

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR DEALING  
WITH TIGER DEATH**



**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS**

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

**NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

## **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH TIGER DEATH**

1. **Title :** Standard Operating Procedure for dealing with tiger death
2. **Subject:** Tiger death/seizure of body parts
3. **Reference:** Advisories of NTCA/Project Tiger on the subject
4. **Purpose:** To ensure that the causative factors for tiger death are ascertained and taken to logical conclusion in the interest of tiger conservation.
5. **Short summary:** This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) provides the basic, minimum steps which are required to be taken at the field level (tiger reserve or elsewhere) for dealing with incidents of tiger mortality where the carcass is available or the body parts have been seized.
6. **Scope :** The SOP applies to all forest field formations including tiger reserves besides other areas where the incident has occurred.
7. **Responsibilities :** The Field Director would be responsible in the case of a tiger reserve. For a protected area (National Park / Wildlife Sanctuary), the concerned protected area manager would be responsible. In the case of other areas (revenue land/conservation reserve/community reserve/village/township) the Wildlife Warden, as per the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, or Divisional Forest Officer/ Deputy Conservator of Forests (under whose jurisdiction the area falls), would be responsible. The overall responsibility at the State level would rest with the Chief Wildlife Warden of the concerned State.
8. **Detailed instructions for the procedure to be followed in tiger death / seizure of body part / incident reported but no body part / carcass available but for corroborative field evidences**
  - (i) **At Scene of crime (SoC) / incident (responsibility : Range Officer, Assistant Director / Assistant Conservator of Forests, Deputy Director / Divisional Forest Officer)**
    - Reach the spot at the earliest, while informing the Field Director/Conservator/Chief Conservator of Forests having jurisdiction
    - Call for Investigation Team to the spot immediately. It should be mandatory for the Investigation Team to visit the SoC with Investigation Kit.
    - Cordon off the area with the help of rope/tape so that evidences are not disturbed
    - Take photographs of undisturbed site/video record from different angles for comparison with camera trap recordings (if done in the area). Photographs and video should have both close ups and from distance shots. Tapes may be placed to show distances of various physical objects found at SoC. Circumstantial observation at SoC should be minutely recorded.
    - Do not manipulate evidences
    - Divide the whole area into grids/circles for investigation and collection of evidences
    - Note down all finer details, date, time, GPS location, weather etc. Each step and action in the investigation process should be properly documented. It is highly recommended that

- Investigating Officers (IOs) should adopt the practice of writing daily case diaries as prescribed under Section 172 CrPC and submit it to next supervisory officer on daily basis.
- Requisite seizure/arrest memo should be prepared on the spot.
  - Wherever possible, two independent witnesses should be associated in search, seizures and arrests.
  - Survey the entire area. In case of suspected infighting of animals, look for trails of other injured animals also.
  - At least an area of about 500 meters encircling the Scene of Crime (SoC) may be searched thoroughly for evidence. In many cases it is seen that the animal moves some distance after it is hit by the bullet or it consumed poison. It is also common that the poachers remove the carcass to a nearby place for the sake of convenience in de - skinning the animal.
  - Rivers, lakes or other water bodies near by the SoC may also be inspected for collection of evidence as the poachers wash their body or the tools/weapons used in de-skinning the animal in the nearby rivers or water bodies. In some cases it is also noticed that the poachers enter the Tiger Reserve walking along the river banks.
  - Record foot prints of animals/human/tyre marks of vehicles if any by using plaster of Paris.
  - Search & collect all possible evidences carefully in original conditions, while preserving (if needed)
  - Search for evidences at ground level, eye level and above eye level (eg. hideout/machan/bullet marks on trees/freshly cut branches/traces of kindled fire on the floor/burnt matchsticks etc.). Samples to be collected from the spot may include: blood, body-fluids, tissues, hair/fur/teeth/bone pieces etc., gun powder, cloth fibre, paint chips, soil, cartridge case, bullets, foot prints, tyre marks, gutka wrapper, match sticks, food items, water sample from waterhole etc.
  - Tools recovered from the spot should be appropriately secured for finger prints, stains etc.
  - At times clothes worn by the accused are to be seized for analysis of blood stains, fluids etc. Nail cuttings may be taken if skinning is suspected.
  - Use transparent polythene bags for collecting these samples. The different articles should not be put in one bag. Each article needs to be put in one bag, separately.
  - Specimen seal to be sent to the expert, Court and the third copy to be put in official file for records.
  - Properly label and seal the samples collected. Assign each sample with exhibit number and brief description. Search the leads/trails/routes of escape/exit. Use sniffer dogs for leads (if available).
  - Record external evidence from carcass: wounds, bullet injury/marks, symptoms of poisoning etc., apart from body measurement (if possible). Injuries on the carcass should be properly measured and described / explained.
  - Go for Post Mortem (PM) if team available or otherwise keep the carcass in deep fridge. The PM has to be conducted during the day light.
  - While doing PM – collect sample of visceral content and tissue. Send visceral sample for forensic analysis to a reputed laboratory; send the tissue sample to the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) or a recognized institute within the country having domain expertise for DNA profiling and histo-pathological tests.
  - Finalize the PM report, and send the same to the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) under intimation to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). In case the PM report is under process, send a preliminary report to the Authority indicated immediately
  - Dispose of the body as per rules in the presence of the competent authority In case of seizures of body parts, the same may be required as evidence for prosecution in the courts of law and

hence in such situations do not dispose the same till the orders of the concerned court for disposal of the same are received.

- Issue a departmental preliminary offence report (POR)/FIR etc.
- Prepare a seizure memo and arrest memo with signature of accused (if present), witnesses etc. alongwith a site map, and a species identification certificate issued by a forest officer, not below the rank of an Assistant Conservator of Forests who would certify that he has identified the species on the basis of his training and experience in identifying the species in the field

**(ii) If suspect(s) is arrested:**

- Collect name, address, biometric details, photographs, height, weight etc. of suspect(s). During the search/ arrest/ interrogation, special care should be taken to seize/ get details of telephone nos. especially mobile phones, diaries including numbers scribbled on a piece of paper etc. These are crucial in tracing linkages. Persons arrested must be informed of the full particulars of the offence committed and the grounds for arrest. (Sec.50 Cr. P.C. & Art 22 (1) - Constitution of India)
- Prepare an arrest memo with ground/basis for arrest, citing reasons/basis for arrest
- Record statements of suspects(s) and/or witness(s) alongwith signatures under Section 50(8) of WPA. Ideally the statement should be recorded by ACF and above authorized by the State Govt. in this behalf (which is the requirement of WPA)
- The nominated person by the accused needs to be informed about the arrest and place where the accused has been lodged as per Section 50A of Cr. P.C and Supreme Court's order in *Joginder Singh's* case intimate
- Get conducted medical examination of arrested suspect(s) and produce before the Magistrate having jurisdiction within 24 hrs. or where forward and backward linkages are to be discovered move an application for remand. Always contact your Public Prosecutor in the local Court before hand in case you are trying to move such application so that the staff succeeds in getting the remand.
- In the case of a female offender, the medical examination has to be conducted only by a female registered medical practitioner.
- Take proper care of health and safety of accused during which he is in your remand. If the accused falls ill in depts. custody, he must be given medical aid or treatment admitted for in a hospital
- Based on interrogations and leads, thoroughly investigate the matter, establish backward and forward links, arrest other links involved based on statement given by the accused and information given by accused.
- The arrested person has a right to consult and be defended by a legal practitioner of his choice (Article 22 (1) of the Constitution of India).
- If the arrested person is poor, he can get free Legal Assistance from the Legal Services Authority (Art 39 A Constitution of India).
- Arrest should not be made on mere suspicion (145 Cr. P.C).
- The arrested person is entitled for compensation for groundless arrest / illegal detention.
- Though the statement given by the accused under Psycho - analysis test has little evidentiary value but in case of hardened criminals who don't cooperate in investigation, such tests may be recommended.
- Prepare a final report, Complaint as per Section 55 of WPA and file in the court of law

- Submit a final report with conclusion regarding cause of death to the Chief Wildlife Warden under intimation to the National Tiger Conservation Authority through the Field Director/Wildlife Warden/Conservator/Chief Conservator of Forests having jurisdiction
- A format of 'Arrest cum Personal Search Memo' is at **Annexure - 1**.

**(iii) Actions required at the Office of Field Director/Wildlife Warden/Conservator/Chief Conservator of Forests having jurisdiction/Control Room**

- Send a preliminary intimation to NTCA, Chief Wildlife Warden and Regional Deputy Director (RDD) of WCCB about the incident (SMS/ e-mail/telephonic call/fax etc.) immediately
- Constitute a Post Mortem team as per the NTCA protocol
- Send an investigation team/issue office order appointing the Investigating Officer (IO)
- Analyze the past and present intelligence reports for possible leads, cell phone records of history sheeters/suspects, check with neighbouring districts/divisions/States
- Deploy vehicular checking on barriers, inform local Police and issue red alert for checking vehicles at all exit points
- Check the photographs of carcass and compare with the National Repository of Camera Trap Photographs of Tigers (NRCTPT) in NTCA or the Phase-IV camera trap monitoring database or other research database to establish the identity/source area
- Issue an official version of the incident through the Chief Wildlife Warden
- Send the biometric details of suspect(s) to the NTCA for alerting other Field Directors/States/Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, and for establishing possible linkage with other crimes elsewhere
- Closely monitor/supervise the investigation, liaise with Police Department, Tiger Cell of the State (if available), Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and other investigation agencies
- Prepare a '**Final Report**' and submit to the Chief Wildlife Warden under intimation to the NTCA. Since all tiger deaths are treated as 'Poaching Cases' by the NTCA unless proven otherwise, justification for categorizing a tiger death as 'Natural' should be provided alongwith evidences
- All cases of poaching / seizure should be dealt in the courts of law having jurisdiction
- Monitor the case ongoing in the court of law till its final disposal by the Court
- After the Court's order, analyze the case for corrective actions (if needed) for further appeal
- If the decision of the Court is satisfactory, close the case and report to the Chief Wildlife Warden under intimation to the NTCA

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IMPORTANT POINTS FOR PREPARING A COMPLAINT

- Check the complaint/ whether relevant sections of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and other Acts have been invoked viz. Section 2, 9, 50 etc. of Wildlife (Protection) Act
- Statements under Section 50 (8) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 of witnesses and confession statements of suspect(s), (besides relevant sections of other laws)
- Site plan of the crime scene. The map of the compartment can also be useful in this regard.
- Status of site of the said offence – protected area/tiger reserve/forest division/other area, alongwith a copy of Government notification (in case of tiger reserve/protected area/reserved forest/protected forest)
- Post Mortem report
- Expert identification report, from institutions like Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun or Zoological Survey of India or reputed institution having domain expertise, regarding only portions/pieces/tissues, if seized
- Copy of the specimen seal affixed on the materials sealed
- CD of photographs/video recording done during investigation
- Copy of ownership papers of house/seized vehicle, identity proofs/cards etc.
- Copy of relevant section of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and/or any other Act
- Annexure containing list of documents and witnesses
- Forensic report of visceral contents, ballistic report (if applicable)
- A format of Complaint is at **Annexure - 2**.
- A list of documents to be attached with the Complaint and guidelines for filing complaint u/s 55 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 are at **Annexure - 3**.

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NOTE ON ACTIONS NEEDED FOR ANTIPOACHING/TIGER PROTECTION

- 1) In-depth thorough investigation on **EACH CASE** with a final report (should not be left unresolved/ open ended)
- 2) Investigation must examine forward/ backward linkages, trans border ramifications, cracking poacher-carrier-trader-consumer nexus/network
- 3) Close monitoring with the help of information technology/informer network on suspects/history sheeters
- 4) Examine Post Mortem (PM) and viscera reports
- 5) Intensive patrolling besides other antipoaching operations should be done in sensitive areas
- 6) Ensure multi-disciplinary approach and cooperation in case of investigation and intelligence sharing. Wildlife authorities should enter into MoU with IB/LIU for intelligence sharing, MoU with Paramilitary forces like BSF, CRPF, Assam Rifles, SSB etc. for joint patrolling in sensitive border areas, through the State Government and NTCA
- 7) Review of each case of mortality regularly at the highest appropriate level
- 8) Ensure review and coordination meeting with Judicial, Police and Revenue Officials on monthly basis
- 9) Each Tiger Reserve must have a highly trained team of officers/ Rangers for investigations of tiger related crime with all modern & scientific tools of forensic science. The State Forest Department, through the National Tiger Conservation Authority should organize training of such selected elite 'Investigating Teams', if required
- 10) After complete investigation, proper prosecution of cases in the appropriate courts of law should be ensured through regular monitoring of pending cases at the highest authority at the appropriate level
- 11) Prepare State/Reserve level of database/history sheet/dossier of each convicted criminals and suspects, while apprising the NTCA periodically. Personal Profiles (PPs) of all accused should be prepared. In case of habitual offenders History Sheets (HSs) may be prepared for surveillance. Copies of PPs and HSs may be sent to NTCA/WCCB as well for circulation and surveillance. A format of Personal Profile is at **Annexure - 4**
- 12) A separate note on the modus - operandi adopted by the criminals in each tiger poaching case may be recorded and circulated to NTCA/WCCB etc., which could be used in crime prevention strategy and also in the sensitization/ training courses for enforcement agencies.
- 13) Ensure that each Tiger Reserve has a Security Plan in place as per the guidelines issued by the NTCA
- 14) Ensure appropriate resources to deal with poaching threats and investigation
- 15) Since tiger is a highly endangered species falling in Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, weekly monitoring of tiger offence cases ongoing in courts of law should be done for expediting the same by the Field Director/Wildlife Warden/Conservator/Chief Conservator of Forests having jurisdiction
- 16) The Chief Wildlife Warden of the State should also review the progress of each tiger case ongoing in various courts of law every fortnight. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HOFF) of the State should also review the same on a monthly basis, while apprising the NTCA

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**ARREST CUM PERSONAL SEARCH MEMO**

(U/S 50 (3) of the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972)

1	Name of Office	
2	Case number, date and Sections of law	
3	Name, parentage and age of the accused arrested	
4	Present and permanent address of the arrested accused	
5	Identification marks of the arrested accused	
6	Reasons for arrest and whether without warrant or with warrant	
7	Place, date and time of arrest	
8	Documents/articles which found on the person of the accused	
9	Name and address of the independent witness who was present at the time of arrest	
10	Name and designation of the officer who effected the arrest	
11	Name of the relative/friend as declared by the arrestee who has been informed of his arrest	
12	Name of the local Police Station where the arrested person is to be kept in custody or other venue of custody of the accused	
13	Any other particulars including injuries on the person of the arrestee if any	
14	Signature of the arrested accused	
15	Signatures of independent witnesses.	



16	Name, designation and signature of the officer who effected the arrest	
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**COMPLAINT IN A WILDLIFE OFFENCE**  
(U/s 55 of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 r/w Sec 200 Cr.P.C)

1	Name of the Office	
2	Offence Report number and date	
3	Place, date and time of offence	
4	Sections of law	
5	Details of property seized	
6	Whose custody the seized properties are lying, if submitted in the court Property Index number	
7	Live specimens if any seized and subsequently rehabilitated in its natural habitat as per the court order	
8	Details of perishable or hazardous materials seized and subsequently destroyed as per the court order	
9	Details of fire arms, if any, seized and handed over to the Police for investigation and the Police FIR number	
10	Whether samples were sent for examination to Wildlife Institute of India, Zoological Survey of India, Botanical Survey of India or any other scientific experts for opinion? If so, details of the opinion received	
11	Name, designation and office address of the officer who filed	

	the Offence Report	
12	Name, designation and office address of the officer filing the complaint	
13	Name and address of the accused against whom the complaint is filed	
(i)	Accused in custody	
(ii)	Accused on bail	
(iii)	Accused not arrested/ absconding	
(iv)	Accused who are habitual/ repeated offenders, details of previous cases	
13	Name and address of the witnesses and facts to be proved by the evidence of each witness	
14	List of documents, if any, submitted along with the complaint	
15	Nature of offences and facts of the case/allegation made against each accused	

Name & designation of the complainant  
with office seal

To  
The Chief Judicial Magistrate/JMFC  
(Address)

**DOCUMENTS TO BE ATTACHED WITH THE COMPLAINT**

1. Forwarding/Covering letter addressed to the concerned magistrate praying for taking complaints u/s 55 of WL(P)Act,1972, r/w Section 200 of Indian Criminal Code 1973.
2. Sequential order of incidence preferably in chronological order along with the violation of relevant sections and section 51 under which sentence of the accused is prayed upon.
3. POR/FIR if any along with the information sent to the court
4. List of accused.
5. List of witness.
6. Site memo
7. Arrest memo
8. Medical report
9. Intimation to relatives
10. Seizure Memo
11. Statement of accused
12. Statement of Witness (u/s 50(8) of WLPA
13. Gazette Notification of R.F/NP/Sanctuary
14. PM Report/Expert Opinion
15. Wildlife Census Report (if any)
16. Appointment letter of I.O.
17. Posting order of staff.
18. Log book of vehicle (if used)

19. Any other relevant document having bearing on the incidence.

**Guidelines for filing complaint u/s 55 of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972:**

The officer filing the complaint should ensure that he is authorized to file the complaint as envisaged under section 55 of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.

If the accused is in judicial custody, the complaint is to be filed within 60 days from the date of arrest of the accused. In case of more than one accused, the 60 days period starts from the date of arrest of the first accused.

The complaint should preferably be typed, or neatly written without any over writings, alterations etc.

Full details of all the accused and the role played by them individually, offences committed by each of them with relevant sections of the Act are to be narrated in the complaint. Present status of the accused like on bail, in judicial custody, absconding etc is also to be mentioned in the complaint. In the case of accused in judicial custody, name of the jail in which they are lodged is to be mentioned. In case of absconding accused, efforts taken by the Investigating Officer to apprehend them including action under Section 82 & 83 CrPC, are also to be narrated in the complaint.

The complaint should be specific and without any ambiguity. Facts not supported by evidence should not be mentioned in the complaint. Similarly, accused against which sufficient evidence is not there should not be named in the complaint. Facts and circumstances connected to the case should be narrated in simple language, sequentially. List of witnesses, documents and material objects should be submitted along with the complaint. The authorized officer who files the complaint should sign all the pages of the complaint and annexures if any.

Statements of all the witnesses, including the official witnesses, recorded u/s 50(8) of Wildlife (Protection) Act as per the list of witnesses, confessional statements of the accused and statements recorded by the Magistrate u/s 164 Cr.PC if any should be filed along with the complaint.

All documents in original or certified copy, as per the list of documents enclosed, should be submitted along with the complaint. A comprehensive list of documents which are to be compulsorily submitted along with the complaint is given below.

PERSONAL PROFILE

1. Name, aliases and Father's name:

2. Address:



3. Personal Description:

Date of Birth / age:

Hair:

Place of Birth:

Eyes:

Height:

Sex:

Weight:

Complexion:

Build :

Language:

Citizenship:

Scars/ Identification Marks: ---

Remarks: ---

4. Important personal information:

a. Telephone/ mobile No(s). :

b. E – Mail Address:

c. Passport No. :

d. Bank Account No(s). :

e. Aadhar Card No. :

f. Voter Id Card No.:

g. Ration Card No.:

h. Finger print records:

5. Current/ previous occupation(s) and list of properties owned:

6. Associates / relatives/ family members and their occupation:

7. Crime history and brief facts of the wildlife case(s) against him:
8. Crime Modus Operandi:
9. Areas of his current activities/ places of usual movements:
10. Previous Acquittals / Convictions:
11. If declared absconder, details:
12. Any other remarks:

(SOP prepared with inputs from WCCB, Mr Saurabh Sharma, Legal Expert, Field Officers of Tiger Reserves)