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| Procedure: Scattered Remains  &  Body Recovery | **Union County Coroner office** |

**The following is a recommended sequence of procedures for the recovery of scattered human remains:**

**1**. Consider the limitations placed on your scene, such as topography, weather conditions, number of causalities etc.

**2**. Define the search area (outer perimeter at least 50ft).

A. Secure an area around the potential scatter area.

I. Control media and onlookers.

II. Inclusion of all potential bones and other evidence. Too large an area is better than not large enough.

B. Locate the major portion of evidence and locate your reference point accordingly.

C. Establish a fixed entry-exit path to be used to access the site between the perimeters.

**3**. Evaluate the site and choose the best search technique for the area.

A. Ground search.

I. Line searches on foot

II. Cadaver dogs

III. Horseback

IV. ATV’s

B. Air search.

I. Drone

II. Helicopter

**4**. Conducting search.

A. Coordinate personnel (visually or by radio)

B. Ensure complete coverage of entire area. (Overlap search areas)

C. Use flags to mark evidence. Use different colored flags to distinguish human and non-human evidence. Consider the color of the flag with respect to visibility in scene images.

**5**. Mapping and Photographing.

A. Label each item of evidence with a number or letter.

B. Include a scale in each photograph.

I. Keep a log of each photograph taken.

C. Measure and record data for the location of each item of evidence.

I. Use basic North-South and East-West measurements.

II. Global Positioning Satellite (GPS)

III. Keep a log of all evidence items collected.

D. Be prepared to locate site again if needed.

I. Sink a piece of rebar at the reference point and at your "A" grid post.

II. Complete a map of the area and a detailed map of the scatter site.

**6**. Collect all items.

A. Secure in appropriate containers and number each package.

I. Paper bags for biological items.

**URI E D B O D Y RE C O V E RY P RO C E D URE S**

**The following is a recommended sequence of procedures for the recovery of buried human remains:**

**1**. Follow steps 1 through 3 of the scattered remains recovery procedures.

**2**. Search for potential gravesite as well as for any surface evidence or scattered remains.

A. Conduct line search.

B. Locate any disturbances in vegetation.

I. Inappropriate vegetation.

II. Dead vegetation in a confined area.

C. Locate any disturbances in the soil.

I. Color changes.

II. Mixed types of soil.

III. Insect activity

D. Locate any depressions in the soil.

I. Primary (resembling the outline of a grave)

II. Secondary (typically of the abdominal area)

E. Signs of attempts to conceal the grave.

**3**. Determination of immediate grave site.

A. Probe for soft spots.

B. Define the outline of the grave.

I. Use different colored flags to mark soft and hard soil.

**4**. Establish inner perimeters.

A. Enclose a secure area limited to authorized personnel.

I. Including the command post area.

B. Enclose a second perimeter within the first limiting access only to personnel involved in the excavation.

C. Establish a fixed entry-exit path to be used to access the site between the perimeters.

D. Maintain a log of personnel entering scene and limit access.

**5**. Locate, mark, photograph, measure and collect all surface evidence as noted in the scattered remain recovery outline.

**6**. Processing the gravesite.

A. DO NOT clear the grave site of vegetation and debris until it has been photographed, gridded and remove one piece at a time and adequately documented.

B. Select a CLEARED location for the sifters.

I. Locate it near the site but not so that it will be in your way.

**7**. Setting up the grid.

A. Use metal stakes or rebar to post a rectangle around the gravesite.

I. Leave enough room within the grid for excavators to work.

II. Two posts should be located north of the site and two to the south.

B. Use a compass.

C. Hammer the posts into the ground so they are secured.

D. Attach string to each post to form a rectangle.

I. String should be leveled with line levels.

II. Document the location of each post in reference to your fixed reference point.

**8**. Excavation.

A. Remove surface vegetation and debris.

B. Collect all surface evidence to reveal a clear working area.

I. Leave flags in place as long as possible.

II. Define the edges of the grave.

III. Work from the edges towards the center.

C. Use brushes and scoops to remove soil.

D. Place soil in buckets.

I. Buckets should be numbered and labeled as to area of grave it was recovered from.

E. Proceed through soil slowly and carefully, keeping the depth level even throughout the grave.

**9**. Uncovered bone or evidence

A. Clear away soil and leave remains in place.

B. Photograph with scale.

C. Measure location.

I. Measure depth of remains.

D. Leave in place until it gets in the way.

I. This shows location in relation to other evidence in future photographs.

E. Continue until hard packed bottom is reached.

**10**. Body removal.

A. Proceed until body can be removed.

B. Place body bag next to site and transfer body into bag.

C. Probe bottom to determine if it is hard packed.

I. Sterile soil.

II. Insect activity.

III. Any additional evidence.

**11**. Evidence found in screens.

A. Photograph in and out of screen.

I. Use scale and number card.

B. Document bucket number evidence was recovered from and its location from the grave.

C. Package appropriately.

**12**. Wrapping it up.

A. Backfill grave.

B. Sink rebar at the reference point and at the location of post "a" of the grid.

I. Document distance between the two pieces of rebar.

II. Rebar can be relocated with a metal detector in the future.