

## Clothing and Fabrics

**C**lothing fibers or small pieces of fabric found at burglary scenes, on suspect hit-and-run vehicles, weapons, or other objects can often be compared or even matched with a suspect's or victim's clothing. Small particles of paint, plastic, metal, wood, glass, soil, or other materials frequently adhere to clothing (pockets, trousers, cuffs, etc.) and may be related to the scene.

*The Laboratory has special equipment to recover trace evidence from clothing. Clothing recovered for examination should be handled with care to avoid damage to critical areas. It is important to collect clothing before it is cleaned or otherwise altered. Trace materials are usually removed or lost in the cleaning process.*

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

### I. General Procedure

- A.** Recover clothing to be examined. Clothing should be carefully removed from the person or body. Care should be taken to minimize damage to garments. **Do not** cut through stains, bullet holes, or knife penetrations. Collect and package each item separately. It is extremely important to keep items separated to avoid contamination during recovery, storage, and transmittal to the Laboratory.
- B.** A tag marked with all pertinent information should be attached to each item. Lead wire seals or locking plastic cable ties may be used to attach the tag to the clothing. If a lead seal is used, it can be crimped and inscribed with the officer's initials. Plastic cable ties can be marked with an indelible marker.
- C.** Clothing or other items that are damp or wet with blood, urine, water, etc., should be air dried in a draft-free place prior to packaging. **Do not package damp clothing or other damp items in plastic bags.** A piece of clean paper should be spread under drying items to catch any debris which might be dislodged. The paper and any debris thereon should be packaged with the item. Label, seal and submit to the Laboratory.

- D. Package each dry item in a clean paper bag, label and seal.
- E. Plastic bags are **not** suitable at any time for packaging shoes and leather objects. A new, clean paper bag should be used for each shoe and leather object.

## II. Packaging Items

- A. Mark the paper bag with identifying data (description, source, date, time of recovery, case number, initials of persons involved in recovery, and other pertinent information).
- B. Seal the bag using one of the methods discussed in Chapter 1, Evidence Integrity.



**Fig. 20-1**  
*Fabric impression on a license plate from a hit-and-run investigation.*