

The significance of information provided by the person reporting the suspicious death must not be underestimated.

**Note:** A person reporting a murder may be a significant witness or the offender.

#### 2.2.2.4 Identify Victim

The identification of victims enables investigators to instigate actions which may lead to the early identification of suspects. Those reporting the incident and witnesses found at the scene should be questioned to establish the victim's identity as soon as possible. No attempt should be made to search the victim's clothing for identification evidence as this may destroy other physical evidence which could identify the offender.

A record should be made of clothing being worn by the victim together with their physical description.

If the identity of the victim is unknown, a search of missing person records should be undertaken to establish if any of the descriptions match the deceased. Visible tattoos or other physical features may also be used to search local records and the PNC.

#### 2.2.2.5 Identify and Arrest Suspects

When homicide is suspected, the identification and arrest of the offender(s) must always be a priority.

**Note:** Offenders may still be at the scene or may return to it during the initial response.

Where suspects have been identified, the arrest should be made by officers who have not visited any scenes. This will avoid cross-contamination. If this is not possible, for example, if the offender is arrested at the scene by officers who are already there, arresting officers should follow normal procedures for taking suspects into custody but should try to reduce contamination of forensic evidence as much as possible. The fact that the arresting officer has been at the scene should be declared to the SIO as soon as possible.

The suspect should not be questioned in detail about the incident; anything that they say should be recorded as significant statements.

### 2.2.3 THE SIO AND THE INITIAL RESPONSE

SIOs are generally called to the scene of an incident following a situation report from those making the initial response. Depending on the nature of the incident, a great deal of activity may have been initiated prior to the arrival of the SIO. The SIO's first task on being informed of an incident is to review what has been done prior to their involvement and bring the investigation under their command.