassing**
 - B. Larceny**
 - C. Battery**
 - D. Breach of contract**
- 5. What is required to ensure clear photography of a footwear impression?**
 - A. A high ISO setting**
 - B. Front lighting**
 - C. Multiple oblique flashes**
 - D. A zoom lens**

- 6. What is the proper method for preserving wheel marks?**
- A. Photographing them from all angles**
 - B. Marking the area with spray paint**
 - C. Casting selected points with characteristic marks or wear**
 - D. Drawing a diagram of the marks**
- 7. Which of the following is considered a known sample?**
- A. Hair collected from the crime scene**
 - B. Buccal swabs from the suspect**
 - C. A random sample of DNA from the population**
 - D. A witness's verbal statement**
- 8. How much dental stone is typically required for casting a footwear impression?**
- A. 1 pound**
 - B. 2 pounds**
 - C. 3 pounds**
 - D. 4 pounds**
- 9. Which piece of evidence should be collected first at a crime scene?**
- A. Hair samples**
 - B. Footwear prints**
 - C. Fingerprints**
 - D. Blood samples**
- 10. What type of container is appropriate for collecting evidence containing ignitable fluids?**
- A. Plastic bags**
 - B. Papers**
 - C. Cardboard boxes**
 - D. Glass jars with metal screw tops**

Answers

SAMPLE

- 1. B**
- 2. B**
- 3. B**
- 4. B**
- 5. C**
- 6. C**
- 7. B**
- 8. B**
- 9. C**
- 10. D**

SAMPLE

Explanations

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1. What factors should be documented when taking notes on the condition of the crime scene?

- A. Types of clothing worn by witnesses**
- B. Weather conditions and time indicators**
- C. Conversation snippets from bystanders**
- D. Names of potential suspects**

Documenting the weather conditions and time indicators is crucial when taking notes on the condition of a crime scene because these factors can significantly influence the investigation and the interpretation of evidence. Weather conditions, such as rain, snow, or wind, can affect the crime scene by altering physical evidence, such as footprints or blood spatter, and may also affect the preservation of evidence. For instance, rain could wash away potential evidence or distort crime scene details. Time indicators are equally important; they can establish a timeline of events that is essential for corroborating witness statements, understanding the sequence of actions, and determining how long evidence has been exposed. Knowing the time of day can also help assess visibility conditions, which might impact eyewitness accounts or the behavior of individuals involved in the incident. While other factors mentioned, like clothing worn by witnesses, conversation snippets, and names of potential suspects, can provide information, they do not have the same foundational impact on the condition of the crime scene itself as weather and time indicators do. Therefore, focusing on environmental and temporal factors is vital for a thorough and accurate crime scene analysis.

2. What element is crucial to find when investigating the scene of a homicide?

- A. The last known whereabouts of the suspect**
- B. The weapon used in the murder**
- C. Potential witnesses**
- D. Previous offenses of the victim**

Identifying the weapon used in a homicide is vital in a criminal investigation, as it can provide concrete evidence linking the crime to a suspect and help establish a narrative of events. The weapon can also offer vital information regarding the nature of the crime, such as whether it was premeditated or was a crime of passion. Additionally, forensic analysis of the weapon can yield crucial evidence, such as fingerprints, blood, or DNA, which can directly implicate an individual in the crime. The weapon acts as a physical piece of evidence that can clarify the circumstances surrounding the homicide and strengthen the overall case against a suspect. In contrast, the other factors mentioned, such as the suspect's last known whereabouts or potential witnesses, while important, do not provide the same direct link to the crime itself. Previous offenses of the victim might offer context but may not be directly related to the specific incident being investigated. The weapon used is often a significant focal point in homicide investigations due to its ability to connect various elements of the case in a tangible way.

3. Which chemical is best for locating fingerprints on the sticky side of tape?

- A. Superglue**
- B. Gentian violet**
- C. Acetone**
- D. Alphabet soup**

Gentian violet is particularly effective for developing fingerprints on the sticky side of tape due to its ability to adhere to the protein content in fingerprint residues. When applied, it forms a visible stain that highlights the ridge patterns, making them much easier to see and analyze. This is crucial in forensic investigations, as fingerprint identification relies heavily on the clarity and contrast of the print impressions. Superglue, although useful for developing fingerprints on non-porous surfaces, does not work well on sticky surfaces like tape because the chemical properties of cyanoacrylate are not conducive to interacting with the adhesive. Acetone, primarily a solvent, could potentially damage the adhesive or the fingerprint residue rather than develop it, while "alphabet soup" is not a viable option as it lacks any chemical properties relevant to fingerprint development. Therefore, gentian violet stands out as the most suitable choice for this specific task in forensic analysis.

4. Which crime involves taking someone's property without their consent, often through digital means?

- A. Trespassing**
- B. Larceny**
- C. Battery**
- D. Breach of contract**

The answer of larceny is correct because it specifically pertains to the act of unlawfully taking someone else's property with the intent to permanently deprive the owner of it. In the context of digital crimes, larceny can encompass actions such as hacking into someone's computer to steal digital files, or unauthorized access to financial accounts to take money. Unlike trespassing, which involves unlawfully entering someone's property, or battery, which pertains to physical harm against a person, larceny focuses on the unlawful acquisition of property. Additionally, breach of contract relates to failing to fulfill a contractual obligation and does not encompass theft or property appropriation. Thus, larceny accurately captures the essence of taking property without consent through various means, including digital methods.

5. What is required to ensure clear photography of a footwear impression?

- A. A high ISO setting**
- B. Front lighting**
- C. Multiple oblique flashes**
- D. A zoom lens**

Clear photography of a footwear impression is best achieved using multiple oblique flashes. This technique involves positioning the light source at various angles relative to the impression. The oblique lighting helps to create shadows, enhancing the detail of the texture and any unique features in the impression. This is crucial, as footwear impressions can have intricate designs that may not be visible under direct light or flat lighting conditions. Using multiple flashes allows for a more comprehensive capture of the impression, highlighting different aspects that may be crucial for analysis in forensic investigations. The oblique light helps to define the edges and depth of the impression, providing clearer images that can be used for comparison and documentation. In contrast, a high ISO setting might introduce noise into the image, which could obscure important details. Front lighting alone tends to flatten the impression, providing less contrast and detail. A zoom lens could allow for closer images, but it doesn't inherently improve the clarity of the impression unless combined with effective lighting techniques. Thus, the use of multiple oblique flashes is a practiced method in forensics for ensuring that footwear impressions are photographed with the highest clarity and detail essential for analysis.

6. What is the proper method for preserving wheel marks?

- A. Photographing them from all angles**
- B. Marking the area with spray paint**
- C. Casting selected points with characteristic marks or wear**
- D. Drawing a diagram of the marks**

The proper method for preserving wheel marks is to cast selected points with characteristic marks or wear. Casting involves creating a three-dimensional representation of the wheel mark which preserves the details of the tread patterns, depth, and any unique characteristics that can be useful for analysis later on. This method allows forensic analysts to maintain the physical evidence in a way that can be directly correlated with vehicles involved in a crime scene, providing valuable information for investigations. While photographing wheel marks is certainly important and can capture the overall scene, it may not capture the depth and texture details that casting can. Marking the area with spray paint can alter or damage the evidence, and drawing a diagram, while useful for documentation, does not physically preserve the mark itself. Thus, casting provides the most accurate and usable form of evidence for forensic analysis in relation to wheel marks.

7. Which of the following is considered a known sample?

- A. Hair collected from the crime scene**
- B. Buccal swabs from the suspect**
- C. A random sample of DNA from the population**
- D. A witness's verbal statement**

A known sample is a biological specimen that can be definitively linked to a specific individual. In the context of forensic analysis, buccal swabs collected from a suspect provide DNA that is distinct and identifiable to that person. This type of sample can be compared directly against evidence collected from a crime scene or from other biological samples. The importance of known samples lies in their capability to establish a definitive connection to a suspect, as they are obtained directly from a source where the identity is known. Buccal swabs include cells from the inside of the cheek, which contain DNA material that can be analyzed for comparison purposes in forensic investigations. In contrast, hair collected from the crime scene does not guarantee a match back to a specific individual without additional context or analysis. A random sample of DNA from the population cannot be linked to a specific case or individual, and a witness's verbal statement is not a biological sample and does not provide a genetic profile.

8. How much dental stone is typically required for casting a footwear impression?

- A. 1 pound**
- B. 2 pounds**
- C. 3 pounds**
- D. 4 pounds**

For casting a footwear impression, approximately 2 pounds of dental stone is typically required. This quantity is often sufficient to create a detailed and durable impression of the footwear, capturing essential features such as tread patterns, size, and any unique characteristics that may assist in forensic analysis. Dental stone has the necessary properties to provide a hard and stable cast, which is crucial for both the physical examination and the presentation of evidence in court. Using 2 pounds ensures that there is an adequate amount to fill the impression adequately while avoiding excess material that may lead to unnecessary complications or waste. Selecting this amount balances the need for detail in the cast with practical considerations, making it a commonly accepted standard in forensic practices when analyzing footwear impressions.

9. Which piece of evidence should be collected first at a crime scene?

- A. Hair samples**
- B. Footwear prints**
- C. Fingerprints**
- D. Blood samples**

Collecting evidence at a crime scene should follow a systematic approach to preserve the integrity of all materials. Fingerprints should generally be collected first because they are highly susceptible to contamination and alteration once they are discovered. Fingerprints can be easily smudged or obscured, making it crucial to prioritize their collection before any other evidence is disturbed. Once fingerprints have been secured, the investigation can proceed to collect other pieces of evidence, such as footwear prints, hair samples, or blood samples, which can be managed with less risk of loss or contamination. In scenarios where individuals are still present, it's vital to establish a clear chain of physical evidence right from the start, putting fingerprints at the forefront due to their importance in establishing identity and providing critical leads in an investigation.

10. What type of container is appropriate for collecting evidence containing ignitable fluids?

- A. Plastic bags**
- B. Papers**
- C. Cardboard boxes**
- D. Glass jars with metal screw tops**

When collecting evidence that may contain ignitable fluids, it is critical to use a container that prevents the evaporation of those fluids and minimizes any potential chemical change to the evidence. Glass jars with metal screw tops are particularly appropriate for this purpose for several reasons. Firstly, glass is inert and does not react with the ignitable fluids, ensuring the integrity of the evidence remains intact. The metal screw tops create an airtight seal, which effectively slows down the evaporation of volatile substances that are often present in ignitable fluids. This is essential since evaporation can alter the composition of the evidence, making it less reliable for analysis. In contrast, other containers like plastic bags are not suitable because they can allow vapors to escape, potentially altering the evidence. Paper can absorb moisture and may also introduce contaminants that compromise the sample. Cardboard boxes, while sturdy, can also be permeable and could allow vapors to present in the evidence to escape, making them less ideal for storing ignitable fluids. Thus, using glass jars with metal tops is the best practice in forensic science for collecting and preserving evidence that may contain ignitable fluids, ensuring that the evidence remains uncontaminated and suitable for analysis.