

A. **General Search Guidelines**

- Use a search pattern (grid, strip or lane, or spiral).
- Search from the general to the specific for evidence.
- Be alert for all evidence.
- Search entrances and exits.
- Photograph all items before collection and notate the photographic log.
- Mark evidence locations on the sketch.
- Complete the evidence log with notations for each item of evidence. If possible, have one person serve as evidence custodian.
- Two persons should observe evidence in place, during recovery, and being marked for identification. Mark directly on the evidence when necessary, but first attempt to place identifying marks on evidence containers.
- Wear latex or cotton gloves to avoid leaving fingerprints.
- Do not excessively handle the evidence after recovery.
- Seal all evidence packages at the crime scene.
- Obtain known standards (e.g., fiber samples from a known carpet).
- Make a complete evaluation of the crime scene.
- Constantly check paperwork, packaging, and other information for errors.

1. **Spiral** (Not in student's handout)

Spiral (circular from outside in or inside out) searches are useful if you have limited personnel at scene and/or wide open flat area where you're looking for large objects. This pattern is good for outdoor searches.

2. **Strip or Line Search**

During this search pattern the area is divided into north-south strips, and a team of people walk parallel to one another.

This type of search is useful if teams are available and you're open to the possibilities of all kinds of evidence. Stakes and twine are sometimes used to keep lanes straight.

3. **Grid Search**

The grid search is similar to the strip or line search except that it overlaps. The area is divided into north-south and east-west strips. This allows a secondary search of each area from a different direction.

Useful if teams are available, you've got a large area, and are looking for hard-to-find evidence. If stakes, twine, and mapping are used, your search is imitating archeological methods.

4. **Pie / Wheel**

This search pattern is also known as the Pie because a large area is divided into pie slices, and then the same or different search patterns are used in each zone. All personnel start in the center and work outward. The drawback is that the area becomes larger the farther out you go.

This type of search is useful if the scene is large and you've got different kinds of evidence spread out all over the place. It is rarely done on foot, and more likely involves the type of aerial search pattern that the Coast Guard uses.

5. **Zone or quadrant search**

Zone searches are good when searching vehicles and even people. We divide the area into quadrants and search each quadrant top to bottom and outside in.

The last search pattern is the **zone or quadrant search**. This is done by dividing the search area into zones and searching each zone completely then moving to the next zone. This pattern has the benefit of being able to be used indoors, outside, in vehicles or when searching an individual. An example would be during a vehicle search the driver's seat area would be zone A, the front passenger side zone B, the rear driver's side zone C and the rear passenger side zone

This search pattern divides the area, usually a room, into equal size zones, and each zone is assigned a searcher. Sometimes, a multijurisdictional scene will involve zones.