

## Burglary

**B**urglary is one of the offenses most commonly encountered by law enforcement officers. The initial investigation of a burglary scene is extremely important, for the objective is not only to determine what may be missing, but also to locate and recover physical evidence which associates the burglar with the crime scene. The following outline may be used by the investigating officer as a procedural guide when processing a burglary scene.

**Caution: Observe laws relating to the collection of evidence.**

### I. Evidentiary Considerations

#### Security and Protection at the Scene

- A. Allow authorized personnel only.
- B. Rope off or barricade area under investigation.
- C. Protect outside areas from elements with a new tarpaulin or plastic sheet.
- D. Maintain security until the scene is completely processed.

#### What to Look for

- A. In surrounding area:
  - 1. Footwear impressions (determine origin)
  - 2. Tire marks (determine origin)
  - 3. Drag marks
  - 4. Abandoned loot, tools, clothing, etc.
- B. At scene:
  - 1. Point and method of entry
  - 2. Object of burglary
  - 3. Point and method of exit
  - 4. Obvious objects of value “passed up”
  - 5. Fingerprints, glove imprints
- C. At point of entry:
  - 1. Hairs, fibers, other materials
  - 2. Chips of paint, wood, glass, and tools
  - 3. Blood

4. Tool marks (photo)
  5. Tools
  6. Other items of evidence
- D.** Inside burglarized premises:
1. Finger, foot, footwear, and palm prints
  2. Burglarized objects
  3. Tools and source of tools (property of victim or perpetrator)
  4. Tool marks (photograph)
  5. Broken or fractured pieces of tools (may be recovered in floor sweepings)
- E.** Suspect:
1. Trace materials may be present on the clothing of a suspect. Therefore, all outer clothing should be submitted to the Trace Evidence Unit according to procedures outlined in **Chapter 20, Clothing and Fabrics**.
  2. The vehicle involved should be thoroughly searched for the presence of physical evidence. Vacuum seats, floors, dash separately.

### **Procedure at Scene**

- A.** Photograph and diagram the crime scene.
- B.** Recover, mark and preserve physical evidence found according to directions set forth in section pertaining to evidence of that type.

### **Materials Required by Laboratory**

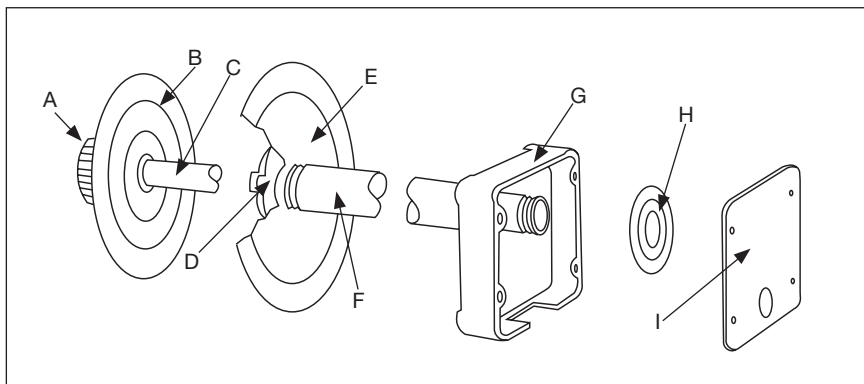
- A.** Photographs and diagrams or sketches of crime scene.
- B.** Physical evidence that has been photographed, recovered, marked and preserved in the proper manner.

## **II. Safe Burglary**

In some rare cases, a safe may be drilled with a core drill to gain entrance. In these sophisticated types of burglary, the Laboratory should be contacted for assistance.

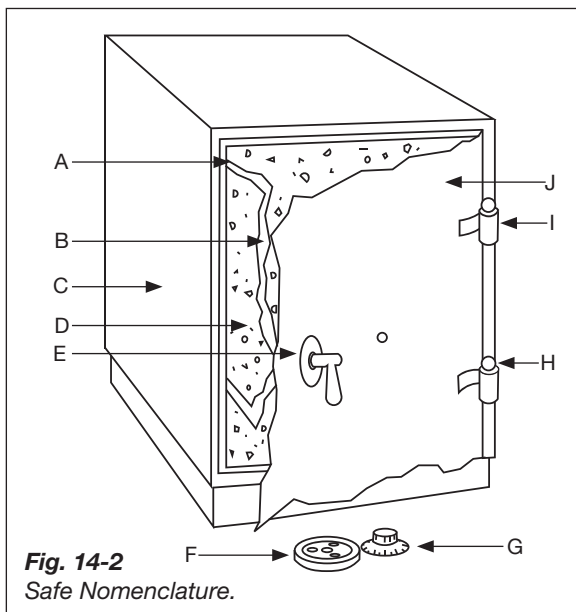
A diagram describing the accepted nomenclature of parts usually encountered in a safe burglary investigation has been included in an

effort to show the correct names of safe parts. Knowledge and use of this terminology will aid the investigator and the Forensic Scientist in communicating effectively regarding safe burglaries.



**Fig. 14-1**  
Combination lock nomenclature.

- |             |                |             |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| A Dial Knob | D Tube Nut     | G Lock Case |
| B Dial      | E Dial Ring    | H Wheel     |
| C Spindle   | F Spindle Tube | I Cover     |



**Fig. 14-2**  
Safe Nomenclature.

- |                     |
|---------------------|
| A Locking Bolt      |
| B Carrying Bar      |
| C Cladding          |
| (outer metal shell) |
| D Firewall Material |
| E Door Handle       |
| F Dial Ring         |
| G Dial              |
| H Hinge Acorn       |
| I Hinge             |
| J Front Plate       |

Although explosives are not employed very often in safe burglaries, the possibility of their use should not be overlooked. If there is reason to suspect explosives were used, it is recommended the scene be evacuated and secured. Then, for guidance in handling the situation, contact one of the following:

- A.** A local bomb squad
- B.** The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) – in Wisconsin, Eastern District (Milwaukee) 414-727-6170  
Western District (Madison) 608-441-5050

If explosives are expected:

**Do not** attempt to neutralize or destroy remaining explosives.

**Do not** turn on any electrical switches.

**Do not** walk or step in a liquid or suspected explosive material.

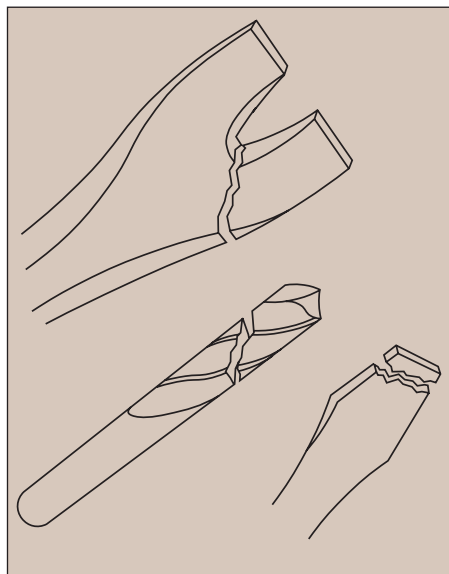
**Do not** move any object.

**Do not** smoke or use matches in area.

**Do not** pick up any detonators or explosives.

**Do not** breathe any vapors which may be present. Nitroglycerine may cause a very severe headache.

After the scene has been processed for finger-, foot-, and palm prints, it should be carefully swept to recover all debris. The debris pile should be thoroughly searched for the presence of broken tool parts and other physical evidence. Broken tool parts may be fracture matched with a suspect tool. This is a conclusive type of identification and is not uncommon in burglary investigations. The recovery and search for debris is frequently overlooked, however, resulting in the loss of valuable evidence.



**Fig. 14-3**  
*Fracture Matches – broken tools.*