

Jandarma ve Sahil Güvenlik Akademisi
Güvenlik Bilimleri Enstitüsü
Güvenlik Bilimleri Dergisi, Kasım 2022, Cilt:11, Sayı:2, 367-388
doi:10.28956/gbd.1071495

Gendarmerie and Coast Guard Academy
Institute of Security Sciences
Journal of Security Sciences, November 2022, Volume:11, Issue:2, 367-388
doi:10.28956/gbd.1071495

Makale Türü ve Başlığı / Article Type and Title

Araştırma/ Research Article
Duties and Responsibilities of First Responders
İlk Ekibin Görev ve Sorumlulukları

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Bilgilendirme / Acknowledgement:

-Yazarlar aşağıdaki bilgilendirmeleri yapmaktadırlar:
-Makalemizde etik kurulu izni ve/veya yasal/özel izin alınmasını gerektiren bir durum yoktur.
-Bu makalede araştırma ve yayın etiğine uyulmuştur.

Bu makale Turnitin tarafından kontrol edilmiştir.
This article was checked by Turnitin.

Makale Geliş Tarihi / First Received :10.02.2022
Makale Kabul Tarihi / Accepted :28.04.2022

Atıf Bilgisi / Citation:

Kösem M. M. ve Yalçın Sarıbey A. (2022). Duties and responsibilities of first responders. *Güvenlik Bilimleri Dergisi, 11(2), ss 367-388. doi:10.28956/gbd.1071495*

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIRST RESPONDERS

Abstract

Crime scene investigation requires teamwork; therefore, those involved in this process should know their duties and responsibilities very well. First responders are among the most important responsible group of personnel. Contrary to the crime scene investigation team or expert laboratory personnel, first responders do not technically examine available evidence at the scene but protect the evidence by keeping the chaotic environment under control at the scene.

This study was conducted to prepare checklists for minimizing or eliminating the deficiencies and problems encountered by law enforcement officers while performing their first responder duties and responsibilities at a crime scene. A first responder checklist consisting of a total of 40 questions under six different themes, was prepared. Four checklists, which consisted of 55 questions in total, were prepared according to the types of events frequently encountered by first responders, including firearm crimes, deaths, suspicious package and explosion incidents, and fire incidents. In addition, a crime scene entry/exit control form was created. The checklists will benefit law enforcement officers in protecting crime scenes.

Keywords: *Crime scene, first responder, duties and responsibilities of first responders, checklist, firearms, explosion, fire.*

İLK EKİBİN GÖREV VE SORUMLULUKLARI

Öz

Olay yeri inceleme bir ekip işidir ve bu süreçte olay yerinde görev alan sorumluların görev ve sorumluluklarını iyi bilmeleri gerekmektedir. Bu ekipte yer alan en önemli sorumlulardan biri de ilk ekiptir. İlk ekip, olay yeri inceleme ekibi ya da uzman laboratuvar personeli gibi olay yerindeki delilleri teknik olarak incelemeyi fakat olay yerinde kaotik ortamı kontrol altına alarak bu delillerin korunma altına alınmasını sağlar.

Bu çalışma; kolluk kuvvetlerinin, olay yerinde ilk ekibin görev ve sorumluluklarını yerine getirirken karşılaştığı eksikler ve sorunların en aza indirilmesi veya ortadan kaldırılmasına yönelik kontrol listesi hazırlamak amacıyla geliştirilmiştir. Kontrol listesinde altı farklı tema için toplam 40 soru hazırlanmıştır. Olay yerinde ilk ekibin sıklıkla karşılaştığı olay türlerinden olan ateşli silahlarla işlenen suçlar, ölüm olayları, şüpheli paket ve patlama olayları ve yangın olayı için toplamda 55 sorudan oluşan dört adet kontrol listesi hazırlanmıştır. Ayrıca olay yeri giriş çıkış kontrol formu oluşturulmuştur. Bu kontrol listesinin olay yerinin korunmasında kolluk kuvvetlerine fayda sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Olay yeri, ilk ekip, ilk ekibin görev ve sorumlulukları, kontrol listesi, ateşli silahlar, patlama, yangın.*

INTRODUCTION

“Crime scene” refers to any location where an alleged crime occurs or the physical evidence directly or indirectly related to the committed crime is present (Fisher, 2004, 54-482; Swanson, Chamelin and Territo, 2002, 35-725). Crime scene investigation is a process of collecting relevant evidence, documentation, characteristics and identification to identify a crime committed, as well as those responsible for and victims of this crime (Bennett and Hess, 2004, 4-608).

Crime scene investigation requires teamwork; therefore, those involved in this process (including first responders, crime scene investigation team members, investigation team members, forensic doctors, and other relevant experts) should be very well informed of their duties and responsibilities (Chowdhury 2021a; UNODC, 2009, 12-36). First responders, those who first encounter and respond to an incident regardless of their branch or rank, are one of the most important groups of responsible persons in this team (SAPS, 2005, 2). In Turkey, police and gendarmerie are charged as first responders to intervene in criminal cases.

First responders encounter a very complex environment at the crime scene: their primary duty is to take control of that scene. Then, they identify possible victims and witnesses at the scene, identify the suspect(s), and do not allow them to be in the same environment (Krishnan and Zhou 2020, 1-7; Chowdhury 2021b).

First responders should be prepared before arriving at the scene and be aware that they may encounter many negative factors: if they fail to protect the scene, the evidence can be lost or damaged. Therefore, although it is possible to catch the perpetrator, this opportunity may be missed. The witnesses who can play a key role in resolving the crime may not be identified. There may be various safety and hazards at the scene such as chemical and biological materials, firearms, unexploded explosives, sharp objects, unsafe structures (UNODC, 2009, 14-36). To avoid such negative interference with evidence-gathering, first responders should prepare for such instances on the way to the scene and go to the scene quickly and start planning (Baxter, 2015, 48-604; (Chowdhury 2021a). After they intervene and have the ongoing incident at the crime scene under control, first responders should immediately take protective measures and remove persons around the scene to a safe place to prevent further serious events, such as an explosion or use of weapons, which could cause extensive damage at the scene. Access to the crime scene and its surroundings should be restricted by a barricade

tape printed with "CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS". If the crime scene is in a closed place, its doors must be locked. In open areas, the crime scene can be protected using a classic crime-scene tape, and also by a rope, cones, barricade vehicles, and personnel, depending on the type and environment of the incident. It should be noted that both protecting the crime scene and limiting its visibility are important for the investigation of the crime and perpetrators, as well as for protecting the privacy of the victims (Miller, 2014, 35-263). It is possible to narrow a crime scene later. However, it may be more difficult to expand the borders of a narrowed crime scene, and the evidence to be obtained will have lower reliability (Ogle and Plotkin, 2017, 60-433).

The boundaries of a crime scene are determined by taking into account the location of the incident, the entrance and exit points of the suspect relative to the scene, and the area where the victim and the objects are located and moved (<https://www.ncjrs.gov>, Accessed on: 12.12.2021). A road route is determined to prevent contamination at the entrance to and exit from the scene, and all personnel in charge are prohibited from entering and exiting the scene from a location other than this route.

If there is a need for support personnel to protect the crime scene, their number is determined and requested from responsible personnel. The place of the incident, its immediate surroundings, and the local environment are kept under observation. The information that witnesses present at the scene is recorded, along with their first statements and the information they provide to identify the suspect (Gomes, 2021, 87-212).

If the perpetrator has left the crime scene, all information regarding the suspect's identity/description is fresh in the memory of the witnesses. In addition, those who were at the scene have observed where and how the perpetrator came to the scene, if any, the people who were with the perpetrator, the crime tool the perpetrator used, and the escape direction after the perpetrator committed the crime (Baxter, 2015, 49-604).

The wounded and dead people at the scene are transported by an ambulance. Unfortunately, the ambulance can park on shell casings at the scene. The curious crowd can step on the footprints, fingerprints, and blood at the scene and disrupt their position by walking on them. Eyewitnesses can be ready to leave the scene with their vehicles; the sun is about to set or rise, or the streetlights are about to

come on or go out. All these issues are of great importance in solving the crime; they should be taken into consideration by the first responders upon their arrival. (Gardner and Krouskup, 2018, 83-431; Gomes, 2021, 85-212).

Whereas the evidence is preserved at the crime scene, those detected need to be marked with a sign to avoid deterioration. For example, to prevent blood stains or smears on an object at the crime scene from being unnoticed and destroyed by first-aid medical personnel, a marking can be made around it, depending on factors such as the size and physical structure of the object (Baxter, 2015, 53-604).

When health personnel intervenes at a crime scene, they may induce changes: that is to say they can take actions that unwittingly change the original state of the crime scenes, such as changing the location of tables or chairs to assist the injured more easily. They can leave disposable medical equipment used during the intervention at the scene (Lemay, 2010, 21-159).

Regardless of their title, personnel who have no authority and duty at the scene should be removed from the scene; this should be noted by first responders (Miller, 2014, 28-263). First responders should not allow smoking, chewing gum, eating, drinking, talking on the phone, and using areas such as bathrooms and toilets at the crime scene. They should also not allow opening doors and windows and using any equipment such as air conditioning and natural gas that would disrupt the original state of the scene (<https://www.ncjrs.gov>, Accessed on: 12.12.2021).

The type of the incident, the address of the crime scene, the time of the announcement, and the time of arrival at the scene, the codes of the teams who arrive to help, if requested, the time of delivery of the scene to the authorized unit, the measures taken at the scene, the names of the personnel in charge at the scene, the types of their duties, vehicle plates, arrival and departure times, names of the victims, suspects and eyewitnesses, and their first statements are noted and reported in writing (Fisher and Ramirez, 2011, 54-225; Gomes, 2021, 85-212).

It is of great importance to take the crime scene under protection/control and to accept the findings as evidence in the judicial investigation. First responders should know that only objects not exposed to external influence are accepted as evidence in the case, and they should always do their duties at the scene by keeping in mind that they have to bear this great responsibility (Fisher and Fisher, 2012, 65-529).

As a result, first responders need to familiarize a correct approach to the incident's ultimate solution. Since first responders are those who initially respond to the incident, their correct or incorrect behavior and attitudes directly affect the course of the case: first responders undertake a very important and sensitive task in this regard (Gardner, 2011, 61-448).

Contrary to the crime scene investigation team or expert laboratory personnel, first responders do not technically examine available evidence at the scene but protect this evidence by taking the chaotic environment under control. If first responders fail to ensure evidence security or introduce contamination at the scene, no matter how successful the experts working on the evidence, and no matter how technologically advanced their equipment, accurate results are not obtained (Gardner, 2011, 62-448). In one respect, the success of criminal investigations depends on the measures to be taken by first responders at the scene. Otherwise, there may be an increase in the number of false convictions or unsolved cases. This may lead to many important problems such as distrust in the justice system, difficulties in establishing a public conscience, and changes in the citizens' perception of the state (Fisher and Fisher, 2012, 64-529).

This study has created checklists regarding how first responders should act and what they should do on encountering a crime scene. Their actions taken to protect evidence during their first interventions at the scene will contribute to the solution of the incident and the fulfillment of justice by ensuring the correct understanding of the crime pattern.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Checklist Development Steps

2.1.1. Creating items for the checklists: Relevant themes were developed for the most common types of events. The checklists were created by identifying items for each event type and including yes/no questions.

2.1.2. Writing the items: It is necessary that the items are simple and understandable, do not contain more than one judgment, and do not have different meanings for different readers.

2.1.3. Use of the checklist: The checklist needs to be easy to understand and has been prepared as succinctly as possible. After proceeding with the necessary

investigations about the incident, the person who uses and follows the checklist will put a "√" sign in the "yes" and "no" response columns of each question, depending on whether he/she has fulfilled the items in the checklist.

In addition, a crime scene entry-exit control form was prepared to ensure the control of people entering and leaving the security corridor at the scene, to determine their entry-exit time, and to record and document their duties at the scene.

3. RESULTS

3.1 First Responder Checklist

A general checklist was created to minimize or eliminate the deficiencies and problems encountered by first responders while performing their duties and responsibilities. A total of 40 questions was prepared for six different themes (Table 1). The themes and questions included in the first responder checklist are listed below.

3.1.1. Information required for the report (8 questions): This list includes questions about whether the announcement or assignment time and the arrival time to the scene were recorded, whether the route used to arrive at the scene is noted, whether the hospital police officer and investigation supervisor were contacted about those who were transferred from the scene to the hospital, whether any people were transferred to the hospital before arriving at the scene and if any, whether their information was obtained, whether persons or vehicles were leaving the scene and if any, whether their information was recorded, and whether the crime scene entry-exit control form and incident report have been filled out.

3.1.2. Incident and crime scene information (8 questions): This list includes questions about whether the reported or assigned incident exists, whether there is an ongoing incident, whether anyone was injured or sought medical assistance at the scene, whether an ambulance was requested, whether there are vehicles or crowd of people that prevent the ambulance from coming to the scene, if any, whether necessary measures are taken in this regard, whether photos of the crowd of people at the scene were taken, whether the necessary notifications were made to the inspection and investigation teams who have yet arrived on the scene, and whether there is a camera recording of the scene.

3.1.3. Crime scene protection measures (12 questions): This list includes questions about whether the boundaries of the crime scene were surrounded by a barricade tape, whether necessary measures were taken to protect physical evidence at the scene, whether the points where the suspect entered and exited the scene have been determined, whether a security corridor has been created for the scene entrance and exit, whether a staff member was assigned to keep the list of those entering and leaving the scene, whether any changes have been made to the scene, whether the personnel wears gloves and overshoes for protection of crime scene and personal safety, whether security personnel accompanies anyone transferred from the scene by an ambulance, whether there were people raising difficulties for first responders at the scene, whether reinforcement was requested, whether the command center and superiors were notified, and whether litter bins in and around the scene were protected.

3.1.4. Procedures regarding the suspect (5 questions): This list includes questions about whether there was a suspect at the scene, whether the identity of the suspect has been identified, whether necessary security measures are being taken regarding the suspect, whether each suspect was taken to different places in cases where there is more than one suspect, and whether there were relatives of the suspects at the scene.

3.1.5. Procedures regarding the victim (4 questions): This list includes questions about whether the victim remains at the scene; if there was more than one victim, whether they were kept in areas separate from each other; whether the victim's identity and first statements were received, and whether there were relatives of the victims at the scene.

3.1.6. Procedures regarding the witnesses (3 questions): This list includes questions about whether there were eyewitnesses at the scene, whether the eyewitnesses were kept separate from each other, and whether the witnesses' identities and first statements were recorded.

In addition, the event, address, date and time, weather condition, and team code information should be entered on the first responder checklist.

The crime scene entry and exit control forms have been created to minimize or eliminate the problems encountered by first responders, and especially, to protect the scene. This control form has been prepared by synthesizing the reviewed

literature. The form should include the incident, date, place, entry time, name/title, purpose/task, exit time, additional information, and name/surname of the issuer (Table 2).

In addition, four checklists were prepared according to the types of incidents frequently encountered by law enforcement officers, including firearm crimes, incidents involving deaths, suspicious package and explosion incidents, and fire incidents. The checklists were created using knowledge derived from published literature.

A checklist was prepared for firearm crimes, consisting of a total of 10 questions about whether there was a firearm at the scene; the position of the firearm; whether the position of the firearm changed; if there was a change in its position, who did it; whether it was recorded digitally if the position of the firearm was changed in necessary cases; whether there was a bullet, shell casing, person injured by a gun, object or building hit by gun at the scene; whether the suspects were allowed to wash their hands at the scene; and whether the suspect's hand swabs were taken before he/she got into the police car (Table 3).

A checklist was prepared for incidents involving death, consisting of a total of 11 questions about whether the prosecutor had been notified; whether there are blood stains and crime weapon at the scene; whether an overall photograph of the scene was made for the first impression; whether there was any odor at the scene; if the scene is a closed area, whether the lights, curtains and windows at the scene were open or closed; if the doors are locked, from which direction they were locked; and whether there were signs suggesting that the scene has been cleaned (Table 4)

A checklist was prepared for suspicious packages and explosions, consisting of a total of 12 questions about whether there was a suspicious package at the scene, whether the command center and the expert team had been notified, whether the crime scene was evacuated, whether the traffic at the scene was interrupted, whether the fire brigade, ambulance and natural gas teams were requested to arrive at the scene, whether the crowd of people at the scene was photographed; if there were injured people at the scene, whether their identities were obtained, whether their health conditions were noted, and whether the hospitals to which they were transferred had been determined; whether the length of barricade tape was determined by adding half of the distance between the explosion center and the

furthest object to the furthest object during the time that access to the scene was restricted with the tape; whether the use of wireless, flash, and camera, which could possibly trigger the suspect package, was permitted at the scene; whether the witnesses at the scene were allowed to meet with the bomb disposal expert team; and whether the suspect's explosive hand swab was taken at the scene before he/she got into the police car (Table 5).

A checklist was prepared for fire incidents, consisting of a total of 22 questions about the presence of the command center; whether there was a fire engine at the scene, if it arrived after first responders, the time of its arrival at the scene; whether health, electricity, water and natural gas personnel were requested to come to the scene; whether there were dead people in the incident; whether the crowd of people was photographed at the scene; whether the color of flames and smoke and the direction and speed of the wind were recorded at the scene; whether there were people who wanted to help excessively at the scene; if the scene was a closed area, whether the owner exhibits suspicious behavior; whether the license plates of vehicles near the scene were recorded; whether the doors, windows and curtains at the scene were open or closed; whether there are objects such as stairs that are likely to be used to enter the scene; whether there were objects such as lighters, matches, gasoline, and chemicals near the scene that could start and accelerate the fire at the scene; whether the scene was checked at regular intervals to control the presence of suspicious persons around the scene; whether there were small children leaving the scene; whether the status of the evacuated persons and belongings was checked before the arrival of first responders; whether explosions or collapses occurred during firefighting activities; whether there was a fire extinguishing system, smoke detectors, alarm devices at the scene, and, if any, the possibility to access their records (Table 6).

Table 1. First Responder Checklist

Incident:	
Address:	
Date and Time:	
Weather Condition	
Team Code:	

Duties and Responsibilities of First Responders

A. Necessary Information For The Report	Yes	No
1. Has the denouncement or assignment time been recorded?		
2. Has the arrival time to the scene been recorded?		
3. Has the route used to arrive at the scene been recorded?		
4. Has the hospital police officer and investigation supervisor been contacted about those who were transferred from the scene to the hospital?		
5. Are there any people transferred to the hospital before arriving at the scene? If any, has their information been obtained?		
6. Are there any persons or vehicles leaving the scene? If any, has their information been recorded?		
7. Has the crime scene entry-exit control form been filled out?		
8. Has the incident report been filled out?		

B. Incident And Crime Scene Information	Yes	No
1. Does the reported or assigned incident actually exist?		
2. Is there an ongoing incident?		
3. Is there anyone who was injured or seek for medical assistance at the scene?		
4. Has the ambulance been requested and the license plate of the arriving ambulance recorded?		
5. Have necessary precautions been taken in case of vehicles or crowds preventing the ambulance from coming to the scene?		
6. Have general photos of the crowd of people at the scene been taken?		
7. Has the necessary information been given to the inspection and investigation teams who arrived at the scene?		
8. Is there a camera recording of the crime scene and its surroundings?		

C. Crime Scene Protection Measures	Yes	No
1. Have the boundaries of crime scene been surrounded by barricade tape?		
2. Have the necessary measures been taken to protect physical evidence at the scene?		
3. Have the points where the suspect enters and exits the scene been determined?		
4. Has a security corridor been created for the scene entrance and exit?		
5. Has a staff member been assigned to keep the list of people entering the entrance corridor at the scene?		
6. Have any changes been made to the scene?		
7. Do the personnel wear gloves and overshoes for the protection of crime scene and for personal safety?		
8. Does a member of the security personnel accompany if someone is transferred from the scene by ambulance?		
9. Were there any people raising difficulties for first responders at the scene?		
10. Has support been requested?		
11. Have the command center and superiors been notified?		
12. Is there a litterbin in and around the crime scene? If any, was it taken under protection?		

D. Procedures Regarding The Suspect	Yes	No
1. Was there a suspect at the scene?		
2. Has the suspect's identity been identified?		
3. Have necessary security measures been taken against the suspect?		
4. In case of more than one suspect, has each of them been taken to different locations?		
5. Were there any relatives of the suspect at the scene?		

Additional Information:

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Issuer Name / Registry / Signature:

(Lemay, 2010, 22-159; Baxter, 2015, 50-604)

Table 3. First Responder Checklist for Firearm Crimes

Team Code	
Address	
Date / Time	

	Yes	No
1. Was there a gun at the scene?		
2. Has the position/location of the gun at the scene changed?		
3. Is it known who have changed the position of the gun at the scene?		
4. When it was necessary to change the position/location of the gun at the scene, have the photos been taken and video recorded?		
5. Was there a bullet / pellet, buckshot and plastic plug at the scene?		
6. Was there a shell casing/shotgun cartridge at the scene?		
7. Was any person injured by a gun at the scene?		
8. Are there any buildings, cars, or objects hit by a gun on the scene?		
9. Has anyone at the scene been allowed to wash their hands and faces?		
10. Have the suspect's hand swabs been taken at the scene before he/she got in the police car?		

Table 4. First Responder Checklist for Deaths

Team Code	
Address	
Date / Time	

	Yes	No
1. Has the prosecutor been notified?		
2. Was there a crime weapon at the scene?		
3. Are there any traces of blood at the crime scene?		
4. Has a general photo of the scene been taken just upon arrival at the scene?		
5. Was there any odor at the scene?		
6. If the scene is a closed environment, were the curtains and windows at the scene open or closed?		
7. If the scene is a closed environment, were the lights at the scene on or off?		
8. If the scene is a closed environment, were the doors at the scene are open or closed?		
9. If the doors were locked, from which direction were they locked?		
10. Were there any signs indicating that the crime has been committed with the intention of hate and resentment at the scene?		
11. Is there any indication that the scene has been cleansed by relatives of victims or other persons?		

Table 5. First Responder Checklist Suspicious Package and Explosion Incidents

Team Code	
Address	
Date / Time	

	Yes	No
1. Was there any suspicious package at the scene?		
2. Has the relevant expert unit and command center been informed?		
3. Has the area containing the suspicious package been evacuated immediately?		
4. Have necessary precautions been taken against the possibility of a second suspicious package at the scene?		
5. Were any roads blocked for safety?		
4. Has a general photo of the scene been taken?		
7. Have the authorities such as fire brigade, ambulance, natural gas personnel been requested to come to the scene and have the vehicle plates of the arriving teams been recorded?		
8. If there were injured people at the scene, were their identities obtained, their health conditions recorded, and the hospitals where they were transferred been determined?		
9. Was the length of barricade tape determined by adding half of the distance between the explosion center and the furthest object to the furthest object while access to the scene was restricted with the tape?		
10. Was the use of wireless, flash and camera, which could possibly trigger the suspect package, permitted at the scene?		
11. Were the witnesses who have information about the location of the explosive at the scene and the people who put it at the scene, allowed to meet with the bomb disposal expert team?		
12. If there was a suspect at the scene, was his/her explosive hand swab taken at the scene before he/she gets in the police car?		

Table 6. First Responder Checklist for Fire Incidents

Team Code	
Address	
Date / Time	

Duties and Responsibilities of First Responders

	Yes	No
1. Has a command control center been established?		
2. Has the fire brigade arrived at the scene and has the license plate of the fire truck been recorded?		
3. If the fire brigade arrived after first responders arrived at the scene, was the time of its arrival been recorded?		
4. Has the crowd of people at the crime scene been photographed from different angles?		
5. Was there any smoke, flame and odor at the scene? If any, what was the color of the flame?		
6. Were there any people who attempted to provide excessive assistance to the staff, especially the fire brigade, at the scene?		
7. Has everything seen and perceived while approaching the scene been recorded?		
8. If the scene is a closed environment, were the doors and windows at the scene are open or closed?		
9. Have the plates of the vehicles near the scene been recorded?		
10. Has the presence of tools and equipment such as stairs that can be used to enter the scene been checked?		
11. Have items such as lighters, matches or parts that could start the fire at the scene been checked in and around the scene?		
12. Has the presence of gasoline-derivative chemical compounds, which can be used as the accelerator of the fire, and their cans and bottles in and around the scene been checked?		
13. Is the scene being checked at regular intervals to control the presence of suspicious persons around the scene?		
14. If people and items were evacuated from the fire scene before first responders arrived, has their information been recorded?		
15. Has an explosion occurred in the fire and during the extinguishing works?		
16. Have the direction and speed of the wind at the scene been recorded?		
17. Have protection systems such as fire extinguishing systems, smoke detectors and alarms been checked at the scene? If so, have their records been received?		
18. Have the authorized personnel of electricity, water and natural gas been requested to the scene?		
19. Was there a deadly incident at the scene?		
20. If the fire occurred in a closed building, is there any abnormality/suspicion in the owner's behaviors?		
21. Was there any children, especially younger ones, leaving the scene		
22. Has a collapse occurred at the scene?		

4. DISCUSSION

First responders has a critical role in the crime scene investigation. Their primary purpose is to protect integrity of the crime scene and evidence. Furthermore they are responsible for documenting the crime scene, evidence and all activities (UNODC, 2009, 12-36)

Documentation begins with first arrival at the scene. Careful and planned action should be taken as wrong actions at the crime scene will jeopardize the investigation. For documentation, first responder make use of notes they will take and the form created for this purpose. If the crime scene is documented, the original state is known and the evidence is not lost and contaminated. However, in our country, there is no checklist for first responders in Turkey (Milner, 2014, 28-263).

A literature review was also performed for the development of the themes and questions in the checklists, where the checklists of different countries for national and international first responders were examined (<http://www.pnp.gov.ph>, Accessed on: 22.12.2021; <https://www.met.police.uk>, Accessed on: 12.11.2021; <https://www.globalrightscompliance.com>, Accessed on: 20.12.2021).

The Philippines National Police Manual includes a checklist for things to do by first responders upon arrival at a crime scene (<http://www.pnp.gov.ph>, Accessed on: 22.12.2021).

This checklist consists of a total of 27 questions and four different themes, including medical assistance (2 questions), procedures regarding the suspect (5 questions), preservation of evidence (9 questions) and, if necessary, collection of evidence (11 questions). In detail, the questions under the theme of medical assistance are related to the control of life and death signs. Those under the theme of procedures regarding the suspect are related to the presence of the suspect at the scene, the determination of the escape routes of the suspect, the notification of the escape routes of the suspect to other units, the interview with the witness (es) and victim(s), and the communication with the people at the scene. Those under the theme of preservation of evidence concern setting up a barricade tape around the scene, protecting the area surrounded by the tape, placing warning signs around the striped areas, checking whether the striped areas are sufficiently large, preventing unauthorized persons from entering the scene, not allowing the suspect and victim

to enter the scene, not touching anything at the scene, preserving evidence, keeping suspects and victims in separate places. Those under the theme of the collection of evidence concern avoiding contamination, paying attention so not to contaminate objects with each other, controlling volatile materials such as fibers and hair, wearing protective equipment such as gloves and shoe covers while collecting evidence at the scene, allowing police to examine both the scene and behavior/actions/clothes of the suspect, allowing a police officer to take care of the victim, examining the vehicles at the scene, taking them with a tow truck if the vehicles are to be taken elsewhere, not using the seats or wearing protective clothing if the use of vehicles is compulsory, recording all information and transactions; find it online at (<http://www.pnp.gov.ph>, Accessed on: 22.12.2021). The questions prepared in this study regarding incident and crime scene information, crime scene protection measures, procedures regarding the suspect, victim and witnesses are similar to those in this manual.

Another checklist for first responders has been prepared by the Metropolitan Police, the police agency of London, the capital of the United Kingdom. It has a checklist for first responders (<https://www.met.police.uk>, Accessed on: 12.11.2021). This checklist consists of a total of 40 questions and six different themes, including actions (10 questions), events (8 questions), forensic medicine (6 questions), victim/witness (7 questions), suspect (6 questions) and other actions (3 questions).

The questions under the theme of actions concern the person who first arrives at the scene, recording all personnel who arrive at the scene, identifying, evaluating and managing risks, calling for emergency assistance, protecting and determining the suspects/victims/witnesses at the scene and those seeking help from them, identifying the incident and the suspect in all details, recording all transactions at the scene, determining the type of the incident, contacting the relevant units, informing the investigation supervisor about whether the officers at the scene know any suspect or witness in person. Those under the theme of events concern protecting the crime scene, setting up a barricade tape around the scene, if any, determining and protecting another crime scene, restricting the scene with a barricade tape printed with "crime scene do not cross", recording the crime scene address, determining the suspect's entry-exit points and the location of a security camera at the scene, taking photos and video recording from the place with the best view of the scene, and investigating the existence of automatic license plate recognition system at the scene and its surroundings. Those under the theme of

forensic medicine are about exchanging ideas with the crime scene specialist, wearing gloves, controlling the crime scene, victims and suspects, paying attention to the movements of the non-assigned personnel, making sure that the evidence is packaged correctly, conducting a forensic examination of the victim and suspect (clothes, etc.). Those under the theme of victim/witness are about investigating whether the victim has sources such as e-mail, short messages and letters, obtaining the name, address and telephone number of victims and witnesses, determining the witnesses and victims seeking help, requesting medical assistance according to the health condition of witnessed and victims, informing the victim about the further investigation process, recording the first statements of the victim and witness, and informing the relevant units if the suspect is a child. Those under the theme of suspect concern recording a description of the suspect, determining the stolen money, belongings and objects, obtaining the identity information of the suspect, taking precautions against risky events and suspects, making sure that the right decisions are made and recorded and investigating the suspect's belongings and the materials used. Those under the theme of other actions concern recording all items containing serial numbers with details, evaluating whether there is a false report of the incident, and investigating personal security information in terms of criminal connections, vehicle, location, telephone and terrorism before going on duty (<https://www.met.police.uk>, Accessed on: 12.11.2021). In addition, a guideline has been prepared for the International Criminal Court Standards for International Crimes by the British Embassy in Kyiv. This document includes articles related to first responders, such as recording, preserving, and collecting all information and transactions at the scene, communicating with witnesses, keeping witnesses in safe and separate places, ensuring the safety of the crime scene and the people there, paying attention to whether there is any other danger in the incident. Although the checklists prepared in this study have some similarities to those created by different countries, there may be differences between them in terms of duties and responsibilities of first responders as the legal regulations in the countries are different. The checklists were created by paying attention to these points.

The "Crime Scene Entry-Exit Control Form" was created to protect the scene, to record the restriction of entry-exit to the scene, and to access these written records when needed. This form includes information regarding the event, date, place, entry time, name/title, purpose/task, exit time, additional information, and issuer's name and surname (Lemay, 2010, 22-159; Baxter, 2015, 50-604; <https://www.ncjrs.gov>, Accessed on: 12.12.2021).

CONCLUSION

Teamwork is required to solve crimes. To reveal the material facts of a crime by expert units working to serve this purpose, it is necessary to protect the crime scene and evidence, to preserve the scene as it was at the time of the incident, and to reveal the relationship between the victim, suspect, and crime scene.

First responders are those who first arrive and provide assistance at the crime scene after receiving a report of a crime. In general, the law enforcement officers in a location closest to the crime scene arrive at the scene. They can be either the personnel working in police stations or patrol security teams or those working in different units, depending on the type and course of the incident. To reveal how the incident occurred and the relationship between victim, perpetrator, and crime scene, it is one of the basic requirements preserving the crime scene as it was at the time of the incident and to take necessary safety and security measures at the scene within the period until the crime scene investigation teams arrive at the scene. Therefore, the higher the awareness and knowledge of first responders who arrive at the scene, the greater the possibility of solving the crime and reaching the criminals. We can compare the precautions and tasks undertaken by first responders at a crime scene to the foundation of a building. In the later stages, the works done by crime scene investigation staff and other relevant specialists at the scene and the actions taken by investigation supervisors are always built on the activities performed by first responders at the scene. The healthier and the better the first responders work in accordance with the legislation, the easier it is for other officers to do their work and carry out the investigation.

In this study, several checklists have been prepared to ensure that first responder easily remembers the points to be aware of during their intervention in forensic cases, that newly hired law enforcement officers who first encounter a forensic incident fulfill their duties and responsibilities at the scene without fault, that senior officers do not miss any detail at the scene, that first responders review whether there are any missing points during their intervention at the scene, and that law enforcement units have standard documentation of the crime scene protection phase for first responders. Thus, the outcome of this research will contribute to the knowledge of personnel who work as first responders.

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