

When MP are called to a barracks, they may find an individual unconscious because of an overdose of prescription drugs or a prohibited substance. The MP may gain entry to the room and call for medical help. After the call for medical help, the MP may search the immediate area and the personal effects of the individual to obtain evidence of identity. The MP may also search the immediate area to determine what substance was used to overdose, so medics can treat the illness properly.

An MP on patrol at night may observe a car in a parking lot after the establishment has closed. If someone is observed in the vehicle apparently unconscious, it is proper for the MP to open the vehicle, learn if the individual is unconscious, notify a doctor, and then obtain evidence of the identification either from the individual or from the car itself.

An MP who finds a vehicle unsecured—one that is registered on post or has a visitor's pass and is capable of being secured—will secure the vehicle, leaving a note that the individual who owns the vehicle should secure it himself next time. If the vehicle registered on post cannot be secured, the MP will attempt to learn the identity of the owner by first calling the PM office if time permits and, if not, by searching the vehicle for identification. If the vehicle is not registered on post or does

not have a visitor's pass, the MP may search the vehicle for identification.

If while searching the unsecured car, the owner of the vehicle is identified, the person making the search for identification will attempt to contact the owner and ask him to secure his vehicle in the future. If while looking for identification evidence of a crime is found, the evidence may be seized and may lead to appropriate action against the individual for criminal conduct.

If the owner of the vehicle cannot be determined by looking for identification, the vehicle should be secured temporarily by the MP, and an attempt should be made through all available means to determine the owner or if the vehicle was stolen.

In some states license plate numbers may not be stored in a computer. It may be difficult to determine whether or not a vehicle is stolen unless the identity of the owner can be determined immediately.

When the MP is permitted to make a search for identification, the scope of the search is limited to areas such as glove compartments and consoles where owner and vehicle identification are normally kept. The scope of the search may also include reading documents that are lying in open view inside the car. Once identification has been established, the search is ended.

CONDUCTING AN AUTOMOBILE SEARCH

An apprehending MP may make a warrantless search of the interior of a car at the time and place of apprehension if there is probable cause to apprehend one of the occupants. The scope of the search can be extended to the entire automobile if there is probable cause to believe there is evidence in the trunk or under the hood. The warrantless search need not take place where the apprehension of the occupant took place if there is a valid reason for conducting the search at another place such as at an MP station.

Where there has been a stop of an automobile, the MP stopping the automobile may make a protective search of the passenger compartment of the automobile if the MP possesses reasonable suspicion that the vehicle contains weapons potentially dangerous to the MP. Whether or not reasonable suspicion exists depends on the same factors discussed later for a frisk of an individual. The investigative search extends to those parts of the passenger compartment in which a weapon may be placed or hidden. Just because there is a stop of an automobile

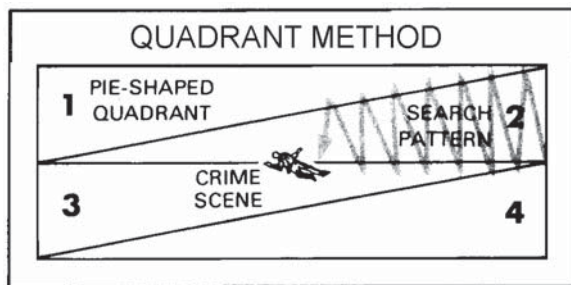
does not mean the MP may conduct an investigative search.

When an individual is stopped for a robbery that has occurred on post and the driver is apprehended on post and taken to the MP station, the car may also be taken to the MP station. If the robbery has recently taken place, there may be probable cause to believe the car contains evidence of the robbery, and it may be searched at the MP station, even though there is no authorization from the commanding officer to search the vehicle.

An individual may be stopped for a traffic offense, and the MP may see items in plain view such as drugs or drug paraphernalia or evidence of other crime. This would give the MP probable cause to believe that other evidence is located in the vehicle. Thus, the vehicle can be searched there or it can be taken to the MP station where a search of the entire vehicle may be made. If the car was not in motion prior to the owner being taken into custody, and there is no likelihood of the vehicle being removed by a third party, a search warrant should be obtained to search the vehicle..

CONDUCTING AN AREA SEARCH

If an offender has left the scene, an adequate number of MP teams should be detailed to participate in an area search. An area search is conducted by using the quadrant method. The area to be searched is divided into four equal pie-shaped wedges radiating outward from the crime scene. One or more units are assigned to each quadrant. The search is begun at the outer perimeter of the quadrant. Units search inward toward the crime scene using a zigzag pattern. It is recommended that units overlap each other's patterns to ensure complete area coverage.



The search for the offender continues until an apprehension is made or the search is abandoned.

In initiating a search, speed is important. Patrol personnel should not wait until a complete description of the offender and/or vehicle is obtained. They should immediately deploy with the information available and start the search. Further

information can be forwarded to units in the field by radio or other means of communications as it is made available.

An area search may be conducted by using a motor vehicle or setting up a fixed post. Or a foot search may be conducted. When conducting a motor vehicle search patrol personnel remain in their vehicles and conduct a rapid area search of fields, parking lots, sidewalks, large throughway alleys, and roads. They are limited in their ability to search because they are conspicuous in a patrol vehicle and thus easily avoided. Also, they are unable to search in detail behind bushes, in doorways, and so forth. Fixed posts are useful at intersections or other vantage points on possible escape routes. These positions can be either single vehicles or formal roadblocks. When conducting a foot search the patrol vehicle is parked, and the search is carried out on foot. Personnel conducting such a search should stop frequently and listen for sounds of the offender. Trees, bushes, and other concealment should be used to protect approaching searchers from being seen by the suspect. Personnel in the area should be questioned. They may have seen the fleeing suspect or strange vehicles in the area. Foot searches can also be initiated to find witnesses and to look for evidence.