

# Animal crime scene- and evidence handling course outline



First off, we would like to thank you for your interest in the course! In this course outline you find more information about the Animal Crime Scene- and Evidence Handling Course. This course was designed by Dr Ulf Tubbesing from Wildlife Vets Namibia, and the initial course was facilitated and sponsored by ISAP (Intelligence Support Against Poaching). With the help of experts in the field (e.g. photographer, police reservists, K9 unit) the course was further improved to its current form.

The course is designed to **improve and augment the multi-disciplinary cooperation** between first responders (e.g. farmers, APU, vets etc.) and the police and MEFT staff, to serve our common purpose of bringing perpetrators to book. Please note that this course is **not** meant to make you a detective! It is meant to teach you how to preserve a crime scene and assist the police and/or MEFT. **When you encounter a poaching scene, it is important to notify the police/MEFT accordingly.**

## Why this course?

One of the biggest threats to both wildlife- and livestock ranching is **poaching** for the trade in ivory, horn, skins and meat. These illegal activities severely impact the economic viability of both game- and livestock farming, and undermine conservation efforts and tourism. When an animal has been poached, it is important that the **correct investigative approach** is taken **as soon as possible**. Poor investigative techniques, as well as errors in crime scene processing and evidence collection and handling are amongst the main causes for poor arrest and conviction rates for these crimes. And here is where some problems come in:

- Efficiency of official investigators** – Due to logistics and a low availability of (competent) officers and/or police cars, the police is often unable to attend to a crime scene immediately. Especially in poaching cases (outdoor crime) the rapid and effective protection of the crime scene and evidence is important, as wind, rain and other animals can negatively affect the scene, and destroy possible important evidence.
- Unintended tampering of the crime scene and evidence** – Upon finding a crime scene (poaching or stock theft), first-responders (farm owners, managers, APU personnel etc.) are tempted to immediately ‘start investigating’; walking around and picking up possible evidence. If done by the uninitiated, this will lead to the accidental destruction of evidence (tracks, fingerprints tec.). Vital pieces of evidence may become contaminated and eventually lose their value in court. Further, by leaving his/her own tracks and DNA on the crime scene, they confuse the picture and may make themselves suspects in the crime!

This course is designed for people that may become involved in crime directed against wildlife and/or livestock. This could be farmers, managers, anti-poaching units, game rangers, reservist police officers etc.



*Taking proper photos and documenting evidence is very important.*







*Investigating a tyre track*










## Course schedule

In this 2.5-day course we will discuss the proper approach to and handling of a crime scene and evidence. The emphasis is placed on wildlife or livestock-related crimes (esp. poaching & stock theft). The course is a mix of lectures and practical training, with lectures usually presented in the morning while the afternoons are reserved for practical training. Below you find a summary of the course schedule (note that this may be subject to change).






Day  
1

Topic	What?
 Introduction to poaching and crime scenes	In this first lecture everybody introduces themselves, and can share some experiences. We give a brief introduction of poaching and animal crime scenes.
 DNA and Forensics	In this lecture you learn more about DNA, what is it, and why is it of growing importance in crime scene investigation.
 Crime scene photography	Crime scene photography consists of 2 lectures; one about general photography tips, and one on how to take photos on a crime scene.
 Practical: photography	Time to head out and get to know your camera! We practise different angles, taking photos in different light (shadow, harsh light etc.) and taking sharp and crisp photos.


*You learn about:*

-  *The importance of DNA and proper evidence collection*
-  *How to carefully approach and handle a crime scene*
-  *What types of evidence can be collected, and how to handle, collect and store evidence*
-  *How to take crime scene photos that can be used in court*
-  *How to properly document your findings*
-  *Maintaining the chain of evidence*
-  *The different roles in a court case and how to behave in court*
-  *How to examine body language and see if a possible suspect is lying*
-  *Practical: Photography, evidence collection, crime scene handling.*

Day  
2

Topic	What?
 The crime scene	In this lecture we go deeper into crime scenes, which types are there, and how should one approach a crime scene? We discuss the different search methods and explain how you document your findings during the search.
 Evidence collection	We explain the different types of evidence you may encounter, and how one should document, handle, collect and preserve it. In an extra lecture we discuss how to make shoe/tyre imprints and castings.
 Writing reports and court appearance	In this lecture we explain what happens in court, and give some tips on how you should behave in court.
 Body language	Bad body language can cost you credibility in court, so we dedicate an extra lecture just on body language. In this lecture we also give some tips on how you might recognize if people are lying.
 Practical: Evidence and shoe & tyre print collection	In the afternoon we go out in the bush again, and spend some time on locating and documenting evidence. We practise photography again, and we collect and store the evidence. We also practise making imprint casts of shoe prints and tyre prints.

Day  
3

Topic	What?
 Practical: The crime scene investigation	Everything you have learned so far now comes together... A fake crime scene will be set up, which the participants must properly approach and investigate. The whole process will be practised; from approaching, collecting evidence, taking photos and documenting findings.

The lectures will mostly be given by Dr Ulf Tubbesing, and depending on their availability, experts will join and assist in the lectures and practicals.

## More information

If you have any questions or you want more information, please do not hesitate to contact us!

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