

PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
 HEADQUARTERS  
 COLONEL OSCAR L. PEREZ  
 CHIEF OF POLICE

TYPE OF ORDER	NUMBER/SERIES	ISSUE DATE	EFFECTIVE DATE
General Order	360.08	9/11/2025	9/11/2025
SUBJECT TITLE		PREVIOUSLY ISSUED DATES	
Eyewitness Identification: Photographic Line-Ups, Physical Line-Ups & Show-Ups		5/13/2024; 11/3/2021; 5/6/2018; 5/3/2013	
REFERENCE		RE-EVALUATION DATE	
CALEA 42.2.9; 42.2.10		5/6/2028	
SUBJECT AREA		DISTRIBUTION	
Law Enforcement Operations		All Sworn Personnel	

**PURPOSE**

To provide Department members with guidelines and procedures to follow when preparing and conducting non-suggestive photographic line-ups, physical line-ups, and field identifications or show-ups, during criminal investigations.

**POLICY**

The Department recognizes that criminal incidents requiring preliminary or follow-up investigation may occur in widely scattered locations, at any time. Occasionally, criminal incidents require witness identification of suspects. As such, the Department is establishing this policy to ensure that investigations requiring the use of line-ups are prepared or composed so that the suspect in the case does not unduly stand out from the other photographs or individuals, and to ensure that all line-ups and show-ups are conducted in such a manner that ensures reliable and accurate identifications. All personnel must adhere this policy when preparing and/or conducting photographic or physical line-ups and show-ups.

**DISCUSSION**

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

Sequential Photographic Line-Up: An array of photographs, including photographs of the suspect and five (5) individuals who are similar in appearance to the suspect, that is presented one at a time to a victim/witness for identification purposes.

Physical Line-Up: A non-suggestive display of individuals that includes the suspect and five (5) individuals who are similar in appearance that is presented to a victim/witness for identification. This line-up can also be referred to as a “live line-up”

or a “body line-up”.

*Field Identification/Show-Up:* An identification procedure in which the victim/witness is presented with a single suspect within a short time following the commission of a crime for the purpose of determining whether the victim/witness identifies the individual as the perpetrator or eliminates the individual as a suspect.

*Fillers:* Individuals or photographs of individuals that resemble the suspect that are used in a line-up. A minimum of five (5) fillers will be used with a photographic or physical line-up. Individuals who are suspected in the same case may not be used as fillers.

*Independent Administrator:* An officer who does not know the identity of the suspect who has been placed in a photographic or physical line-up by the case investigator. Also referred to as a “Blind Administrator”.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **I. PHOTOGRAPHIC LINE-UPS**

- A. A photographic line up may be constructed using BCI mug shots, DMV photos, photographs clarified using digital software, or photographs from other agencies that provide similar photographs of every individual to be utilized. When composing a photographic line-up, Department personnel shall adhere to the following procedures to ensure that the suspect does not unduly stand out and to ensure reliability:
1. Only one suspect, based upon the description of the victim/witness, shall be included in each line-up.
  3. Sequential line-ups will be used when Department personnel must rely on photographs from outside sources that cannot be properly image edited by trained Department personnel. These sources may include yearbook photographs, Adult Correctional Center mug shots, social media or other sources.
  4. The photographs of the suspect and fillers shall be similar in appearance and shall fit the description of the victim/witness. When there is a limited or inadequate description of the perpetrator provided by the victim/witness, or when the description of the perpetrator differs significantly from the appearance of the suspect, fillers should resemble the suspect in significant features, taking into account any unique or unusual features such as scars, marks or tattoos.
  5. Complete uniformity of features is not required. Department personnel should avoid using fillers who are so indistinguishable from the suspect such that even someone familiar with the suspect would not be able to tell them apart.
  6. Photographs should be randomly placed in the line-up, not

systematically arranged. To the extent possible, photographs of the suspect should be placed in different positions in each line-up when line-ups will be shown to multiple victims/witnesses in the same case.

7. Department personnel will ensure that photographs of the suspects or fillers do not contain any writing or information concerning previous arrests or identifications.
  8. When showing a line-up with a different suspect, Department personnel shall not use the same filler used in a previous line-up shown to the same witness.
  9. When possible color photos will be used for photographic line-ups. Should the utilization of a "black and white" photo of the suspect be necessary then all other photos within the photo array must be black and white.
  10. Photographs of juveniles shall not be used as fillers in line-ups containing adult suspects. Photographs of adults may be used as fillers in line-ups containing juvenile suspects provided that they meet the above appearance, content and reliability criteria set forth in this section.
  11. Department personnel will view the line-up once it is completed to ensure that the suspect does not unduly stand out and appears only once in the line-up.
  12. Department personnel shall preserve the presentation line-up. In addition, photographs should be preserved in their original condition.
- B. Personnel shall conduct photographic line-ups in a manner that promotes reliability, fairness and objectivity in the identification process. Photographic line-ups shall be conducted in a manner that ensures that they are non-suggestive.
1. Instruct witness using the Department standardized instructions form entitled, "Photographic Line-up Instructions" or, if unavailable, similar documented verbal instructions.
  2. Prior to showing the line-up Department personnel will ask the victim/witness if he/she understands how the procedure will be conducted and inquire if he/she has any questions.
  3. Instruct the victim/witness to place the date and time, and their initials next to the photograph of the individual that they have identified.
  4. If the victim/witness indicates that he/she recognizes or identifies

someone in the line-up, Department personnel shall ask the circumstances from which the victim/witness recognizes the individual and how certain he/she is of his/her identification. When conducting a sequential line-up, Department personnel shall show the victim/witness all of the photographs, even if he/she makes an identification during the presentation.

5. Department Personnel shall not provide the victim/witness with any feedback, in any manner, regarding his/her identification, or lack thereof. Department personnel shall not comment in any manner, verbally or by physical gesture, regarding the individual selected or on the outcome of the process.
6. Department personnel are prohibited from showing a photographic line-up to more than one victim/witness at a time. If multiple victims/witnesses are involved, Department personnel will separate the victim/witnesses and give each individual instructions regarding the line-up without the other present. Victims/Witnesses should not be allowed to confer with one another before, during or after the procedure. Department personnel should instruct the victim/witness not to discuss the line-up or its results with other witnesses.
7. Prior to presenting the line-up to the victim/witness, do not show the victim/witness any photographs of the suspect and do not allow the victim/witness to see the suspect (i.e. in an office or holding cell).
8. Any photographic line-up that Department personnel show to a victim/witness, regardless of whether or not the victim/witness makes an identification, will become part of the case file. Department personnel shall document how the proceeding was conducted and the results in their case file. Department personnel shall document each victim/witness' identification or lack thereof, including the exact words used by each witness viewing the line-up. If a sequential line-up was conducted, Department personnel will include documentation as to the order in which the photographs were shown to the victim/witness.
9. When circumstances warrant, it is strongly recommended Department personnel may consider using an independent administrator to present the photographic line-up.
10. Department personnel shall instruct the victim/witness regardless of whether an identification is made, the investigation will continue.

## **II. PHYSICAL LINE-UPS**

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- A. A physical line-up can be used where an individual who is a suspect is in custody, or if the suspect is not in custody, the suspect may be asked to voluntarily participate in a line-up or required to participate through the use of a non-testimonial order. A physical line-up shall only be conducted in a room of a Department facility designated for such use. In the rare instance a physical line-up is used, Department personnel shall adhere to the following procedures when constructing and conducting a physical line-up:
1. Only one (1) suspect shall appear in each individual line-up.
  2. The suspect and fillers shall be randomly placed in the line-up. To the extent possible, Department personnel should place the suspect in different positions in each line-up when line-ups will be shown to multiple victims/witnesses.
  3. Suspects and fillers shall be similar in appearance and manner of dress, taking into consideration any unique or unusual features such as scars, marks or tattoo.
  4. Complete uniformity of features is not required. Department personnel should avoid using fillers who are so indistinguishable from the suspect such that even someone familiar with the suspect would not be able to tell them apart.
  5. Department personnel shall ensure that no writings or information concerning previous arrests or identifications will be visible to the victim/witness on any line-up.
  6. When showing a line-up with a different suspect, Department personnel shall not use the same fillers used in a previous line-up shown to the same victim/witness.
- B. Physical line-ups shall be conducted with the degree of fairness and integrity that is necessary to ensure they are non-suggestive and reliable.
1. Instruct the witness using the Department standardized instructions form entitled, "Physical Line-up Instructions" or, if unavailable, similar documented verbal instructions.
  2. Prior to showing the line-up, Department personnel will ask the victim/witness if he/she understands how the procedure will be conducted and inquire if he/she has any questions.
  3. Department personnel shall not provide the victim/witness with any feedback, in any manner, regarding his/her identification or lack thereof. Department personnel shall not comment in any manner, verbally or by physical gesture regarding the individual selected or on the outcome of the process.
  4. If practical, audio and video tape the entire line-up procedure.

Minimally, Department personnel shall take a photograph of each line-up prior to its presentation, documenting the order in which the participants are presented, their clothing, and general appearance.

5. If it is necessary for the participants to perform any physical action(s) (i.e., speak a phrase, walk, gesture, assume a position, wear certain clothing, etc.), each participant must perform the same action(s).
6. If the victim/witness indicates that he/she recognizes or identifies someone in the line-up, Department personnel shall ask the circumstances from which the victim/witness recognizes the individual and how certain he/she is of his/her identification.
7. If, after viewing the entire line-up, the victim/witness requests to see a specific individual, Department personnel shall present the entire line-up to the witness again, in the same order in which it was originally presented.
8. Department personnel are prohibited from allowing a victim/witness to view a physical line-up more than one at a time. If multiple victims/witnesses are involved, Department personnel will separate the victims/witnesses and give each individual instruction regarding the line-up without the other present. Victims/Witnesses should not be allowed to confer with one another before, during or after the procedure. Department personnel should instruct the victim/witness not to discuss the line-up or its results with other victims/witnesses.
9. Prior to presenting the line-up to the victim/witness, do not show the victim/witness any photographs of the suspect and do not allow the victim/witness to see the suspect (i.e., in an office or holding cell).
10. Department personnel shall document how the proceeding was conducted and the results in their case file. Department personnel shall document each victim/witness' identification or lack thereof, including the exact words used by each witness viewing the line-up.

### **III. FIELD IDENTIFICATION/SHOW-UP**

- A. A show-up occurs when law enforcement officials show one suspect to one witness for the purpose of eyewitness identification. Courts recognize that show-up procedures can be suggestive, but acknowledge show-ups have benefits for both public safety and innocent parties. The following procedures apply regardless of whether other practices would be legally permissible. For instance, even if a given suspect consents to a show-up, a show-up still should not be conducted unless the investigating Department personnel decides that the exigencies of the situation outweigh any possible risk of misidentification presented by conducting a show-up. Consent may legally authorize Department personnel to detain a suspect for a show-up, but it does not remove the suggestiveness of the

procedure. Show-ups may be conducted, subject to the following conditions:

1. In situations in which probable cause to arrest does not exist, but Department personnel have temporarily detained a subject who matches a general eyewitness description, Department personnel may conduct a show-up for the following reasons:
  - a. To identify a potential suspect, or
  - b. To immediately clear an innocent person from suspicion.
2. Department personnel may detain suspects where he/she is located, in the least restrictive manner possible that will ensure the presence of the suspect and the safety of Department personnel for reasonable time to confirm or refute whether the subject is the perpetrator.
  - a. Department personnel should not display a suspect detained in a Department vehicle.
  - b. If possible and safe, Department personnel should not restrain or handcuff the suspect unless the handcuffs can be concealed. When circumstances dictate that a suspect must be controlled and/or separated from the victim/witness, Department personnel must take practical steps to minimize the suggestiveness of the procedure.
  - c. Show-ups should not occur at a barracks, police station, or other law enforcement building.
3. Whenever practical, transport the victim/witness to the suspect (as opposed to transporting the suspect to the victim/witness). Department personnel shall notify his/her supervisor that he/she is transporting a victim/witness for the purpose of an eyewitness identification.
4. Prior to the show-up, Department personnel shall provide the following instructions to the victim/witness and ask the victim/witness if he/she understands same:
  - a. That the individual being detained may or may not be the perpetrator;
  - b. That it is just as important to clear an innocent person from suspicion as to identify guilty parties;
  - c. That the victim/witness should not feel compelled to make an identification; and

- d. Regardless of whether an identification is made, the investigation will continue.
5. Avoid suggestive words or conduct of any type that may suggest to the victim/witness that the individual is or may be the perpetrator.
6. If the victim/witness makes an identification, Department personnel shall not confirm or corroborate the identification. Department personnel shall discreetly advise the detaining Department personnel or officer of the victim/witness's response or identification.
7. If the victim/witness indicates that he/she recognizes or identifies the suspect, Department personnel shall ask the circumstances from which the victim/witness recognizes the individual and how certain he/she is of his/her identification.
8. In the case of multiple victims/witnesses, show-ups should not be conducted with more than one victim/witness at a time. When feasible, after one witness makes an identification during a show-up, that identification should provide probable cause for an arrest, and the remaining witnesses should ordinarily be shown a photo line-up rather than participate in a show-up. If show-ups are conducted separately for multiple victims/witnesses, the victims/witnesses should not be permitted to communicate before or after the show-up regarding the identification of the suspect.
9. In the case of multiple suspects, the victim/witness should view each suspect in separate show-ups conducted in accordance with these procedures.
10. The same suspect should not be presented to the same victim/witness more than once.
11. Show-up suspects should not be required to put on clothing worn by the perpetrator, speak words uttered by the perpetrator, or perform other actions mimicking those of the perpetrator.
12. Whenever possible photograph the suspect at the time of the show-up.
13. Department personnel shall document how the proceeding was conducted and the results in their case file. Department personnel shall document each victim/witness' identification or lack thereof, including the exact words used by each witness viewing the line-up.

#### **IV. ATTACHMENTS**

- A. *Photographic Line-up Instructions form.*
- B. *Physical Line-up Instructions form.*

**(This Space Left Blank intentionally)**

**APPROVED:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Oscar L. Perez', written in a cursive style.

**COLONEL OSCAR L. PEREZ  
CHIEF OF POLICE**

**PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**Detective Bureau**

*Photo Lineup Instructions*

In a moment you will be shown a group of photographs. This group of photos *may or may not* contain a picture of the person who committed the crime now being investigated.

Keep in mind that hair styles, beards and mustaches may be easily changed. Also, photographs may not always depict the true complexion of a person. It may be lighter or darker than shown in the photo.

Pay no attention to any markings or numbers that may appear on the photos, or any other differences in the type or style of the photographs.

When you have looked at all of the photos, tell the investigating detective whether you see the person who committed the crime.

Please *do not tell other witnesses* that you *have or have not* identified anyone.

If you have any questions concerning these instructions, please ask the investigating detective.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness sign here

\_\_\_\_\_  
Detective sign here

**PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
Physical Line-Up Instructions

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_

I (Name of Administrator) am going to show a group of individuals for identification purposes. This procedure is designed to clear the innocent as well as to ensure the accurate and reliable identification of the guilty. The perpetrator may or may not be present in this group of individuals. You do not have to identify anyone, regardless of whether or not you make an identification the investigation will continue. The fact that these individuals are being shown to you should not cause you to believe or guess that the guilty person has been caught.

Please keep in mind that the individuals in the physical line-up may not appear exactly as they did on the date of the crime as features such as head and facial hair are subject to change.

While viewing the physical line-up please keep in mind the following:

1. There is no significance to the order in which the individuals appear.
2. During the process, no one is to give you any hints or suggestions, or attempt to influence your identification in any way.
3. You must view all of the individuals prior to making an identification.
4. If you make an identification, it will be done in writing.
5. If you make an identification you must state in your own words how certain you are of such identification.

Please do not talk to anyone other than the Administrator while viewing the physical line-up. Please do not indicate in any way to other witnesses that you have or have not made an identification.

I acknowledge that the above physical line-up instructions have been read to me and fully understand the instructions.

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)