

Types of Evidence

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Evidence is the information used by investigators and court personnel to confirm or rule out an individual's involvement in a criminal act. Evidence can be:

- **Verbal:** Testimonies or statements.
- **Physical:** Objects like a bloodied knife.
- **Documentary:** Items like emails or letters.

Evidence must be collected and preserved to prevent tampering. While police are experts in handling evidence, security guards may also encounter it and must preserve the scene and evidence until the police arrive.

Security Guard's Role in Handling Evidence:

As a security guard, you may be the first responder at a crime scene. Your primary duty is to ensure there are no further hazards (e.g., broken glass, chemicals) and to check the safety of bystanders. If emergency services or police have not been called, you should call them or direct someone else to do so.

Once safety is ensured, observe the scene carefully. Use all your senses to make mental notes and enter the information into your notebook as soon as possible. Clear the scene of unnecessary individuals and keep witnesses aside for police questioning. Protect the scene from people walking through it or attempting to clean it up.

When police arrive, note their arrival time in your notebook and reports. Introduce yourself to the officer in charge and provide any relevant information. Inform the officer about any witnesses to the incident. Record the officer's name and contact information for your report. Documenting the transition of authority is crucial as you may need to demonstrate in court that the scene was secure and access was controlled at all times.

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Evidence from a crime scene can be categorized into several types:

- **Direct Evidence:** Information provided by a witness as first-hand testimony during a court proceeding.
- **Circumstantial Evidence:** Information suggesting an individual's presence or involvement in a crime. For instance, finding someone's ID card at a break-in scene who

doesn't belong there suggests they might have been present. Although not highly reliable alone, it can support an investigation when combined with other evidence.

- **Hearsay Evidence:** Information based on what a third party said. For example, testifying in court about overhearing someone threatening another person is providing hearsay evidence.
- **Documentary Evidence:** Includes photographs, security video footage, and various documents.
- **Physical Evidence:** Tangible items like the ID card found at the break-in scene. While it may not be significant alone, in context (like a crowbar at a crime scene), it can support an investigation.
- **Trace Evidence:** Includes fingerprints, footprints, and samples for DNA testing. Usually invisible to the naked eye, it must be collected by trained experts.