

 West Mercia POLICE		POLICY
Security Classification	OFFICIAL	
Disclosable under Freedom of Information Act 2000	Yes	

POLICY TITLE	Crime Scene Attendance
POLICY REFERENCE NUMBER	WMP145
Version	1.0

POLICY OWNERSHIP	
DIRECTORATE	CRIME & VULNERABILITY
BUSINESS AREA	FORENSIC SERVICES

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION DATE	March 2021
NEXT REVIEW DATE:	July 2021
RISK RATING	LOW
EQUALITY ANALYSIS	LOW

West Mercia Police welcome comments and suggestions from staff about the contents and implementation of this procedure.
Please e-mail contactus@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

1.0 POLICY OUTLINE

- 1.1 This policy identifies to which crime scenes that Scenes of Crime Officers (SOCO) will go to and is aimed specifically at all operational, investigative and specialist staff attending a crime scene or requesting the services of Scenes of Crime. It will ensure that SOCO will be able to maximise the potential at these scenes, give due consideration to THRIVE when assessing scenes and restrict attendance at scenes which have no benefits to the investigative process.
- 1.2 This policy does not cover the attendance or work of SOCO at major crime. These incidents are managed under the direction of a Crime Scene Coordinator and Force Senior Investigating Officer (SIO). Such incidents are covered by the requirements and guidance laid out in the NPCC Major Incident Room Standardisation Administration Procedure (MIRSAP) and NPCC Murder Manuals.

2.0 PURPOSE OF POLICY

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to focus and co-ordinate the work of the Scenes of Crime Unit, ensuring we maximise the potential to recover forensic evidence in line with West Mercia Police current Policing Priorities.
- 2.2 The Policy will add clarity to the attendance of forensic specialists at volume crime scenes to ensure that the Forensic Services Department within West Mercia Police deliver a single service across all their policing areas.
- 2.3 This policy is a key recommendation from HMICFRS 'Under the Microscope.'

3.0 IMPLICATIONS of the POLICY

- 3.1 West Mercia Police are committed to the prevention and detection of crime. This policy will allow the restricted resources within Forensic Services to be used to their maximum effect.
- 3.2 This policy is compliant with all relevant legislations including the Human Rights Act (1998), Data Protection Act (1998) and the Equality Act (2010).

4.0 CONSULTATION

<i>Business Lead Consulted</i>	<i>Date Consulted</i>
Head of Forensics	March 2021

- 4.1 Consultation with this policy has been made with the Head of Crime & Vulnerability for West Mercia Police, Assistant Chief Constable, the Joint Negotiating Consultative Committee the Joint Executive Board and Local Policing Implementation Team.
- 4.2 The recommendations from HMIC under the Microscope and Under the Microscope Re-focused are reflected in this procedure.

5.0 DOCUMENT HISTORY

The history and rationale for change to policy will be recorded using the below chart:

Date	Author / Reviewer	Amendment(s) & Rationale	Approval / Adoption
		Previously approved at JNCC meeting	JNCC 22/03/2013
Feb 2021	N McCoy	Rebadged – reverted to West Mercia policy, a full review will take place in July 2021 see note below	March 2021

“From 1st September 2021, West Mercia Forensic Services will transition to becoming a single force forensic service provider which no longer host forensic services for Warwickshire. This policy will be further reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect any new ways of working introduced as a result of the forthcoming transition.”

6.0 PROCEDURE

- 6.1 SOCO resources are on duty between 08:00 hours and 22:00 hours every day of the year. Outside these times SOCO are available to be called out, on an emergency basis, via the Operations & Communications Centre in line with the agreed SOCO Callout Criteria. It is not expected that SOCO will be called out, or incur overtime to examine volume crime scenes, instead, the matter will be brought to the attention of the early turn SOCO. The only exception will be distraction burglary dwellings where identified forensic opportunities at the scene cannot be preserved and the IP will not be further distressed by having to wait for SOCO arrival and stay up until their examination is over.
- 6.2 No estimated time of arrival should be given for the SOCO. They are a resource that cover all types of crime, hence they may have other significant commitments that take priority over volume crime.
- 6.3 Scenes of Crime attendance will be allocated and prioritised following an assessment of the incident. This will include consideration of all aspects of THRIVE.
- 6.4 SOCO will not examine any premises without a keyholder or police presence and any vehicles to be examined must be off road and dry.
- 6.5 If the IP wishes to repair any damage or is not willing to preserve the scene, advice should be given to the person reporting that this may affect whether a SOCO will attend at all.
- 6.6 Burglary Dwelling: Where appropriate these will be attended and examined as a promptly as possible, having taken into account other priority crime scenes and their locations. The value of attendance at such scenes will be left to the overall professional judgement of the SOCO.
- 6.7 Theft of motor vehicle: These will be attended and examined once the vehicle has been recovered to a secure approved location. The vehicle should be stored undercover.

Only in exceptional circumstances will these be examined in situ (i.e. in serious and major crime.) These cases must be discussed with a Senior SOCO firstly and a police presence must be provided for examination.

- 6.8 Burglary other than domestic property (excluding 'shed breaks'): [See flow diagram 1](#).
- 6.9 Theft from motor vehicle: [See flow diagram 2](#).
- 6.10 Robbery These offences will be attended where the offence is premises related. Person (Street) robbery will be attended if the investigating officer assesses that forensic evidence that may lead to the identity of the offender is present. Where the only evidence is clothing, a subsequent submission should be considered by the OIC following advice being sought from a Senior SOCO or a SOCO. SOCO will not attend purely to swab victim's blood.
- 6.11 Other volume crime scenes Scenes of Crime will not routinely attend other volume crime scenes. Exceptional circumstances however may apply to the minority of crime scenes. The officer in the case will be responsible for discussing directly with the Senior Scenes of Crime Officer the requirement for SOCO to attend in these circumstances. [See Flow diagram 3](#).
- 6.12 Common Assault or Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm Injury Photographs These will not be photographed by SOCO. The above level of injuries just require recording fully within an evidential statement. Examples of how to describe injuries can be found on the Forensic Services intranet site. The Director of Public Prosecution's guidance specifically refers to this matter (see "Dealing with Medical Evidence" in DPP's Guidance.) The only exception will be if the injuries sustained relate to Hate Crime or Domestic Violence cases. [DPP Guidance](#)
- 6.13 Potential threats to confidentiality are identified within the SOCO Risk Register, alongside methods to mitigate the risk. Dissemination of information in relation to an offence will be restricted to those with prior agreed and legitimate access to the information. Any information gathered at scene that may be relevant to the investigation should be shared with the investigating authorities.

7.0 ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

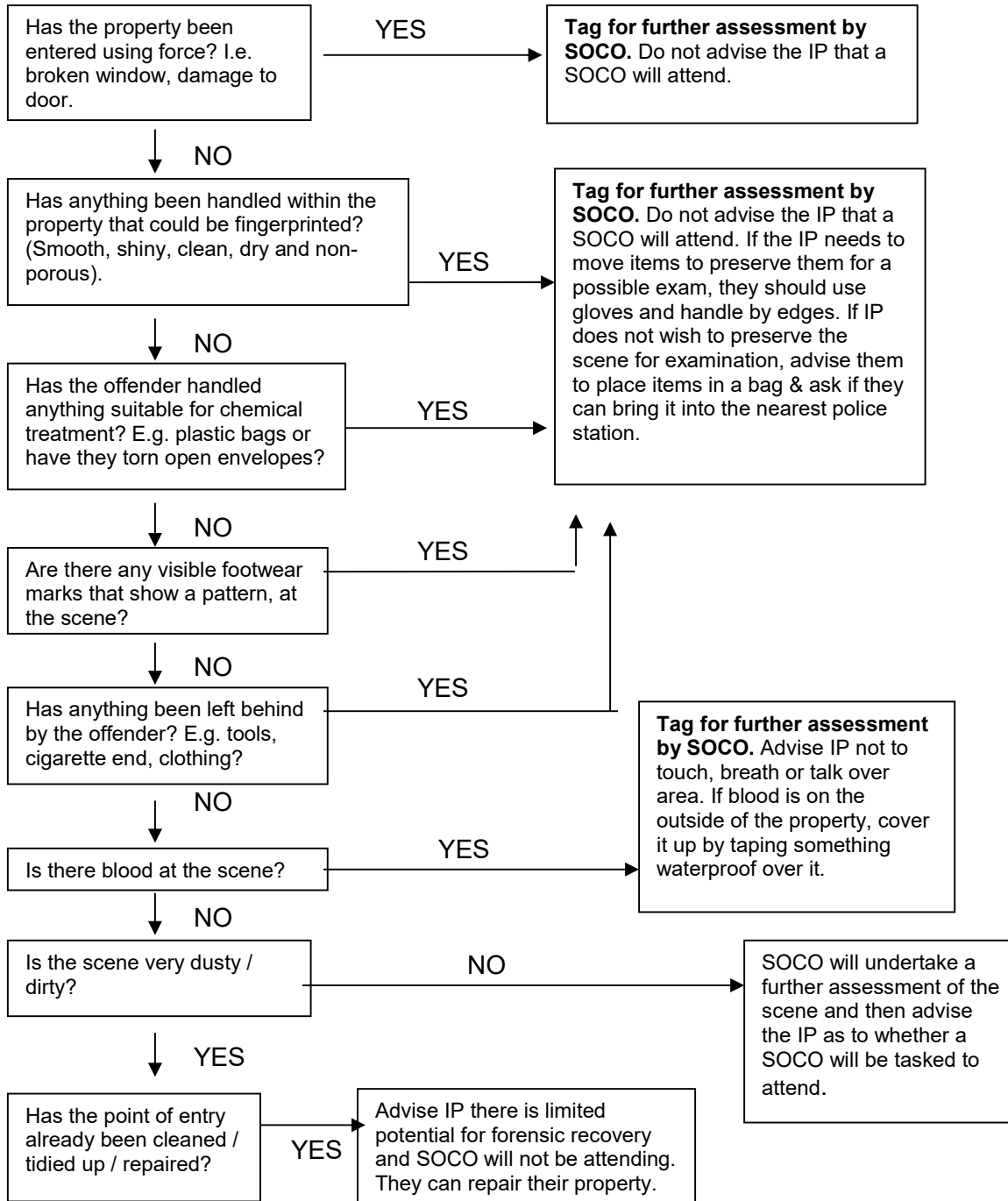
An Equality Analysis (EA), Health and Safety Assessment (HAS) and Risk Assessment (RA) is available on a separate document

8.0 MONITORING / EVALUATION

The monitoring and review of this policy is the responsibility of the policy owner.

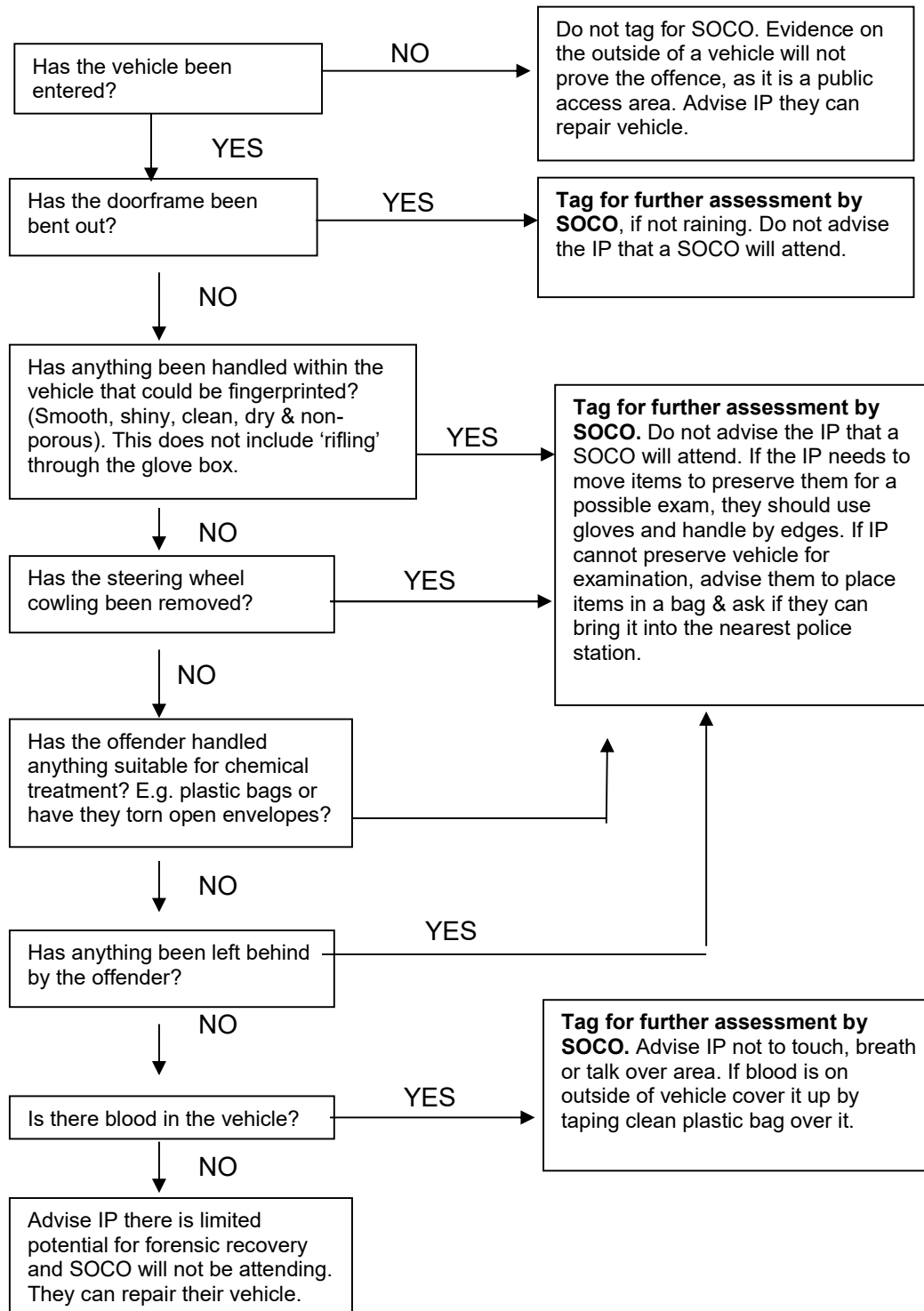
Flowchart 1 - Burglary Non Dwelling Crime Scene Assessment

Consideration must be given to THRIVE, as this may change the decision on whether SOCO attendance is required. When in doubt, speak to a Senior SOCO.



Flowchart 2 – Theft From Motor Vehicle

Attendance will be targeted at those scenes where there are grounds to believe that forensic evidence has been left at the scenes or where following consideration of THRIVE a scene visit is justified.





Flowchart 3 - Other Crime Scene Assessment

