

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme					
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Title:	Homicide and Unexplained Death Policy - Roles and Responsibilities				
Summary:	This document explains the roles and responsibilities for those involved in the initial response and investigation of all homicides and unexplained deaths.				
Branch / OCU:	Specialist Crime & Operations 1 - Homicide and Major Crime.				
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## **Key Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Uniformed officers/First responders**

The five investigative building block principles should be adhered to. For more detail please refer to [General Investigation Toolkit](#)

### **Uniformed supervisors**

To support constables, a uniformed supervisor must attend scenes and demonstrate clear leadership. The supervisor must ensure that decision making is recorded with relevant rationale and endorsement. Where a sergeant is the initial investigator of a death, then an inspector will supervise their actions.

### **Duty officer**

The duty officer is responsible for attending all deaths where there is clear evidence of a crime, suspicion that a crime may have been committed, suicides, unexplained or work-related death, fatal fires and sudden unexplained death of infant (SUDI). The duty officer is responsible for overseeing all initial action including the key areas identified by the five building block principles. The calling of any support services does not remove the duty officer's responsibility for the incident.

### **Borough CID officers**

On being informed of a sudden death where a medical practitioner is unable to issue a death certificate, a substantive CID officer (preferably of sergeant rank) will go to the scene and assess the situation. If there is the slightest doubt, then the event will be dealt with as a suspicious death. In the event of any doubt about whether a death is suspicious or not, the advice of the BOCU DI will be sought to resolve the issue.

### **Detective Inspector**

In relation to homicides or suspicious unexplained deaths the BOCU DI should:

- attend the scene and take charge of the investigation where practicable.
- authorise the call out of the Homicide Assessment Team (HAT)
- consult with SC&O1 duty SIO
- authorise the call out of the crime scene manager (in consultation with HAT)
- authorise the call out of the SO3 photographer (in consultation with HAT)

If the incident occurs during the night this role will be carried out by the on call Cluster DI. Whilst this should be the standard response it is appreciated that a DI may not be available in some circumstances and as such any inspecting rank can authorise the aforementioned resources if necessary.

HAT cars **will attend** all:

- Homicides
- Attempted homicides (Clear and unambiguous intention to kill must be identified)
- Self Immolation incidents
- Work related deaths where Corporate Manslaughter has occurred or is suspected.
- Unexplained deaths which have suspicious circumstances

During the night one SC&O1 DI will be available to the HAT Crew for the whole of the MPS and will be:

- The first point of advice or guidance for the night duty HAT Car crews.
- Made aware of all the calls that the night duty HAT Car crews attend and/or give advice.

### **ACPO direction**

ACPO can task SC&O1 to deal with cases deemed to be beyond the capability and capacity of BOCU or other units.

### **Primacy dispute**

Any issues regarding investigation primacy will be dealt with by the on call SC&O1 Superintendant who will meet with the BOCU OCU Superintendent to consider the issues. The final decision as to primacy for a disputed investigation will be made by the on call ACPO (or on weekends by the on-call crime commander).

SC&O1 will undertake the following reactive investigations:

- all murder, manslaughter (where there is likely to be culpability for the loss of life) and infanticide offences;
- interfamilial child homicide (including attempts);
- deaths within the workplace or mass disaster where culpability for the loss of life is likely to be an issue in a criminal court;
- attempted murder where the evidence of intent is unambiguous and the risk assessment identifies substantive risk to life (see note below);
- high risk missing persons where there is a substantive reason to suspect life has been taken or is under threat;
- Linked series of two or more rapes, which are beyond the capability of one SC&O17 resources to manage (see note below); and
- Other critical incidents which, due to their serious nature, complexity or organisational risk or may require Holmes 2 support.

**NOTE:** Cases of attempted murder and linked series rape will not be investigated by SC&O without authority of an SC&O detective superintendent following a presentation by the BOCU Senior Investigating Officer (SIO).