



Global Leaders in Fire Investigation®

**International Association of Arson Investigators, Inc.**  
2111 Baldwin Avenue, Suite 203, Crofton, MD 21114  
www.firearson.com

## Fire Scene Evidence Collection Guide Checklists

### Pre-Collection Checklist

Confirm that you have in your possession:

- Proper PPE (personal protective equipment), including eye, face, and respiratory protection.
- Camera for photographic documentation and sufficient data cards or film to properly document this scene.
- Sufficient latex or nitrile gloves, evidence collection tools, and evidence containers necessary to process this scene.

Ensure that you have a secure location to store evidence as you collect the items at the scene (such as your locked investigative vehicle).

Inspect all containers and tools to ensure they remain in new and unused condition. Discard any that are not.

Ensure that you have decontamination supplies (dishwashing liquid, plastic tubs, stiff bristle brush). Washing tools in a decontamination line consisting of successive containers of soap and water followed by two water rinses has been found effective.

Make sure you are wearing clothing that has not been used at a scene since it was properly laundered. If you are coming from another scene, change your clothes. It is good policy to wear a disposable cover, such as a Tyvek® suit, over your scene examination apparel.

Check with the laboratory prior to beginning evidence collection if you have any questions or concerns. If anything arises during the investigation that concerns you, call your laboratory for assistance.

Start your evidence collection log and any other required chain of custody documentation.

Set up your decontamination station.

Notify the incident commander (if on scene) and your department of your whereabouts and plan. If at all possible, work with a team or another person at the scene so you are not alone in case something happens and you need assistance or rescue. You should have an accountability tag system in place. Implement it prior to entering the scene.

Wear your PPE, including breathing protection.



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### Pre-Scene Release Checklist

Double-check to make sure all evidence is properly sealed and labeled. Make sure you have followed ASTM 1188 standards for marking your samples and any procedures required by your department or laboratory.

Ensure that you have a secure location to store evidence as you collect the items at the scene (such as your locked investigative vehicle).

Check your photographs to make sure they have all been properly downloaded, stored, copied, or whatever your departmental protocol requires.

Be sure that all sampling locations are noted on your diagram and cross-referenced with their exhibit numbers.

Walk the scene one final time to ensure that there are no more items you want to collect.

Notify the laboratory or storage location that you are en route with evidence to check in.

Notify the incident commander and/or your department that you are leaving the scene. Close out your accountability system.

Make sure the scene is secure and/or has been released to the owner or proper authority.