

**DeKalb County Death and Serious Bodily Injury Investigation Protocol**  
**DeKalb County Prosecuting Attorney's Office**  
**Revised Effective March 9, 2007**

**Purpose:**

To provide immediate, thorough investigation and effective prosecution of crimes resulting in death or serious bodily injury. This protocol is guidance to law enforcement—not the right of any particular defendant.

**Procedure:**

When a death is reported for which the coroner is being called, and when a complaint of serious bodily injury (SBI) possibly caused by criminal activity is reported, the law enforcement officer who responds to the scene shall: 1. address any medical or safety issues; 2. secure the scene; and 3. contact a detective for direction. A detective is any law enforcement officer so designated by his or her department.

The detective contacted shall assess the case to determine the level of investigation needed per the following classifications.

**Classifications of Cases:**

- I. Death cases and SBI *with life-threatening* injuries probably caused by criminal acts or possible arsons.
- II. Death cases in which the cause simply is not known; SBI *without life-threatening* injuries; crimes committed with deadly weapons; and suicides.
- III. Death cases which appear to be from natural causes, but a coroner is being called.
- IV. Traffic fatalities or SBI accidents.

**Investigation by Classification:**

Class I cases will be worked by an Indiana State Police Detective and crime scene technician of his or her choosing, and with the assistance of all local detectives and officers.

Class II cases will be worked by a local detective, with early consultation from an Indiana State Police Detective, and with the crime scene technician of their choosing.

Class III cases will be worked by a local detective and crime scene technician of his choosing. At the detective and coroner's discretion, calling a separate crime scene technician is optional.

Class IV cases will be worked by road officers and an accident reconstruction expert.

**General:**

The investigating detective is encouraged to delegate work at his or her discretion and under his or her supervision. As always, prompt, preferably recorded statements of all witness are the goal. Except with respect to the coroner, the investigating detective is in charge of the crime scene and shall limit access to persons necessary to the investigation.

The crime scene technician will at a minimum document the scene and body by photographs, and make a digital copy of those photographs available to the coroner at any autopsy or as soon thereafter as possible.

**The Prosecutor's Office (via the beeper) shall be called at the direction of the investigating detective on all Class I and II cases, and on any OWI accidents causing death or SBI in which obtaining blood samples is a problem.**