

A message from
Captain Roger Spurgeon
Homicide Branch Commander

The IMPD Homicide Branch is dedicated to seeking truth and justice. The emotions associated with - and legal complexities of - the kinds of cases investigated are recognized as sources of frustration. This brochure has been created to ease some of those frustrations.

You are encouraged to read this short brochure in its entirety since it is intended to answer commonly asked questions. Please keep this document readily available as a continual reference since these frequent questions come up at different points in time during the process of investigating the death of your loved one.

Finally, please know we recognize each incident represents the loss of someone's loved one. Each person was special to someone. So, more than just being detectives, as human beings who also have loved ones, we are committed to finding the answers to the questions we would have if this was our own family.

FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why are homicide detectives involved in the investigation of your loved one's death?

A: IMPD homicide detectives investigate all equivocal deaths in IMPD's jurisdiction of the City of Indianapolis to include:

- Murder
- Suicide
- Overdose
- Drowning
- Fire
- Infant (Child)
- Criminal Neglect
- Accidents other than vehicular

Q: When do homicide detectives continue with the death investigation?

A: Homicide detectives focus on cases involving suspicious deaths. Once the death is ruled a homicide, the detective will delve further into the case and work it until they either solve it or can go no further.

Q: What happens if the death is not considered a homicide or a criminal investigation?

A: The Marion County Coroner's Office will conduct their investigation and contact the family.

Q: If my loved one was a victim of a homicide or criminal act causing his/her death, will a homicide detective contact me?

A: A homicide detective will be immediately assigned to a homicide investigation. It is very important the assigned detective contacts the family and meets with the family in person. Victimology is the study of the victim's life and is a crucial element in any such investigation. The assigned detective will set up a meeting to determine the history of the victim. The detective will need one person to be the family point of contact, usually the legal next-of-kin. This single point of contact will be the person the detective shares information with because it is very difficult and time-consuming to try to keep several members of the victim's family informed. The detective will have many other cases already assigned to him/her, and this process helps with efficient information-sharing.

Q: What if the detective assigned to my loved one's case does not call or share information with me like I think they should?

A: A homicide investigation is very intense and detailed. The detective must determine the facts of the case. Many details of the investigation must remain confidential and cannot be shared. The detective must keep this information confidential to ensure the case can be prosecuted in a court of law.

Q: What can I do to help with the investigation?

A: The best thing to do is to keep your eyes and ears open and contact the detective with any new information you may find. Even small bits of info sometimes have great value. Please be cautious when using social media.

Q: What happens to my loved one's personal property?

A: During a homicide investigation, all your loved one's property may be used as evidence. Therefore, it might be held until the case is resolved before it can be released. This is on a case-by-case basis.

Q: IMPD towed my loved one's vehicle, will it be released?

A: If your loved one's vehicle was towed due to a homicide investigation, the detective assigned will have the vehicle processed as soon as possible and released.

Q: Will I incur a charge due to my loved one's car being towed?

A: Anytime that IMPD has a vehicle towed it is taken to Auto Return, which is a private company. Therefore, there will be a fee charged for the tow and storage. Auto Return may be reached at 317-308-4479.

Criminal Investigations Division

Deputy Chief Christopher Bailey

Major Harold Turner

Lieutenant Matthew Thomas

Homicide Branch

Captain Roger Spurgeon

Lieutenant Bruce Smith

Lieutenant Kerry Buckner

Your Homicide Detective

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