Photography
Photography

- Photographs taken at a crime scene:
  1) Show the layout of the crime scene
  2) Show the position of collected and uncollected evidence
  3) Show the point of view of victims, suspects, and witnesses
  4) Show the original condition of items of evidence at the scene
Crime Scene Photography

- Crime scene photographs should record the area in which the crime actually took place and all adjacent areas where important acts occurred.
- The most important prerequisite for photographing a crime scene is for it to be in unaltered condition.
- Each crime scene should be photographed as completely as possible in a logical succession. The sequence will show the overall scene first, then work down to individual pieces of evidence that jurors in the trial can easily relate back to the larger scene.
A detailed log of each photograph taken at the crime scene is kept by the crime scene photographer.

The top of the photography log form includes -- case number, type of scene, date, location of scene, description of the camera and lenses being used, film type and speed (if applicable), and the photographer’s name and title.

For each photograph, the log records -- date and time the photograph was taken, the location of the picture, the f-stop and shutter speed settings, the lighting used and the lighting angle (if applicable), and a brief description of the subject of the picture.
Progression of Photographs

- Long Range or Overall Photographs
- Evidence Establishing Photographs
- Close Up Photographs
- Identification Quality Photographs
Crime Scene Photography

- Overview photographs of the entire scene and surrounding area, including points of exit and entry, are taken first.

360 degree view of scene

--Taken from the outside borders of the scene and from various angles

--Include a “visual tag,” an object recorded in multiple overview photographs, to help visually piece the scene together
Medium-range photographs show the layout of smaller significant areas of the crime scene.

--Include at least one photograph of the “center” of the scene
Crime Scene Photography

- **Close-up photographs** are taken last and show greater detail of individual objects or evidence.
  -- Taken at a 90° angle to the object, with and without evidence markers and scales
  -- For three-dimensional objects, oblique lighting may be needed to show depth details
  -- Correct lighting is required in order to clearly capture fingerprints.

- The four **minimum photographs** required at a crime scene are an overview photograph, a medium range photograph, a close-up photograph, and a close-up photograph with a scale.
Night photography – requires the use of external lighting or “painting with light.”

Indoor photography – requires photographs of the neighborhood, points of entry and exit, and all walls, floors, and ceilings.
Indoor Photography

Camera positions represent multiple photographs taken.
Outdoor photography – requires location of photographs to be recorded by a Global Positioning Device or measurements from landmarks.

--May include aerial photographs
Sexual assault photography – requires photographs of all wounds and clothing while showing discretion to the victim.

Impression photography – requires oblique lighting to show details and a scale to later create a 1:1 scale photograph for comparison to footwear or tire samples.
Arson photography – requires photographs of the point of the fire’s origin and use of special equipment or techniques to provide maximum contrast in photographs of charred areas.

--May also include photographs of crowd outside scene because arsonists commonly return to scene
Bloodstain photography – requires photographs of all pertinent stains and determined area of convergence or area of origin.

Bloodstains treated with luminol photographed in complete darkness

Latent fingerprint photography – require photographs with a 1:1 scale using a special latent fingerprint camera or a regular camera fitted with an adapter.

Black and white film used to show greater contrast
Advantages of digital crime scene photography include:

1) The ability to observe images immediately after taking them ensures important photographs are clear and show the best possible detail.

2) The resolution available can exceed 6 megapixels, while the maximum resolution offered by a film SLR camera is equivalent to about 5 megapixels.

3) Computer programs can stitch digital crime scene images together to create a 3-D view of the crime scene.
Disadvantages

- Digital images are easily manipulated using computer programs and may not show an accurate depiction of the crime scene.
- Digital images may lose image data or details through compression.
Digital photographs are not admissible in court unless...

Law enforcement agencies ensure the admissibility of digital crime scene photographs by
1) Developing Standard Operating Procedures that must be followed
2) Saving images to writable (not rewritable) disks by lossless compression
3) Saving enhanced or altered images as separate files
4) Keeping a detailed and accurate photography log
5) Submitting testimony from the crime scene photographer as to the accuracy of the digital images
As with still crime scene photography, the crime scene video must include overview, medium-range, and close-up images.

A narrated crime scene video combines photography and notes.

However, it is important that only one person narrates and no side conversations are captured on the video.

Some video cameras can produce still photographs, but the quality is often poor.

Therefore, still photographs from a film or digital camera are still required.