

# Investigation

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

First published 23 October 2013 Updated 8 June 2023

4 mins read

## Investigative strategy

Public order public safety (POPS) commanders and planners should consider whether an investigative strategy should be developed as part of the overall plan. This is likely to be dependent on the nature of the event, as well as the scale and scope of the operation.

POPS events that present a risk to public safety or have the potential for serious disorder may present unique challenges to the management and investigation of crime. These include:

- potential scale of investigations
- diversity of offences
- difficulties of scene management
- resource implications
- likelihood of high-profile court proceedings
- witness, victim and suspect management
- likelihood of media coverage

## Investigating officer, senior investigating officer (bronze crime)

The gold POPS commanders should consider appointing an investigating officer (IO) or senior investigating officer (SIO) at an early stage in the planning process.

The choice of IO or SIO will be dictated by the anticipated or actual investigative requirements of an operation – for example, the level of the Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP) required.

The IO or SIO should perform a bronze crime role during an operation and is responsible for developing a tactical investigation plan that supports the gold strategy and the silver's tactical plan.

The IO or SIO should be appropriately trained and accredited to perform the role of IO or SIO. The investigation plan may include the following.

- Resources, including the role of the IO or SIO in the command structure (for example, functional bronze). IO and SIO post-holders should be trained and accredited as per the national standards for those roles.
- Links to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and prosecution policy. Early liaison with force solicitors and the CPS to assist with the investigation strategy and potential legislation that may be relevant, along with identifying relevant thresholds for arrest and the subsequent processing of any arrested persons.
- Consideration of how community impact assessments (CIAs) can be included in the investigation element to capture the impact of the POPS event or operation.
- Appointment of a digital media investigator (DMI) to assist in developing a digital strategy.
- Crime media policy.
- Authority levels.
- Working protocols with the intelligence coordinator (bronze intelligence).
- Methods for evidence collection – for example, officers' notes, evidence gathering teams, CCTV and body-worn video.
- Briefing material and methods for key staff.
- Contingencies to deal with crime scene management.
- Intervention plans.
- Development of the evidential chain process to include prisoner handover from point of arrest through to arrival at custody. This will need to take into account the potential that the arresting officer will not be able to leave the incident, particularly during disorder due to the existing circumstances.
- Development of a custody plan to include:
  - identifying sufficient cell capacity
  - transportation of arrested persons to custody
  - seizing of exhibits
  - interviewing and processing teams
- Charging policy.
- Crime scene management in hostile environments.
- Process for obtaining statements from officers, victims, witnesses and members of the public.

- Identifying processes for securing relevant evidence and exhibits, including digital, telephone, video and CCTV, as well as physical evidence such as clothing and weapons.
- Consideration for the use of forensic recovery teams.

The [silver commander](#) should preserve any crime scene in balance with the needs of the ongoing police operation (you will need to log in to College Learn).

The IO or SIO should advise the silver commander on the need to preserve a scene. The silver commander should then advise on the feasibility of preserving that scene with current resources following consultation with the relevant bronze public order commander. The decision should be recorded.

POPS commanders, POPSAs and planners may use the [investigation checklist](#) to assist in the development of an investigation plan (you will need to log in to College Learn).

Further information regarding investigations, prosecution and case management, and detention and custody can be found through the relevant authorised professional practice (APP). See also:

- [Major investigation and public protection APP](#)
- [Investigation APP](#)
- [Prosecution and case management APP](#)
- [Detention and custody APP](#)

## Tags

Public order   Public safety