

New York State Photo Identification Guidelines

1. Introduction:

There are various ways to conduct a fair and reliable identification procedure. The guidelines below outline how a neutral, fair and reliable identification procedure can be conducted by the case investigator or by an administrator unfamiliar with the case. These guidelines are intended to allow for the individual needs of the 62 counties and 551 police departments in New York State. It is expected that the guidelines will improve with time as practical experience and knowledge is gained.

2. Definitions:

- a. **Photo Array:** A collection of photographs that are shown to a witness to determine if the witness can recognize a person involved with the crime.
- b. **Suspect:** Person police believe to have committed the crime.
- c. **Filler:** A person whose photograph is included in a photo array, but is not a suspect in the crime.
- a. **Administrator of the Photo Array:** The person who is conducting the identification procedure. Depending on the jurisdiction and the circumstances of the case, a photo array administrator may be the investigator assigned to the case or a “blind” administrator. The procedures described in this document apply equally to both types of administrators. The types of administrators are:
 - i. **The Investigator Assigned to the Case:** The administrator of the photo array is often an investigator working on the case. This can often provide significant case information as that investigator has knowledge about the case and witness, which will be helpful in evaluating the witness’ identification or lack of identification. The presence of the case investigator can also provide some assurance to a nervous or reluctant witness. It is crucial that the investigator remain neutral throughout the identification procedure.
 - ii. **A “Blind” Administrator:** A “blind” administrator is someone who does not know which person in the photo array is the suspect. An identification procedure is considered “double” blind when it is run by a “blind” administrator. A significant benefit of the double blind procedure is its ability to negate the defense contention that the administrator guided or cued the witness into picking the suspect. However, in cases with multiple witnesses, the blind administrator may quickly learn or assume the identity of the suspect, if the suspect is selected by one or more witnesses. Therefore, it is crucial that the blind administrator remain neutral throughout the identification procedure. The requirement of a “blind” administrator is a significant strain on resources as it increases the personnel requirements for

New York State Photo Identification Guidelines

investigating a case. This can be particularly burdensome in jurisdictions with staffing shortages. A blind administrator will be less likely to remember individual identification procedures and may rely solely on documentation when called to testify.

- iii. **Supervisor:** In some jurisdictions, a supervisor participates in various ways in the identification procedure. The protocols outlined here apply equally to the supervisor.

3. How to Invite the Witness to Come In for an Identification Procedure:

- a. **No Known Suspect:** The investigator should call the witness and invite him or her in to view photos to possibly identify the perpetrator of the crime.
- b. **Suspect Is Known:** When a suspect is known and the investigator calls a witness to arrange for the viewing of a photo array, either at the precinct, the witness' home or the witness' place of business, the officer should simply advise the witness that they intend to conduct an identification procedure and should not say anything about the suspect. For example, the detective should say to the witness: "We'd like you to come in to view a photo array in connection with the crime committed on *(date and location)*."
 - i. **Officer Should Remain Neutral:** The officer should give no opinions about the witness' ability to make an identification.
 - ii. **What To Avoid Saying:** Unless the witness specifically asks the investigator if someone is in custody, the witness should not be informed that an arrest has been made and that the police have a suspect that the witness will be viewing. The detective should not say: "We have caught the guy. He had your credit card and now we want you to identify him."

4. Showing Photographs When There is No Suspect:

- a. When there is no known suspect, multiple photographs can be shown to a witness to see if a suspect can be identified.
- b. If possible, a computer program should select the photos based on the description of the perpetrator as provided by the witness.
- c. The investigator should record the source of the photographs and, if possible, how many photographs were shown to the witness. However, current computer systems may not have the capacity to record all the photographs shown to the witness.

New York State Photo Identification Guidelines

5. Arranging a Photo Array for a Known Suspect:

- a. **Computer Generated Arrays:** Where possible, computer-generated photo arrays should be used. E-Justice provides an automatic photo array system, which eliminates the claim that the investigator assembled an intentionally biased array. The computer can generate a photo array based on the characteristics of the suspect.
- b. **Fillers:** The fillers should be similar in appearance to the suspect in the lineup. Similarities should include gender, clothing, facial hair, race, age, height, extraordinary physical features, or other distinctive characteristics. Fillers should not be known to the witness. At least 5 fillers should be used, in addition to the suspect. Only one suspect should be in each array. If there is more than one suspect, then different fillers should be used in separate arrays for each suspect.
- c. **Photo Quality:** Photo quality, color and size should be consistent. Some photo array programs can create similar color backgrounds for all of the pictures. However, in some instances it may not be possible for the photographs to be consistent. The witness should be instructed to ignore any differences in the photographs, such as background, markings, or lighting.
- d. **Individual Characteristics:** If individual characteristics are seen in the photo, (for example: clothing, facial hair, race, skin color, age, gender, height, extraordinary physical features, etc.), then these individual characteristics should be as consistent for all photos as possible.
- e. **Document Changes to the Photos:** Document any alterations made to photographs in the array, for example, changing the background color of the photo to make them look more uniform.
- f. **Multiple Suspects:** If there are multiple suspects, then each suspect must be placed in a separate photo array. Different fillers should be used for each photo array.

6. Instructions to Witnesses Viewing a Photo Array:

Instructions should be given to the witness *before* the identification procedure begins and not while the witness is in the process of viewing the photo array. This will alleviate confusion and minimize any allegations that the investigator provided cues to the witness.

- a. **Written Instructions:** Consideration should be given to providing written instructions to the witness. The instructions can be in various languages. The witness can sign the instructions after reading them, or after having the administrator read the instructions to the witness.

New York State Photo Identification Guidelines

- b. **No Comment by the Administrator Until the Identification Procedure Is Completed and Documented:** Until the information about the identification procedure is documented, the administrator should not comment about the procedure or the next steps in the case. Stray comments that potentially focus a witness' attention to one photo over the others, such as: "Are you sure you got a good look at number 2?" or "Can you take another look at number 6?" should not be made before, during or after the procedure.
- c. **Instructions Given *Before* the Viewing of the Array:** Before the identification procedure begins, the administrator should tell the witness what questions will be asked during the identification procedure.
 - i. **Setting the Context:** The investigator should tell the witness that the witness is being asked to view the photo array to see if the witness recognizes anyone involved with the crime on (*date*) at (*location*).
 - ii. **Instructions to the Witness to Avoid Any Influence by the Administrator:** These instructions let the witness know not to look to the administrator for assistance in either making a selection or ratifying an identification. They also address the possibility of a witness feeling any self-imposed or undue pressure to make an identification. The instructions are as follows:
 - 1. The person who committed the crime may or may not be present.
 - 2. I was not present at the crime, so do not assume I know who the perpetrator is.
 - 3. I want you to focus on the photo array and not to look to me or anyone else in the room for guidance during the procedure.
 - iii. **Instructions to the Witness About the Quality of the Photographs:**
 - 1. Individuals presented in the photo array may not appear exactly as they did on the date of the incident because features such as head and facial hair are subject to change.
 - 2. Photographs may not always depict the true complexion of a person; it may be lighter or darker than shown in the photo.
 - 3. Pay no attention to any markings that may appear on the photos, or any other differences in the type or style of the photographs.
- d. **Questions Asked *After* Viewing the Photographs:**
 - i. Do you recognize anyone?
 - ii. If so, what number photograph do you recognize?
 - iii. From where do you recognize the person?

New York State Photo Identification Guidelines

7. Multiple Witnesses Viewing a Photo Array:

- a. **Witnesses Cannot Speak to Other Witnesses About the Identification Procedures:** If there are multiple witnesses who will be viewing a photo array, they should be told not speak to each other about the identification procedure before, during and after the process. There are a number of ways to make sure the witnesses do not speak with each other about the identification. The following are some suggestions that will diminish the opportunities that witnesses have of talking to each other before or immediately after the identification procedure.
 - i. They can be kept in separate rooms before and after the identification, or
 - ii. An officer can sit with the witnesses to ensure they do not speak about the process or the case, or
 - iii. The witnesses can be allowed to leave immediately after participating in the procedure, or
 - iv. The witnesses can be taken to separate areas after the identification procedure for further interviews with detectives.
- b. **Showing the Same Array to Multiple Witnesses:** The witnesses must view the photo arrays separately. One photo array per suspect can be shown to multiple witnesses, provided there are no markings on the photo array. Duplicate copies of one photo array can be made for each witness, particularly if the witness will be signing the form.

8. Procedures for Viewing a Photo Array:

- a. **Remain Neutral:** To protect the integrity of the identification procedure, the administrator must remain neutral throughout the procedure so as not to, even inadvertently, suggest a particular photograph to the witness. Comments that could potentially focus a witness' attention to one photograph over the others, such as: "Are you sure you got a good look at number 2?" or "Can you take another look at number 6?" should not be made before, during or after the procedure. If a witness seeks guidance about whom to pick, the administrator should simply direct the witness to focus on the array.
- b. **Instructions *Before* the Procedure Begins:** The witness should be instructed on how to view the array *before* being handed the array. Witnesses should be told to take whatever time they want when they view the array.
- c. **Cover the Photo Array:** The photo array should be handed to the witness in an envelope, or in a folder, so neither the witness nor the officer can see the

New York State Photo Identification Guidelines

pictures. This will avoid the possibility of any inadvertent influence by the administrator.

- d. **Administrator Not in the Witness' Line of Sight, Where Practicable:** After being instructed about how to view the array, where practicable, the witness should view the array in such a way that the witness cannot see the administrator at the time the witness is viewing the photos in the array. Where practicable, the administrator should be positioned to see and hear what the witness says as the witness views the array, but should remain out of the witness' line of sight while the witness views the array. This will avoid claims of inadvertent cueing by the administrator and it reduces any inclination by the witness to look at the administrator for guidance. The administrator should neither crowd the witnesses nor interrupt the concentration of the witness. The administrator should never tell the witness to look at a particular photograph.
- e. **Location of Identification Procedure:** The witness should view the photo array in a location away from things that could influence the witness' identification, for example, other evidence in the case, wanted posters about the case and other information about the suspect, e.g., the suspect's rap sheet. A photo array can be viewed away from a police facility, for example, at the witness' home or place of business.

9. Documenting the Identification Procedure:

- a. **Training, Protocols and Forms:** Standardized instructions, questions, protocols and forms should be developed for each department or jurisdiction. All investigators who conduct the identification procedures should be trained on the protocols.
- b. **Preserving the Photo Array:** The photo array should be preserved in the original form it was shown to each witness. Standardized procedures should be developed for preserving the witness' identification procedure, for example, when an identification is made, the witness could sign the photo array or a form and indicate the number chosen. A copy of the photo array used should be given to the Assistant District Attorney as soon as practicable.
- c. **Document the Photo Array Procedure:** Document all the people involved in the identification procedure, where it took place, and the date and time it took place.
- d. **Recording the Witness' Statement and Physical Reaction:** Any comments made by the witness at the time of the identification should be written down. The documentation should not merely state: "positive" or "negative" results. The witness' words uttered during and after the identification procedure should

New York State Photo Identification Guidelines

be recorded, for example, “It is definitely #1.” “If I had to pick, it would be #2.”, “I’m not sure, but it might be #3.” All three of these comments, could be listed by an officer as a positive identification, but that may be misleading. The witness’ words and physical reactions should be recorded.

- i. **Witness’ Statements Rather Than “Confidence Statements”:** “Confidence statements” where the investigator requires a witness to provide a numeric value or a certainty level to their identification, e.g., “On a scale of 1 – 10, how sure are you?” or “Are you 100% sure?” can be problematic. Most witnesses do not spontaneously offer a numeric confidence level at the time of viewing the array. Forcing a witness to attach a numeric value or level to their identification, or lack of identification, could lead to an artificial statement and may prove to be misleading. The better practice is for the administrator to memorialize each of the witness’ statements, comments or reactions made throughout the identification procedure.
- e. **Signing the Photo Array or a Form:** To record the result of the photo array, the witness can sign and date the photograph that was selected or sign an identification form. If there are multiple witnesses, a fresh, unsigned photo array must be shown to subsequent witnesses.

10. Speaking with the Witness after the Identification Procedure:

- a. **Record the Witness’ Statements Before Discussing Next Steps:** The administrator, or another appropriate person, should record the statements of the witness regarding the identification procedure *before* talking with the witness about next steps.
- b. **Discussing Next Steps:** Once the identification procedure is concluded and documented, the administrator can talk to the witness about how the case will proceed or what the next steps in the case may be, for example, we will continue to search for the perpetrator (where there has been no identification), or we will contact you about meeting with the Assistant District Attorney next week, etc. After the identification procedure, witnesses frequently have questions about the case. It is entirely appropriate for the investigator to accurately answer questions about the case, including whether an arrest will be made.
- c. **Do Not Comment on the Identification:** The administrator should never comment on or make gestures about the identification itself by saying things such as: “Great job.” or “We knew you would recognize him.” or even nodding in agreement. Such comments or reactions may subsequently affect the witness’ confidence in his or her identification. The administrator should remain neutral about the identification when speaking with the witness.

New York State Photo Identification Guidelines

- d. **Do Not Discuss the Identification with Other Witnesses:** The witness should be told not to discuss what was said, seen or done during the identification procedure with other witnesses, nor should the administrator speak to the witness about other identification procedures conducted.

11. Training:

Proper training is a critical component of conducting a fair and reliable identification procedure. Investigators who will be participating in the identification procedures in any way by picking up the witnesses, creating the photo array or instructing the witnesses, should be trained in these procedures.

Lineup Form Information Sheet

Complaint Report # _____ Crime Committed: _____

Crime Date & Location: _____

Lineup Date _____

Location of Lineup: _____

Witness' Name: _____

Was Witness Transported? Yes: _____ No: _____

Transporting Officer _____ Rank _____ Command _____ ID # _____

Case Officer _____ Rank _____ Command _____ ID # _____

Suspect's Name _____ DOB _____

Lineup Administrator _____ Rank _____ Command _____ ID # _____

Security Officer _____ Rank _____ Command _____ ID # _____

Supervisor Present? If so, name: _____ Rank _____ Command _____ ID # _____

Assistant District Attorney Present? Yes: _____ No: _____

Name of ADA _____ Telephone # _____

Interpreter Present? If so, name: _____

Who selected the suspect's position? _____

Lineup Members

Name	Number Held	Position	Age	Height	Weight
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

Lineup Form Defense Counsel Sheet

Suspect's Attorney Present? Yes: _____ No _____

Defense Attorney: _____ Telephone # _____

- The Defense Attorney was instructed **not** to speak while in the viewing room with the witness. Yes: _____ No: _____
- If Defense Attorney makes requests about the lineup, record the request and whether the request was agreed to or refused :

1.Request: _____

Agreed _____ Refused _____

Reason for Refusal _____

2.Request: _____

Agreed _____ Refused _____

Reason for Refusal _____

3.Request: _____

Agreed _____ Refused _____

Reason for Refusal _____

Lineup Form

Instructions to the Witness

Witness Name: _____

LINEUP ADMINISTRATOR MUST READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE WITNESS

- As part of our on-going investigation into a crime that occurred at _____ (*location*) on _____ (*date*) you are about to view a lineup.
- You will look through a one-way mirror and see six people in the lineup. They will not be able to see you.
- Each person on the other side of the mirror will be holding a card with a number on it.
- Take whatever time you want to view the lineup.
- The perpetrator may or may not be among the six people in the lineup.
- I was not present at the crime, so do not assume I know who the perpetrator is.
- Do not look to me or anyone else in the room for guidance during the procedure.
- Individuals presented in the lineup may not appear exactly as they did on the date of the incident because features, such as head and facial hair, are subject to change.
- After you have had an opportunity to view the lineup I will ask you the following three questions:
 1. Do you recognize anyone?
 2. If you do, what is the number of the person you recognize?
 3. From where do you recognize the person?
- After the identification procedure is concluded, do not discuss with other witnesses what was said or observed during this identification procedure.

WITNESS MUST INITIAL:

The above instructions have been read to me: _____ (initials). Date: _____

Lineup Form

Running the Lineup and Results

Instructions for Administrator When Entering the Viewing Room:

- Remain neutral. Do not comment on the identification before, during or after the identification procedure.
- Take a photograph of the lineup composition. Preserve the photograph and have the witness sign the photo, if possible.
- Take the witness into the viewing room.
- So as not to distract the witness, do not comment during the identification procedure.
- Introduce by name all individuals present in the viewing room to the witness.
- Tell the witness when the identification procedure will begin, e.g., “You will now look through the one way mirror.”
- If there is a need to have a lineup member speak, move, change clothing, or some other activity, then all the lineup members must do the same activity.
- While the witness is viewing the lineup, you should stand out of the witness’ line of sight, while still being in a position to observe the witness.

Record the words and gestures made by the witness *during* the viewing:

AFTER THE WITNESS HAS VIEWED THE ARRAY ASK THESE QUESTIONS:
--

- Did you recognize anyone in the line-up: Yes _____ No _____
- What is the number of the person that you recognize? _____
- From where do you recognize that person? _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Witness Signature: _____

FINAL INSTRUCTION TO WITNESS: *Do not discuss with any other witness what you observed or said during this identification procedure.*

Photo Array Form

CASE INFORMATION AND WITNESS INSTRUCTIONS

Complaint Report # _____ Crime Date & Location: _____

Photo Array Date _____ Time _____ Location _____

Crime Committed: _____ Witness' Name _____

Was Witness Transported? Yes: _____ No: _____

Transporting Officer: _____

Rank _____ Command _____ ID # _____

Photo Array Administrator: _____

Rank _____ Command _____ ID # _____

READ THE FOLLOWING TO THE WITNESS *PRIOR* TO SHOWING THE PHOTO ARRAY

- As part of the ongoing investigation into a crime that occurred on (*date*) at (*location*) you are about to view a photo array.
- It consists of six photographs of individuals. Each photograph has a number underneath the photograph.
- Take whatever time you want to view the photo array.
- The perpetrator may or may not be among the pictures.
- I was not present at the crime, so do not assume that I know who the perpetrator is.
- Do not look to me or anyone else in the room for guidance during the procedure.
- Individuals presented in the photo array may not appear exactly as they did on the date of the incident because features, such as head and facial hair, are subject to change.
- Photographs may not always depict the true complexion of a person; it may be lighter or darker than shown in the photo.
- Pay no attention to any markings that may appear on the photos, or any other difference in the type or style of the photographs.
- Do not discuss with other witnesses what you see, say or do during this procedure.
- After you have had an opportunity to view the photo array I will ask you the following three questions:

1. Do you recognize anyone?
2. If you do, what is the number of the person you recognize?
3. From where do you recognize the person?

WITNESS MUST INITIAL:

The above instructions have been read to me: _____ (initials) Date: _____

Photo Array Form

SHOWING THE PHOTO ARRAY

Witness Name _____

Administrator _____

Interpreter, if any: _____

Instructions to the Administrator Showing the Photo Array:

- Remain neutral. Do not comment on the identification before, during or after the identification procedure.
- Provide the photo array in an envelope or folder when handing it to the witness.
- Stand out of the witness' line of sight, where practical, but still observe the witness as the witness views the photo array.
- So as not to distract the witness, do not comment during the identification procedure.

Record words and gestures of the witness:

AFTER THE WITNESS HAS VIEWED THE ARRAY, ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

Did you recognize anyone in the photo array? Yes _____ No _____

If so, what is the number of the person that you recognize? _____

From where do you recognize that person? _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Witness Signature: _____

FINAL INSTRUCTION TO WITNESS: *Do not discuss with any other witness what you observed or said during this identification procedure.*

Photo Array Form

Information Sheet

THIS PAGE OF THE FORM MUST NOT BE SHOWN TO THE WITNESS

ADMINISTRATOR TO FILL OUT THE AREA BELOW

The photo array:

- The original photo array **MUST** be preserved.
- Attach a copy of the photo array to this form and provide the information below, if available.

Position	Name	NYSID #	Date of Photo
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Suspect's Name: _____ DOB: _____

Suspect's Position in the Photo Array: _____

Was Any Photo Altered? Yes: _____ No: _____

If yes, which photo? _____

Describe alteration: _____

Comments:

Date: _____

Signature of Administrator

New York State Lineup Guidelines

1. Introduction:

There are various ways to conduct a fair and reliable identification procedure. The guidelines below outline how a neutral, fair and reliable identification procedure can be conducted by the case investigator or by an administrator unfamiliar with the case. These guidelines are intended to allow for the individual needs of the 62 counties and 551 police departments in New York State. It is expected that the guidelines will improve with time as practical experience and knowledge is gained.

2. Definitions:

- a. **Lineup:** A collection of individuals, either sitting or standing in a row, who are shown to a witness to determine if the witness can recognize a person involved with the crime.
- b. **Suspect:** Person police believe to have committed the crime.
- c. **Filler:** A person who is in the lineup, but is not a suspect in the crime.
- d. **Lineup Members:** The people who make up the lineup; both the suspect and the fillers.
- e. **Lineup Room:** Room where the fillers and suspect are arranged for viewing by the witness.
- f. **Viewing Room:** Room from which the witness, the administrator, and on some occasions the defense attorney, view the lineup.
- g. **Security Officer:** The person monitoring the fillers and the suspect in the lineup room.
- h. **Administrator of the Lineup:** The person who is conducting the identification procedure. Depending on the jurisdiction and the circumstances of the case, a lineup administrator may be the investigator assigned to the case or a “blind” administrator. The procedures described in this document apply equally to both types of administrators. The types of administrators are:
 - i. **The Investigator Assigned to the Case:** The administrator of the lineup is often an investigator working on the case. This can often provide significant case information as the investigator has knowledge about the case and the witness, which will be helpful in evaluating the witness’ identification or lack of identification. The presence of the case investigator can also provide some assurance to a nervous or reluctant witness. It is crucial that the investigator remain neutral throughout the identification procedure.
 - ii. **A “Blind” Administrator:** A “blind” administrator is someone who does not know which person in the lineup is the suspect. An identification procedure is considered “double” blind when it is run by a “blind” administrator. A

New York State Lineup Guidelines

significant benefit of the double blind procedure is its ability to negate the defense contention that the administrator in some unspecified way guided or cued the witness into picking the suspect. However, in cases with multiple witnesses, the blind administrator may quickly learn the identity of the suspect, if the suspect is selected by one or more of the witnesses. Therefore, it is crucial that the blind administrator remain neutral throughout the identification procedure. In some instances, the blind administrator may have previously known the suspect or some of the fillers. The requirement of a “blind” administrator is a significant strain on resources as it increases the personnel requirements for investigating a case. This can be particularly burdensome in jurisdictions with staffing shortages. A blind administrator will be less likely to remember individual identification procedures and may rely solely on documentation when called to testify.

- iii. **Assistant District Attorney (ADA):** In some jurisdictions, an ADA and/or the investigator is in the viewing room with the witness and asks the witness questions. If the ADA does not know who the suspect is in the lineup, then this is the same as a “double blind” identification procedure. The protocols outlined here apply equally to the ADA.
- iv. **Supervisor:** In some jurisdictions, a supervisor participates in various stages of the identification procedure. The protocols outlined here apply equally to the supervisor.

3. How to Invite the Witness to Come In for a Lineup:

- a. When an investigator calls a witness to arrange for the witness to view a lineup, the officer should simply ask the witness to come in for the identification procedure and should not say anything about the suspect. For example, the officer should say to the witness: “We’d like you to come in to view a lineup in connection with the crime you witnessed on (date and location).”
 - i. **Officer Should Remain Neutral:** The officer should give no opinions about the witness’ ability to make an identification.
 - ii. **What To Avoid Saying:** Unless the witness specifically asks the investigator if someone is in custody, the witness should not be informed that an arrest has been made and that the police have a suspect that the witness will be viewing. The detective should not say: “We have caught the guy, he had your credit card, and now we want you to identify him.”

4. Fillers for Lineup:

- a. **Number of Fillers:** Where practicable, there should be 5 fillers, in addition to

New York State Lineup Guidelines

the suspect, but in no case should there be less than 4 fillers. There should be only one suspect per line up.

- b. **Similarities of Fillers:** The fillers should be similar in appearance to the suspect in the lineup. Similarities should include gender, clothing, facial hair, race, age, height, extraordinary physical features, or other distinctive characteristics. Fillers should not be known to the witness.
- c. **Fillers Seated:** All members of the lineup should be seated, if necessary, to eliminate any extreme variations in height.
- d. **Suspect Picks Position:** The suspect should be allowed to pick his own position in the lineup. If there was an identification based on a photo array prior to the lineup, the suspect should not be placed in the same numerical position in the line up as he appeared in the array (unless the suspect insists on that number).
- e. **Requests from Defense Counsel:** Document requests made by the defense counsel and whether they were granted, and if not, why not. Reasonable requests from defense counsel should be honored and documented. Any defense request for a change in the lineup that is not, or cannot be, honored must also be documented.
- f. **Defense Attorney Cannot Speak in Viewing Room:** The defense attorney must be instructed not to speak in the viewing room when the witness is present.
- g. **If Asked, All Lineup Members Must Speak, Move or Change Clothing:** If any lineup member is asked to speak, move or change clothing, all members must do so. Everything the lineup members are asked to do should be documented. If a witness' request of the lineup members is not feasible and cannot be accommodated, the request should also be documented.
- h. **Fillers Must Remain Neutral:** The fillers must be instructed not to speak with each other or make any unnecessary gestures, but should remain still, hold the placard and look forward, unless instructed otherwise by the security officer in the room with the fillers.
- i. **Photo Array Fillers:** Fillers from a photo array previously viewed by the witness should not be used as fillers in the lineup.

5. Instructions to Witnesses:

- a. **Written Instructions for the Witness:** Consideration should be given to providing written instructions to the witness. The instructions can be in various languages. The witness can sign the instructions after reading them, or after having the administrator read the instructions to the witness.
- b. **No Comment by the Administrator Until the Identification Procedure is Completed and Documented:** Until the information about the identification

New York State Lineup Guidelines

procedure is documented, the investigator should not comment about the procedure or the next steps in the case. Stray comments that could potentially focus a witness' attention to one lineup member over the others, such as: "Are you sure you got a good look at number 2?" or "Can you take another look at number 6?" should not be made before, during or after the procedure.

- c. **Give Instructions *Before* the Identification Procedure:** Instructions should be given to the witness *before* the identification procedure begins and not while the witness is in the process of viewing the lineup. This will alleviate confusion and minimize claims that the investigator somehow, even inadvertently, provided cues to the witness. Witnesses should also be told to take whatever time they will need when they view the lineup.
 - i. **Setting the Context:** The administrator should tell the witness that the witness is being asked to view the lineup to see if the witness recognizes anyone involved with the crime on (*date*) at (*location*).
 - ii. **Instructions to the Witness to Avoid Any Influence by the Administrator:** These instructions let the witness know not to look to the administrator for assistance in either making a selection or ratifying an identification. They also address the possibility of a witness feeling any self-imposed or undue pressure to make an identification. The instructions are as follows:
 - (1) The person who committed the crime may or may not be present.
 - (2) I was not present at the crime, so do not assume I know who the perpetrator is.
 - (3) I want you to focus on the lineup and not to look to me or anyone else in the room for guidance during the procedure.
 - iii. **Lineup Members Speaking, Moving or Changing Clothing:** Consideration should be given to telling the witness that the lineup members can be asked to speak, move or change clothing, if necessary. However, if one lineup member is asked to do so, then all the lineup members will be asked to do the same.
6. **Questions Asked *After* an Opportunity to View the Lineup:**
 - i. Do you recognize anyone?
 - ii. If so, what is the number of the person that you recognize?
 - iii. From where do you recognize the person?

7. Multiple Witnesses:

- a. **Witnesses Cannot Speak to Other Witnesses About the Identification Procedures:** If there are multiple witnesses who will be viewing a lineup, they

New York State Lineup Guidelines

should be told not to speak to each other about the identification procedure before, during and after the process. There are a number of ways to make sure the witnesses do not speak with each other about the identification. The following are some suggestions that will diminish the opportunities that the witnesses have of talking to each other before or immediately after the identification procedure.

- i. They can be kept in separate rooms before and after the identification, or
 - ii. An officer can sit with the witnesses to ensure they do not speak about the process or the case, or
 - iii. The witnesses can be allowed to leave immediately after participating in the procedure, or
 - iv. The witnesses can be taken to separate areas after the identification procedure for further interviews with detectives.
- b. **One viewing of the Photo Array:** In those jurisdictions that regularly use lineup procedures, consideration should be given to running lineups after the first witness makes an identification from a photo array. Where practicable, the additional witnesses can view only the lineup and not the photo array.

8. Procedures for Viewing a Lineup:

- a. **Security:** Safety and security for all civilians, suspects and law enforcement personnel must be ensured during any lineup procedure. Where necessary, the confidentiality of the witness' identity must be protected.
- b. **Remain Neutral:** To protect the integrity of the identification procedure, the administrator must remain neutral throughout the procedure so as not to, even inadvertently, suggest a particular lineup member to the witness. Comments that could potentially focus a witness' attention to one lineup member over the others, such as: "Are you sure you got a good look at number 2?" or "Can you take another look at number 6?" should not be made before, during or after the procedure. If a witness seeks guidance about whom to pick, the administrator should refocus the witness on the lineup.
- c. **Administrator Standing Away from the Witness:** The administrator of the lineup should stand away from the witness during the lineup, in a neutral manner, while still being in a position to observe the witness. The key is for the administrator to stand outside the witness' line of sight while the witness is viewing the lineup. This will reduce any inclination by the witness to look at the administrator for guidance. When coupled with the type of instructions discussed above, this procedure will create a neutral environment, free of inadvertent cues

New York State Lineup Guidelines

from the administrator.

- d. **Security Officer with the Suspect and the Fillers:** The security officer who is monitoring the suspect and fillers in the lineup room should remain out of view of the witness. This will eliminate the potential for any claims of inadvertent suggestions by the security officer and it also removes the potential for distracting the witness as the lineup is being viewed. However, if the witness needs a lineup member to speak, move, or change clothing, then the security officer in the room with the lineup members may have to be seen.
- e. **Location of Lineup:**
 - i. **Neutral Location:** The witness should view the lineup in a room or area away from things that could influence the witness' identification, for example, other evidence in the case, wanted posters, sketches and other information about the suspect.
 - ii. **Central Location:** If identification procedures are conducted in a central location, away from the arrest precinct, a trained, neutral administrator, with no knowledge of the investigation may be available to conduct the identification procedure. A central location can be designed for a double blind identification procedure. However, the ability to construct and outfit a central location is a strain on resources and not available in the vast majority of jurisdictions.

9. Documenting the Lineup on the Lineup Form:

- a. **Identification Procedure Protocols and Forms:** Standard instruction sheets, questions, protocols and forms should be developed. All investigators involved in the identification procedure should be trained on the protocols.
- b. **Photographing the Lineup:** Every time a witness views a lineup, the lineup should be preserved by photograph. The witness should sign the photograph, if one is available at that time, to verify that it is the lineup that he or she viewed.
- c. **Documenting What the Suspect and Fillers Were Asked To Do:** Anything the lineup members are asked to do (e.g., speak, move, or change clothing) must be documented.
- d. **Document All People Present for the Lineup:** Document all people in the viewing room with the witness and the lineup room with the suspect.
- e. **Recording the Witness' Statement and Physical Reaction:** Comments made by the witness during the identification should be written down word for word. The documentation should not merely state: "positive" or "negative" nor "hit" or "no hit" as the results. The witness' words uttered during and after the identification procedure should be recorded, for example, "It is definitely #1.",

New York State Lineup Guidelines

“If I had to pick, it would be #2.”, “I’m not sure, but it might be #3.” or “I didn’t want to say inside the room but it was #4.” All four of these comments could be listed by an officer as a positive identification, but that could be misleading depending upon the case. The witness’ words and physical reactions should be recorded.

- i. **Record the Witness’ Statements Rather than “Confidence Statements”:** “Confidence statements” where the administrator asks a witness to provide a numeric value or a certainty level to their identification, e.g., “On a scale of 1 – 10, how sure are you?” or “Are you 100% sure?” can be problematic. Most witnesses do not spontaneously offer a numeric confidence level at the time of viewing the lineup. Forcing a witness to attach a numeric value or level to their identification, or lack of identification, could lead to an artificial assessment and may prove to be misleading. The better practice is for the administrator to memorialize each of the witness’ statements, comments or other reactions made during the identification procedure.

10. Speaking with the Witness After the Identification Procedure:

- a. **Record the Witness’ Statements First:** The administrator, or other appropriate person, should record the statements, comments or gestures of the witness regarding the identification procedure *before* talking with the witness about next steps.
- b. **Discussing Next Steps:** Once the identification procedure is concluded and documented, the administrator can talk to the witness about how the case will proceed or what the next steps in the case may be, *e.g.* we will continue to search for the perpetrator (where there has been no identification), or we will contact you about meeting with the Assistant District Attorney next week, etc. After the identification procedure, witnesses frequently have questions about the case. It is entirely appropriate for the investigator to accurately answer questions about the case, including whether an arrest will be made.
- c. **Do Not Comment on the Identification:** The administrator should not comment or make gestures on the identification itself by saying things such as: “Great job.” or “We knew you would recognize him.” or even nodding his head in agreement. Such comments or reactions may subsequently affect the witness’ confidence in his or her identification. The administrator should remain neutral about the identification when speaking with the witness.
- d. **Do Not Discuss the Identification with other Witnesses:** The witness should be told not to discuss what was said, seen or done during the identification

New York State Lineup Guidelines

procedure with other witnesses, nor should the investigator discuss any other identification procedures with the witness.

11. Training:

Proper training is a critical component of conducting a fair and reliable identification procedure. Investigators who will be participating in lineup procedures in any way by picking up the witnesses, standing with the lineup members or instructing the witnesses, should be trained in these procedures.