

Law Enforcement Session

Tracking as an Enforcement Investigative Tool

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Abstract: The value of tracking and foot impression evidence has been highly underrated during investigations in the past. This oversight has been due to the lack of training in finding and following tracks and knowing the value of foot impressions as conclusive evidence. Today, however, there exist instruction and technological advances which can promote the use of foot impressions to the forefront of investigative concerns. Foot impression evidence may be as conclusive as DNA and finger prints when processed properly. The ability to find, age, and follow tracks are skills all of us are capable of performing to some degree. Where there are people, there are tracks, both indoors and out. Tracking knowledge will enhance an officer's awareness, investigation, search and rescue abilities, and self confidence, and can be as conclusive as any other evidence available today. As conservation officers we are often thought to be the ultimate woodsman; as a skilled tracker we can make this concept a reality.

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What was once thought of as a primitive skill, tracking is now a refined art appearing on the horizon. Over the last 25 years great strides have been made to perfect and articulate the use of tracks for educational and investigative matters. Today, the talent and skills are available to make tracking a leading edge in the enforcement and investigation of criminal law.

The most common knowledge of a track to the average person is the possible identification of an obvious clear print of a man or animal. However, defining a track in the broadest context has been accomplished by Tom Brown Jr., a world renowned survival instructor and tracker. His definition is “. . . every disturbance and irregularity on the landscape is a track. Every mark is the signature of an animal, plant, mineral, or some atmospheric, geologic, or mechanical force. Weather and gravity conspire to erase them. The earth tries to be flat. Every depression, every bump, every fissure, and every scratch on the landscape was made by something. Whether it was made by a rabbit, mouse, bulldozer, fish, frog, or volcano, it is the tracker's job to notice and interpret it . . . Stop looking at the ground as dirt, it is a manuscript” (Brown 1983, page 111).

Over the years, investigative techniques used in the apprehension and prosecution of criminals have reformed and advanced. These changes usually occur due to new technology and experience. Tracking, the ultimate form of awareness and once a

staple for survival, faded away with technology. Social structuring has replaced analyzing footprints and following them to locate people with following paper trails such as social security numbers, addresses, licenses, etc. The more sought after evidence in crime scene investigations are fingerprints, tool marks, and DNA, whereas foot impressions are just as commonly placed and conclusive in identifying suspects.

Having grown up an outdoors man and working in various law enforcement positions. I noticed tracking was not getting the attention I feel it deserves as an enforcement tool. If it was mentioned at all during training, it was only in the most basic context. Further investigation into this matter has revealed resources and training are available to make tracking and tracks a priority in many criminal investigations. Charles Worsham, Joel Harding, Tom Brown, Jr., and David Scott-Donelan are proficient tracking instructors. As for tracking making a significant contribution to law enforcement, this has been firmly reinforced by William J. Bodziac. He was the FBI's foremost forensics specialist in footwear impression evidence. "Items of footwear and their impressions that remain at the crime scene offer sound, reliable and demonstrative evidence of a person's presence . . . Positive identification of footwear is as accurate as fingerprints, tool marks, and handwriting. Today, everyone accepts the potential for the presence of latent fingerprints at a crime scene. Unfortunately, it is often not recognized that there is an equal chance that a latent footwear impression could be present as well. The average investigator could list many possible reasons why fingerprints would be left at a crime scene and their probable locations. The same investigators are not usually as knowledgeable about footwear impressions. Yet with every step that is taken, whether on soil, snow, concrete, a tile floor, carpeting, glass, a wooden window sill, a piece of paper, a bank counter, or one of many other objects and materials, a representation of the characteristics of the shoe outsole can be impressed against and retained by that surface, in either a visible or a latent form" (Bodziac 1995, page 3). Bodziac identifies all the methods available to detect, preserve, reconstruct, enhance, and document tracks on and around a crime scene. Furthermore, he explains what individual identifying characteristics the forensics lab is able to distinguish in footwear impressions and more.

Technology combined with the ancient skill of tracking has developed into a reliable resource for law enforcement communities. Some of tracking's potential consists of an information gathering process, limiting a search to a particular area or direction, reconstructing crime scenes, positive identification of suspects, and creditable evidence in the courtroom. "Tracks are clues, and they are by far the most plentiful type of clue that a lost person or violator will leave behind. To the eye of an expert tracker, a bit of evidence will appear just about every place that the person he is seeking has moved. In ideal circumstances this means a clue just about every 18-20 inches" (Kearney 1978, page 11).

Tracking should no longer be taking a back seat in the field of law enforcement. By compiling existing information available and educating officers in the field to be track conscious, this ancient art has the potential to make an impressive contribution to the administration of justice today.

How To Find Tracks

All trackers have acknowledged in their own ways that acute visual perception is a must for a successful tracker. We must learn to gather information with the physical eye and to analyze with the mind's eye (Samuels et al. 1973). Too often, beginning trackers try to force preconceived images onto the surface of the ground, when in fact they should be looking for disturbances and then analyzing them with preconceived images and intuition, then resort back to the physical eye to search for more clues or disturbances. It is very important to be conscious of which sense you are operating from as your brain tends to be a bully and is quite capable of inserting assumptions into your thought process. In most instances the area you are searching should be between you and the light source. Tracks are usually exposed by their edges which are outlined by shadows. Therefore an oblique light source is desired and recommended when artificial light is used.

Establish Baseline

Establishing baseline is a constant endeavor. "It is the basis from which you judge everything else, the undisturbed area from which you operate to discover disturbances from within. Nature will continue to establish and alter baselines. It is up to you to interpret disturbances from within. Is it man? animal? Or act of nature?" (Worsham 1989, page 13).

Elements of Visual Perception

Worsham (1989) defines acute visual perception as "an active, demanding endeavor, and we must acquire the habit of looking carefully yet aggressively for those elements which make things visible to us." He has used his education and skills as an artist and tracking instructor to develop the following templates for the bases of visual perceptions. It can be just one or a combination of all these qualities which makes a track visible to the human eye.

Outline—The edge of an object, it marks the boundary or outer limits of a shape, such as the heel of a boot. It is most often discovered due to shadowing, color, or texture change.

Shape—The form of an object, most important element for recognizing a track (i.e., compressions in the ground which form identifies a foot, heel, or shoe outsole of a shoe).

Color—Valuable in differentiating one object from another, but in nature, color tends to be muted and less vivid.

Value—Is relative lightness or darkness (contrast), if an object is lighter or darker than its surroundings, it is likely to be discovered.

Texture—The relative roughness or smoothness of an object in relation to its surroundings.

Sunlight—Objects will absorb or reflect light in differing degrees, compressed matter

will tend to reflect light more, moisture on grass smoothed by a foot will allow light to penetrate more, giving the grass a deeper richer color.

Rhythm—Movement or variation characterized by the regular recurrence or alternation of different qualities or conditions (i.e., the rhythm of the tides). Rhythm may also be defined as a regular or harmonious pattern created by lines, shapes, colors, values, and textures (i.e., geometric shapes).

Movement (1)—Present, actual physical movement.

Movement (2)—Past, physical indicators which show movement and mood.

Positive/Negative—Positive space would be actual physical objects which prohibit visual inspection beyond that point (a rock, tree, vehicle). Negative space is that area which is within the perimeter of physical objects yet allows you to see beyond that object (an opening within the limbs of a tree or bush, the area between the body of a vehicle and the ground).

How To Age Tracks

It is imperative that you become very conscious of the weather, especially wind and all aspects of moisture content, from rains to snow to fog or frost and freezing weather, all of which plays a large part in track deterioration. There are 2 important questions you must ask yourself when determining the age of a track. What was happening when the track was made and what has happened since the track was made? The 2 most common methods for aging a track are visual (seeing) and tactile (touching). Both of these methods should always be used together in order to develop an interrelationship which will help to reinforce your perceptions.

Fabricate the Damage and Compare Contrasts

“The best way to tell the age of a track is by determining what it does to live vegetation. Grass, plants, bushes, and trees are all alive and like all living things, when injured, immediately start healing themselves” (Kearney 1978, page 97). Become familiar with the plants in your area and study their healing process after inflicting similar injuries as might be expected from someone walking through the area. You can compare damage found by a track with fresh damage you fabricate.

Another method of training to enhance your track aging abilities is by taking an area of tracking medium and systematically making identical impressions within it on a time scale, recording temperature, humidity, and wind velocity, with each impression and observing deterioration of the previous tracks. This will assist you in aging tracks within the type of medium (Brown 1983). Remember, visual inspection alone can be deceiving, get your fingers into the track and compare contrasts with a fresh disturbance. The only exception would be if the impression in question is going to be retained as physical evidence.

Tactile Contrasts

Worsham (1989) developed the following 6 tactile contrasts to assist in aging a track. By simulating a fresh disturbance and comparing it with the track in question

using these tactile contrasts, along with the elements of visual perception, you can determine how much the track has aged. Exert this exercise at every opportunity and in all types of soils and weather conditions. Repetition and persistence in educating yourself by making these comparisons on impressions of known times will assist in the accuracy of making age determinations in the future.

Hard/Soft—When a track is made, it will sink into the ground to a depth determined by the soil type, soil moisture, animal weight, and animal gait. By placing a new print next to the track in question, by studying the degree of penetration between the 2 tracks, and by pushing down into both tracks with the fingers, age differences can be determined . . . If the finger will not sink into the new track, but will penetrate the soil slightly in the other track, then some weathering has occurred to the track in question.

Rough/Smooth—Contact with the ground may compact soil particles, making the soil feel relatively smooth within the track. Moisture invading a freshly-made track will also make the dirt within the track feel smoother. As the track ages and becomes dryer, the finger will not move as smoothly across the track surface (soil resistance and adhesive qualities will also play a role here).

Wet/Dry—We can sometimes determine the age of a track by looking for moisture in the track, by watching how rapidly moisture flows into a fresh track, or by studying how fast moisture disappears from a track. An almost classic example if using wetness to determine track age is the discovery of a track where moisture can be seen to slowly flow up into the track from below: this track was just made, and a test track placed next to it can be used to predict the track's age to within minutes of its creation.

Warm/Cool—A new track may feel cooler than the surrounding soil. This can be the result of the tracking medium being compressed and forcing moisture to the surface. Warning: deep tracks (regardless of age) will often fill cooler than the surrounding soil. This is because external moisture such as rain or dew will remain longer in the track bottom than up on the surface where sun and wind will dry things more rapidly.

Sticky/Nonsticky—In some soils, especially those with clay content, the right amount of moisture and the correct degree of foot pressure will make the soil stick to a foot or shoe. The degree of stickiness in a track is an excellent relative guide for determining how long a track was made after a rain (by . . . visual analysis) and, likewise, how much earlier it was made before the time of examination (by using the sense of touch in conjunction with a fresh track . . .).

Resistant/Nonresistant—When dragging a finger through a track, particles of dirt and stone may move with little resistance. On the other hand, ground which has not been stepped on may be more resistant to the dragging of a finger with little resultant dislodging and rolling of soil particles. In addition, a fresh track in loose soil may display packed granules which will resist dislodging more than will a slightly older track. Fresh tracks in moist clay-like soil may not resist finger pressure and will feel soft and pliable. As the moisture leaves the track, soil will become more resistant to the touch, and ridges or high points in the track will tend to snap off rather than bend.

Pressure Releases

Pressure releases are “the visible deformities within and around a track left either by the pressure of the foot as it was making the track, or by release of that pressure as the foot is lifted” (Brown 1983, page 209). A few examples of the study of pressure releases are:

Track Wall Tells Direction

Cliff—occurs at the sides of the foot impression, indicates travel in a straight line.

Ridge—caused by pressure exerted to one side of the track, indicates a turn.

Plate—indicates high pressure against the wall, definite change of direction.

Wall explosion—indicates sharp turn with the highest degree of energy.

Cave—usually in front of track, indicates sudden stop or jump to one side.

Track Floor Shows Acceleration

Wave—is a small arch in the floor of the track created by the heel striking the ground, compressing soil forward; the foot rolls forward and pushes off with the toe again compressing soil to the center arch of the track. Indicates a stroll.

Double Wave—is the same as a wave but two arches may form. Indicates a walk.

Disk—when walking the toes will tend to pile up loose soil within the front portion of the track; as the subject accelerates, the pressure transfers to the ball of the foot which in turn transfers any loose soil farther back in the track. The farther back this disk is from the front of the track the faster the individual is accelerating. Indicates fast walk or jog.

Dish—once a disk passes the center of the track, it is referred to as a dish. Indicates fast jog or run.

Explosion—due to such force in acceleration all loose soil is cast out the rear of the track creating a huge plume. Indicates a spring or jump.

Pitch—is the overall lengthwise angle of the track: even, forward, and backward pitch. Indicates body posture: slumped, erect, and alert, etc.

Roll—is the overall lateral angle of the track: no roll, right & left roll. Indicates a turn in the direction of the pitch.

Plume—is dirt spread out beyond the track: If in front it indicates a fast gait in direction of plume, if behind, it indicates rapid acceleration, if in a circular pattern it indicates sudden pivot.

Pressure releases are invaluable when tracking, especially where there are multiple tracks to sift through. They will indicate a change of direction before it is made, show a change in acceleration, and speed up the tracking process. Terminology of this subject may differ according to trackers.

Tracks as Evidence

The division of forensic science has developed a series of methods for enhancing, documenting, and comparing foot impressions on all types of mediums. As in fingerprints, when sufficient detail is available, a positive match can be made to a suspect's shoes. The entire foot impression is not necessary for a conclusive decision. The possibilities of foot impressions are far more prominent at a crime scene than fingerprints. A suspect has to walk to, from, and about the location of the crime but does not have to touch anything. If at all possible, items containing footwear impressions should be seized and taken to the lab. Such things as doors, carpet, signs, counters, paper, glass, car parts, and even contusions on bodies have been matched to a suspect's shoes, to list a few of the many possibilities. Do not underestimate where impressions may be found either. They may be found under bodies buried in a shallow grave and on glass from a broken window where an illegal entrance was made. Officers in the field need to be trained to be more track conscious and to use proper procedures to retain and document this evidence. Examination-quality photographs and dental stone casts are the most common methods for documenting footwear impression evidence.

Photographing Foot Impressions for Evidence

"Photography at crime scenes is an unsurpassed means of illustrating items of evidence and their relationship to each other and their physical surroundings. Photography accomplishes this more efficiently and with more detail than any sketch or verbal description could ever hope to achieve. In addition to providing a pictorial documentation of the crime scene, photographs assist in the overall investigation. They are often used to support and verify testimony of witnesses and to assist in the evaluation of evidence. In some cases, photographs are a critical factor in determining the guilt or innocence of a suspect" (Bodziac 1995, page 25).

There are 2 separate types of photographs which need to be taken at a crime scene: general crime scene photography and examination quality photographs. It is best to have a separate camera for each. General photographs may be taken with a regular point-and-shoot 35mm camera and are taken with 3 basic steps in mind. Long range, mid range, and close up photographs. This will provide a zoom-in effect of each piece of evidence and how it relates to its surroundings. Markers should be used to assist in separating and recording which foot impressions were found where. Corresponding markers are then placed on examination quality prints which identifies each impression and its relation to the general photographs. The location of each impression must be documented and the investigator must be able to recreate the scene in court. Examination quality photographs are taken to record the maximum amount of detail possible. These photos will be enlarged to the original size of the impression and examined under a microscope for unique characteristics. Lighting, stability, and focus need to be precise, as any distortion will also be magnified as much as 20 times. When submitting examination quality photographs to a lab, the negatives must also be presented. These photographs will have to be taken with a quality camera capable of

accepting a macro lens. Following are prescribed techniques which capture detail and minimize distortion in examination quality photographs.

Use a Proper Scale—Bodziac (1995) says the 2 most common mistakes in taking examination quality photographs are not using a scale and not using a proper scale. A scale provides a reference for size. Photographs have to be enlarged so the evidence is examined in its natural size. Without a proper scale the photograph is of limited value. Always use a scale when taking examination quality photographs. The scale should include a length of preferably 12 inches with a minimum of 6 inches. Right angle rulers are better than straight ones; ruler should contain 1 or more circles. This aids in detecting if the photograph was taken at an angle. The surface should be non-reflective with contrasting numerals and markings with a scale finely divided into increments of 1/32" or millimeters (may be sprayed with photographic matt spray to reduce glare). Physical characteristics of a scale should include flat and thin so it may be placed on the same plane as the impression, rigid so it will not sag or twist. Place a label next to the impression when photographing which includes identifying marks to correspond with the general photographs. This assures precise documentation of where the photograph was taken.

Always Use a Tripod—It provides stability and assists in proper positioning. The photograph should always be taken parallel to the impression. Tripods which allow the camera to be held in an inverted position are best. Set the tripod and camera up next to the impression to make your basic adjustments and then place the tripod directly over the impression for fine tuning.

Use a Cable Release—it allows you to take the photograph without the risk of jarring the camera. If a cable release is not available you can use the automatic timer.

A Flash with at Least a Five-Foot Extension—The secret for revealing minute detail is in using oblique light (side light). The angle of the light will vary with the depth of the impression. The deeper the impression the higher the light. For 2 dimensional impressions the light should be level with the impression. Once the proper degree for the oblique light is determined, the light should be placed in 3 different positions around the impression at least 100 degrees apart. This will assure proper lighting. By rotating the flash around at different positions, the areas that were covered by shadows from the oblique light will become exposed and highlighted when taken from the different angles. When photographing impressions, it is suggested 9 photos be taken of each impression. This figure is arrived at by bracketing photos at 3 different positions. "Any experienced footwear examiner will agree that the failure to properly use oblique light is one of the most serious mistakes encountered in the photography of footwear impression evidence" (Bodziac 1995, page 45).

A Light Source Indicator—this is a small instrument placed in an upright position next to the scale which causes a shadow to be cast revealing the direction and angle of the light source. This assists the examiner in recreating the shadow effect in the known impression with the questioned impression. Suggested items for such use are golf spotters and thumb tacks.

Dental Stone Casts

“In the case of forensic footwear impression evidence, casting may be defined as the filling of a 3-dimensional footwear impression with a material that will take on and retain the characteristics left in that impression by the footwear. . . .A cast is an actual life-size molding of the impression. It reveals every characteristic including the unevenness of the surface and the variance depth of the impression. It is capable of reproducing all the detail present in an impression, including microscopic detail, which later can be closely examined in the laboratory. There are no focus problems or lighting problems, as is often the case with photography. Additionally, there are no size problems. Modern casting materials have excellent dimensional stability. A dental stone cast is, for all practical purposes, the true size of the impression it filled. Because the cast is a positive likeness of the footwear that made the impression, it can be compared directly with the known footwear. In the courtroom, the cast provides a tangible piece of evidence that is easily displayed and understood by the jury . . . casts of footwear impressions are extremely valuable as a means of retrieving the maximum amount of detail from an impression and they provide the examiner with far more information than do photographs alone” (Bodziac 1995, page 46). The most practical casting material for 3 dimensional impressions is dental stone. It is the only casting material recommended by the FBI. The major reason casts are not made at crime scenes is because there are no casting materials on hand when needed. Obtaining the materials beforehand and having them available is essential. Cost is approximately \$1 a pound and it is available from any dental supply company and most crime scene supply businesses.

Preparing Impressions for Casting—In most instances hardly any preparation is needed (just be sure photographs, with a scale, have been taken beforehand). Do not remove any debris from the impression which was there when the impression was made, or which is part of the impression. If debris has fallen into the impression after it was made, then it may be removed. I have found that small items may be removed by moistening a straw sized object with saliva and touching it lightly, which allows you to lift it out gently by adhering to the end of your probe. This should not be attempted if it is in any way going to disturb the impression.

Forms—If the ground is sloped you may need to use a partial or full form to control the flow of the casting material. The form should be kept 2 inches from the edge to ensure no detail is disturbed. All edges should be evenly on the ground to prevent seeping and caution should be used when inserting any form or support into the ground so as not to disrupt the impression. Any fill dirt or debris used to support, brace, or prevent seepage should be obtained away from the impression so as not to risk contamination, such as scraped soil or pieces of a stick being broken accidentally getting into the impression.

Fixatives—The use of fixatives to help retain impressions in dry loose mediums is not necessary when making dental stone casts; improper use of fixatives may even obscure or destroy detail. Be sure all preparations are completed before mixing the dental stone.

Mixing Dental Stone—The most practical and convenient use of dental stone is through the use of pre-measured quantities in plastic bags. I prefer freezer bags, as they are thicker and more durable. A 1-gallon bag with 2 pounds of dental stone is adequate for most footwear impressions. Several of these bags with a pre-measured amount of dental stone kept in a protective container makes for convenient usage when needed. I prefer mixing by holding the bag in my left hand with the top half closed while adding 10–12 ounces of water into the bag and gently squeezing and massaging the bag with my right hand. Make sure all the material in the corners of the bag is mixed. The proper viscosity should be close to pancake batter. If too much water is added you can thicken by adding more dental stone. A runny solution will set up. But you run the risk of eroding the detail with a quick flow of casting material when pouring. You would also need a good form in order to contain the dental stone and to allow a thick enough cast to prevent breakage. On the other hand, if your mixture is too thick, it may not retain the necessary detail. A thick solution may be thinned by adding more water or, once poured, assisted in settling by lightly agitating the surface with an instrument. Be careful not to penetrate the dental stone too deeply or you will disturb the detail you're trying to reproduce. When pouring the casting material, never start off by pouring directly onto the impression, the falling cast material could disturb the detail you're attempting to capture if it is allowed to drop directly onto it. Start by pouring adjacent to the impression and allow the casting material to flow into it. On slopes this should be initiated at the lower end so that gravity is not allowed to create enough velocity to erode the detail. If it is a deep impression, be sure to fill the entire depression and allow for a slight overflow. Valuable detail can be found on the edges as well as the bottom. Be sure to mix enough casting material to complete the impression; if you don't and you pour another mix adjoining the first one, a seam will be created along the surface you're trying to retain. Bodziac recommends 20 minutes for the cast to be left undisturbed in warm weather. Care should be used not to damage the cast while trying to dislodge it by gouging into the soil around its edges.

Pouring Casts under Water—Underwater casting can be accomplished by using a form which provides at least 2 inches of free space around the edges of the impression. The form should be high enough so that all sides are above the water. You should not attempt to drain water from or remove debris that is part of the impression. Lightly sprinkle or sift dental stone over the impression until you obtain approximately 1-inch thickness. Now prepare a normal mixture of dental stone which will be capable of forming a 2-inch thick layer over the entire area within the form. Add this mixture right over the already sifted cast making sure the entire area around the form is covered. This cast should be allowed to set for 1 hour. Impressions which are partially covered or have standing water may be cast in the normal manner. The dental stone will displace the water. Be sure to label the cast with the time, date, your initials, and other pertinent information. This information can be etched into the cast while it is still soft or written with a felt tip pen after it hardens. Once the cast has set up and you remove it from its original position, you should not

attempt to remove any soil or debris. It may feel hard when touched at this point but it is not completely dried. If the cast is to be examined by a lab technician, Bodziac (1995) suggests a 2-day drying period at room temperature and the cast should not be cleaned at all. This method assists in the preservation of detail. Never store casts in plastic bags. Plastic will not allow the release of moisture and restricts air flow. If casts are not to be used to explore minute or microscopic detail they can be cleaned in water with a soft tooth brush. Do not attempt to pick any pebbles or other debris loose from the cast. It may leave an unidentifiable pock mark for those who might inspect your work.

Casts in Snow—With the use of commercially made Snow Print Wax excellent casts can be made in the snow. Cost is approximately \$15 per can which is sufficient for making 2 full foot impressions. Snow Print Wax comes in an aerosol can and should be applied by spraying 3 generous coats into the impression, allowing a couple of minutes' drying time between coats. Remember to photograph the impression first, and once the first coat of Snow Print Wax is applied, photograph the print again, as the wax does an excellent job of outlining the edges and exposing detail. Be aware you are actually forming a trough made of wax to contain your dental stone. Be sure the entire impression is covered thoroughly. If there are any weak areas, the dental stone may leak through and deform the impression you're trying to cast by melting away the snow. On a windy day you may have to shield the impression to allow the aerosol of the Snow Print Wax to reach the lower indentations of the track and deposit the wax appropriately. Allow the Snow Print Wax to set up for a few minutes before you start mixing your dental stone. You may need to cover it with something such as a newspaper if it is exposed to direct sunlight. The dental stone should be mixed a little on the thick side and some snow should be substituted for water in order to reduce the temperature of the solution. When pouring, be sure not to allow an overflow outside of the Snow Print Wax. Cover the cast with paper and allow it to set for about an hour. When removing the cast be extra careful of the bottom surface; most of the detail is now retained by the wax which can be distorted by touch or melted if exposed to heat such as direct sunlight. Photograph the bottom of the cast at this time in order to maintain a record of the detail.

Conclusion

To become track conscious during investigations will encourage officers to sharpen their observation skills and discover conclusive evidence which is often overlooked. To teach them to track will enhance their reconstructive capabilities, allow them to follow suspects or lost persons, and will significantly aid K-9 handlers. Furthermore, it will increase officer safety by alerting them of someone's presence and allow them to determine a time frame of someone's passing. Trained trackers will create another significant deterrence for illegal activity.

Remember, the ground is not dirt, it is a bulletin board which is constantly being updated with the most recent events. Are you missing out on the news?

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